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*ERNEST THOMPSON SETON'S FIRST VISIT
TO NEW MEXICO, 1893-1894*

H. ALLEN ANDERSON

ON A CRISP AUTUMN EVENING in 1893, a gangly young man stepped down from the east-bound train at the Fort Worth and Denver Railroad station in Clayton, New Mexico. He saw before him a windswept, wood-and-adobe frontier town, void of trees, not unlike the communities he had seen on the prairies of his Canadian homeland. Yet this place had an atmosphere almost foreign to him. Here, at the northernmost point of the region known locally as "Little Texas," the Anglo and Hispanic cultures intermingled and occasionally clashed. That was the farthest thing from young Ernest Thompson Seton's mind, however, as he trudged down the dusty street toward the hotel. His primary goal was to observe and study the natural world outside town, a world fast being altered by the advance of the "civilization" that Clayton represented. At the age of thirty-three, Seton had already begun a multifaceted career as a wildlife artist, illustrator, and author of quasifactual nature stories. Likely he neither realized that this latest venture, although brief, would serve as a major springboard for his literary career, nor did he know that his lifelong pilgrimage as a man of many hats would one day lead him back to New Mexico as an adopted son.

To see how this young outdoorsman happened onto the scene of New Mexico's last frontier, it is necessary to review briefly his early life and background. Ernest Thompson Seton was born of Scottish parentage in the seaport town of South Shields, England, on 14 August 1860, the eighth of ten sons (and one adopted daughter). According to family tradition, his great-grandfather was Lord George Seton, the Earl of Winton. His father, he claimed, was legal heir to that title but never used it. Instead, he went by

Thompson, an assumed name taken by Alan Cameron, a Scottish ancestor who had fled to England after the debacle at Culloden in 1746.¹

Joseph Logan Thompson, Ernest's ill-tempered father, was a ship owner in the British merchant marine. He was a virtual child-abuser who often beat his sons with a riding crop if they so much as failed to stand at attention whenever he entered. Ernest was a sensitive boy, and because of his tyrannical father, plus the somber, "hell-fire and damnation" Calvinist atmosphere in which he was raised, Seton's childhood mind became distorted. Throughout his life, he carried a distaste for churches and traditional Anglo Puritanism.²

In 1866, a series of financial disasters resulted in the loss of the family's fortune. Because of this reversal when Ernest was not quite six, his family moved to Canada and settled in a wilderness area near Lindsay, Ontario. There, they lived the life of pioneer farmers, learning by experience to make the best of whatever was available. For Ernest, who had an inborn love of nature and saw it as an escape valve from his father's tirades, this wilderness environment set the stage for his future career. The natural world held for him an intensive interest that his father later scorned, fearing that such an interest would not be profitable.³

After four years in the wilderness, the Thompsons sold their farm and moved to Toronto, where it soon became evident that Ernest possessed artistic ability in addition to his knack for wildlife. His art won a gold medal in the Ontario College of Art & Design in 1879 when he was eighteen. Delighted by his son's artistic talents, Ernest's father consented to send him to London, for a mere \$25.00 a month, to further his studies. In London, in 1880, young Seton's artwork garnered a seven-year scholarship in the Royal Academy of Arts and Sciences. Although persons under twenty-one were not normally allowed access to the natural history library housed in the British Museum, letters of request to the museum board of directors (among whom were the Prince of Wales and the Archbishop of Canterbury) enabled the young artist to study the works of Audubon, Ridgeway, Thoreau, and other naturalists. His realization that many men were successful in the field of natural history inspired him to pursue such a career.

Seton's stay in London was cut short because of poor health and inadequate funds. After less than three years there, he returned to Canada and took up residence at his brother's homestead near Carberry, Manitoba. Here he spent several fruitful years studying the wildlife of the then-unspoiled Canadian prairies and, at the suggestion of a friend, began a lifelong practice of keeping daily scientific records.⁴

With \$3.00 in his pocket, Seton went to New York City in 1883 to seek an outlet for his work. Because of his connection with J.A. Fraser, who taught at the Ontario College of Art, he soon attracted the attention of several influential publishers. One was J.A.'s brother, W. Lewis Fraser of *Century Magazine*, who gave Seton a job illustrating the second edition of the *Century Dictionary*. Other editors encouraged him along similar lines, and Seton published several articles in *St. Nicholas* and other periodicals. He made many field trips to Canada during the 1880s in conjunction with these early works, and his intimate contact with nature established his course as an authority on wildlife.⁵ In 1890, Seton went to Paris to continue his art studies at the Julian Academy. There he exhibited several sketches and oil paintings and did elaborate research on bird and mammal anatomy, the results of which he later published in his first important work, *Art Anatomy of Animals* (1896). In September 1892, after his return from Paris, Seton was appointed official naturalist to the government of Manitoba. The following summer, in his role as a serious artist, he displayed a sample of his artwork and many of his specimens at the Chicago Exposition.⁶

One of Seton's favorite animal subjects was the wolf. There is an interesting story concerning his family background on this matter. His mother had originally named him Ernest Evan, the Evan after a famous ancestor who helped rid Scotland of the fierce wolf packs that decimated livestock. She gave him this middle name, it was claimed, in the hope that her son would inherit the courage, fortitude, and renown of his notable forebear.⁷ From a tender age, Seton fought against the traditional "villain" image of the wolf in literature.⁸ Throughout his career, he used the imprint of a wolf track for his insignia. His most famous paintings that he did in Paris were on wolf subjects. During his Canadian field trips, Seton



Ernest Thompson Seton in 1903. Courtesy of Philmont Museums, Philmont Scout Ranch, Cimarron, N. Mex.

sometimes observed, hunted, and trapped wolves for scientific purposes.

It was this interest in wolves plus his association with a wealthy family that gave Ernest Thompson Seton his initial acquaintance with New Mexico and the American Southwest. Soon after his return from Paris in 1892, Seton's fame as an authority on wolves reached the ears of Louis V. Fitz-Randolph, a prominent New York businessman. His daughter had earlier become acquainted with Seton, who began paying frequent visits to the Fitz-Randolphs' New Jersey estate. Fitz-Randolph, in addition to other business interests, owned a large cattle ranch near Clayton, New Mexico. In the summer of 1893, Fitz-Randolph asked the budding naturalist if he could go to New Mexico and help rid his ranch of wolves that were taking a terrible annual toll among his cattle. Anxious for a vacation from confining easel and desk work, along with his doctor's orders to rest his eyes, Seton accepted the assignment.⁹

According to arrangements, Seton was to stay for a tentative period of at least two months, do what he could to exterminate wolves, and influence the ranchmen to begin an organized war on the pests. Seton would have the skins of the animals he killed, plus the bounties that they made. Fitz-Randolph would foot the bill on ammunition, poisons, traps, and travel expenses, as well as room and board. A horse would also be furnished. In all, a total of \$80 was estimated for expenses.¹⁰

The artist-naturalist traveled by train from New York to Chicago, and from there to Pueblo, Colorado, where he saw for the first time the lofty peaks of the Rockies. Here, too, he had his first glimpse of the plant and animal life that characterized the southern Plains.¹¹ From Pueblo, Seton traveled the Fort Worth and Denver line to Clayton, where he arrived on the night of 22 October 1893.

Clayton in the 1890s was a boisterous "cowtown" with a population of around 400. It had been founded in 1888 as a campground for the cattlemen when the newly built Fort Worth and Denver Railroad began accepting cattle for shipment. Soon, a permanent town sprang up after several small businesses moved in. When Seton arrived on the scene, Union County had recently been

created. Clayton was engaged in a heated contest with neighboring Folsom over which town would become the county seat, an honor that Clayton would soon win.¹² Cattle and politics were the main items of conversation.

The young naturalist spent the next two nights at the Clayton House, the town's only hotel. The Clayton House, containing a barroom and a dance hall that was "run on the most respectable lines," was the community social center. A dance, "in true Western style," was held here every Saturday night.¹³ Directly across the street from the Clayton House was a general store run by A. W. Thompson, who was also the town's postmaster.¹⁴ About fifty yards behind the hotel was a small, muddy pond from which Seton would take several small bird and mammal specimens. In the center of town stood a lone cottonwood tree, the only tree in the community. Always the sharp-eyed observer, Seton once spotted a ladderback woodpecker busying itself on the trunk, while all the cats in town stalked it from various directions. He also observed a large flock of sheep being herded into railroad cars at the stockpens for market and was surprised to learn that goats often served the same function as sheep dogs for this operation. In his journal, Seton made several sketches of the town, taking note of the volcanic rock areas, especially the twin peaks to the west known as the Rabbit Ears.¹⁵

After spending two days in Clayton, Seton left with the mail carrier for Louis Fitz-Randolph's L Cross F Ranch, where he was to be employed as a wolf hunter. The largest ranch in the Clayton area, the L Cross F was located on Pinabetitos Creek, about twenty-five miles to the southwest. It was managed by the foreman, H. M. Foster, who officially was Seton's "boss." However, because the ranch was temporarily without a cook and the foreman was away on business for a short time, arrangements were made for Seton to board at the cabin of Jack Brooks, a neighboring rancher. Brooks's small holding was about seven miles from the L Cross F headquarters and close to the tiny community of Clapham, which had the nearest school and post office.¹⁶

For the next few days after moving into the Brooks cabin, Seton carefully studied the terrain of his new environment and observed the habits of the local fauna. Despite the fact that he was there

during the late fall and early winter, many species of birds were still fairly abundant on the eastern New Mexico plains, and during his four-month stay he made several additions to his specimen collection. Seton noted his reaction to his first roadrunner, or "Mexican peacock," which resembled, in his thinking, an English pheasant. One cowboy called it "half magpie, half chicken."¹⁷

Among the native mammals, Seton was impressed with the abundance of prairie dogs, but because of the difficulty involved in catching the subterranean rodents, he was able to bag only three.¹⁸ Another unusual rodent that he found fascinating was the kangaroo rat. Seton later captured two of these elfin creatures and kept them in a crude, pine box cage in order to study their habits more closely, but they did not remain captives long. The naturalist awoke one morning to discover that they had chewed through the half-inch thick box top and escaped.¹⁹ One of Seton's most prized specimens was a bobcat; this was his first opportunity to study that particular species. He also produced in his notes several sketches of the "Texas wildcat" or "red lynx."²⁰

Seton began his wolf hunts in earnest. He quickly mastered many of the cowboy arts and skills such as throwing the lasso and shooting from horseback, but even then he knew that catching wolves was no easy task. He had learned from previous experiences in Canada that these animals, once considered dangerous to man, had since been "educated by gunpowder to let man alone."²¹ Trailing wolves by the use of dogs was not always successful because of the numerous arroyos that slashed through the New Mexico prairies and that often enabled a pack of wolves to elude and draw off their howling pursuers.²²

The reason that wolves were so destructive to sheep and cattle, Seton observed, was that man deprived them of the buffalo, antelope, and deer, their main sources of food. Without these natural means of survival, wolves had no choice but to prey on man's livestock. Consequently, local ranchers declared an all-out war against them. Traps and poisons were imported in vast quantities. Bounties were offered for each wolf pelt. At first, traps and poisons were quite successful, but by the 1890s, many wolf packs seemed to learn how to detect them. Seton believed that wolves, being social animals, had somehow "passed on" information

about man's weapons to others of their kind.²³ No wolf would go near a carcass that had any trace of human contact. By their keen sense of smell, many learned to detect poisoned bait.

Seton began his campaign against wolves by using strychnine. This poison was fairly effective on coyotes, but never once did he get a wolf with it. In fact, he later claimed more than a hundred coyotes, partly by poison and partly in traps, but he caught only five wolves, all of them in steel, double-spring traps.²⁴ He supposedly devised a method by which he could get at least two coyotes every night, but as he remarked, "I have changed from a coyote killer to a coyote protector; and the devilish secret of destruction shall perish with me."²⁵ After one chilly November evening, when a played-out cowhand accidentally swallowed strychnine he had mistaken for medicine, with fatal results, Seton abandoned the use of poisoned bait.²⁶

In conjunction with his wolf hunts and animal observations, Seton associated with the local populace of Clayton and vicinity, frequently participating in their various activities. A. W. Thompson, the storeowner, recalled one morning after a light snowfall when Seton took him to the edge of town and showed him some rabbit tracks. The naturalist followed the tracks, pointing out where the rabbit had stopped, went on, jumped, and finally disappeared. Another time, Seton had Thompson accompany him to Kelly's Feed Yard, later the site of a Catholic church, and asked the storeowner to pick out a dozen coyote skins from a pile he had stored there.²⁷

Another building in which Seton kept his animal skins was a small adobe shed located behind the Clayton House. Mrs. Harry Wells, wife of the hotel owner, stored her eggs in this shed, which she kept locked so that passing cowboys would not steal them. Because of that, she was at first reluctant to allow the naturalist access to the storehouse, but he assured her that he would not so much as touch the eggs. In later years, Mrs. Wells recalled that Seton was very much a gentleman.²⁸

During his four-month stay, Seton became acquainted with virtuous and undesirable characters of the Old West, and his adventures with them, as portrayed in his autobiography, are worthy of any Hollywood script.²⁹ Occasionally, he accompanied the L

Cross F cowboys on their roundups and gathered many of their campfire tales. It was on one such venture in December 1893 that Seton had his first, and only, glimpse of a wild mustang herd led by the legendary black stallion later immortalized in his story of the "Pacing Mustang."³⁰

Even in his journal, Seton made several interesting comments on the cowboys as masters of the horse and lasso, as well as on their liberal use of certain terms, many of Spanish origin. He considered the "list of wild creatures in this country incomplete without the cows and the cowboys." In one passage, Seton wrote:

The cowboy unfortunately is always at his worst when on public view—i.e., when in the towns—then all his vices are rampant and his better parts forgotten or smothered in drink. At home, at sober work, I find him always good humored, rollicking, reckless, hard working, courteous, and hospitable to a degree that I never before experienced.

Certainly, Seton often experienced firsthand the monotonous life of the cowboy at work, riding the ranges for days at a time and spending nights at various ranches and line camps.³¹

One particularly outstanding cowboy was Billy Allen, considered the champion roper in the whole region. So skilled was he with the lasso that he could rope a badger before the animal could get to the safety of its den. Once, while roping a steer for wolf bait, Allen threw the animal over in a complete somersault, breaking its neck and both of its horns at the roots in the process.³²

Certain episodes served as stimulants in shaping Seton's religion and personal philosophy toward life. He recalled one Sunday morning in 1893 when a circuit rider held a revival meeting in the Clapham schoolhouse, which doubled as a church building. Standing behind the teacher's desk, the preacher began his sermon to the predominantly cowboy audience by stating that "in SIN did our mothers conceive us!" A tall Texan in the front row, unaware of the true meaning of that passage of Scripture, immediately jumped up, pulled his gun on the clergyman, and gave him a stern warning not to slander his mother like that. Seeing this incident as representative of his own liberal thinking opposed to his Calvinist

upbringing, Seton thought that Christian doctrine should not condemn "every God-appointed natural human emotion and relationship" as sin.³³ Gradually, his studies of the natural world drew him into his own brand of pantheism.³⁴

In his acquaintance with the men and women of the West, Seton soon experienced the feelings of prejudice and jealousy that occasionally flared between the Anglo and Hispanic populace. He also discovered the loose interpretation of law and justice on the frontier and that many small ranchers sometimes rustled cattle from their larger and more prosperous neighbors. An incident of this sort, if one can believe all his autobiography, may have gotten Seton into trouble and forced him to cut short his wolf hunts.

According to the story, Seton had arranged through his cabin mate, Jack Brooks, a meeting with the brothers Joe and Charley Callis, who had a small holding near the Canadian River. Joe, a successful wolver, knew of several hunting and trapping methods about which Seton was anxious to learn. Brooks warned Seton not to go to the Callis abode at night, explaining that Joe was a wanted outlaw and that he shot at anyone venturing near his house after dark. Heeding this advice, Seton made it a point to be at the Callis ranch before sundown. The following day, Seton and the Callises loaded a chuck wagon and headed for the Canadian, which Joe said was good wolf country and where he claimed having cattle interests. While encamped near the river that night, the outlaw-wolver sketched several local cattle brands in the sand and asked Seton if he could alter them in any way. Unaware of the Callises' motives, the artist-naturalist did so. Only in the morning when he saw his companions alter the brands of cattle they had rounded up in the canyon did he realize their intentions. Seton wasted no time informing them that he wanted no part of their illegal activities. The rustlers let him go, but on his promise that he would keep quiet about the affair.³⁵

This escapade, Seton said, forced him to leave New Mexico earlier than he had planned. On the evening of 5 February 1894, a deputy sheriff whom Seton had befriended came to him and told him that a week earlier Joe Callis had become roaring drunk in Clayton and had boasted openly about Seton's "slick counter-brand." As a result, a warrant was out for Seton's arrest. The

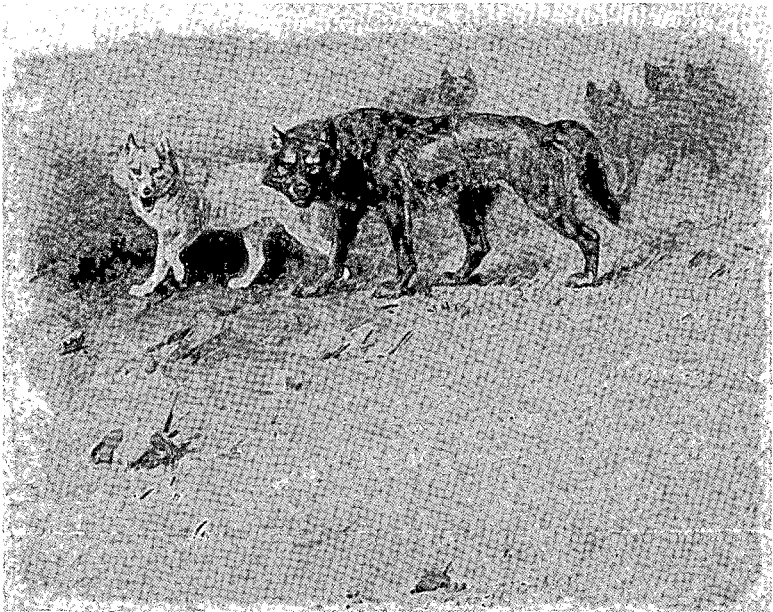
deputy, fearing that his friend's testimony "could not convince a Mexican judge and jury," advised him to take the midnight train out of Clayton. Seton hastily packed his belongings and left for "a place called New York."³⁶

That is the way Seton told it in his autobiography. If one carefully examines his journal, however, no clear evidence exists to substantiate the story. Like many writers, Seton liked to "tell a good story," even if it involved half-truths. In Seton's descriptions of his adventures with the local populace, several western stereotypes crop up: a starry-eyed, Oxford-educated eastern dude; a foul-mouthed femme fatale of ill repute; a fiery Mexican gunfighter. To some of the less desirable characters he encountered, Seton assigned different names; the Callis brothers became Tom and Bill Tannerey, and Jack Brooks, who occasionally rustled cattle, became Jim Bender.³⁷ In his diary, Seton merely told of spending the night at the Callis abode, preparing for an early start the next morning, and camping out the following night in Alamosa Arroyo, near the old Francisco Gallegos Ranch, to take refuge from a cold "northeaster." At the Gallegos place, he commented on the locoweed plant and its ill effects on livestock and also mentioned that cow chips were the only fuel available. Two days later, Seton and the Callises made the twenty-five mile ride back to the latter's ranch "in the face of driving sleet," and from there, the naturalist rode on back to Clapham. Nowhere in the journal did Seton indicate that the Callis brothers were rustlers, but neither did he deny such a possibility. When he prepared to leave New Mexico in early February, Seton discussed final arrangements as to how much money he was to get in bounties (\$72 in all). On the train trip back east, via Denver and Chicago, he made an extended stopover in Toronto before returning to New York.³⁸

Seton's first visit to frontier New Mexico was thus ended. By his admission, his four-month venture was almost traumatic. Judging from his humanitarian philosophy toward animals, it is not easy to imagine Seton in the role of a hired wolf hunter. While Fitz-Randolph may have hired Seton to participate in an experimental predator control program and while he undoubtedly joined the group of exterminators dedicated to reduce the New Mexico ranchers' financial losses, Seton at the same time saw this ex-



Lobo exposing the traps



Lobo and Blanca

perience as a golden opportunity to expand his knowledge of wolves and other wildlife in a region of North America he had never before seen. In his journal, he analyzed the behavior and habits of local species. Many of his results were used in constructing several short stories that he later published.³⁹ One episode in particular, his capture of Old Lobo, proved to be a milestone in his professional career.

The Valley of the Currumpaw (or Corrumpa) River north of Clayton contained some of the best grasslands in eastern New Mexico, complete with waterholes and shelter from the harsh winters. Heading near Capulin Mountain, the often-dry Currumpaw runs eastward toward the Oklahoma Panhandle, where it feeds the North Canadian. This valley was ideal cow country. But, as Seton noted, "plenty of cattle meant plenty of wolves," and these predators meant a loss of thousands of dollars annually to the local cattlemen and sheepmen.⁴⁰

Soon after Seton arrived in the fall of 1893, he heard stories of a pack led by a huge killer wolf of devilish cunning. Some of the cowboys claimed that Old Lobo, as he was called, killed a cow or a sheep every night. It was not that he needed that much food, but that his almost supernatural instinct warned him never to return to a kill, as it might be poisoned or surrounded with traps. The Currumpaw sheepmen and ranchers offered a tremendous bounty for Lobo's pelt, a bounty that gradually increased until it amounted to \$1,000.⁴¹ But repeated attempts to snare him were in vain. Although he was seldom seen, people always knew when he was around by his distinguishable howl and huge track.

From the first, Lobo was "number one" on Seton's list. As headquarters for this operation, Seton occupied an abandoned sheep rancher's adobe near the Currumpaw's sandy river bed.⁴² His description of the place and the surrounding area reflects his colorful literary style as well as his impressions of the eastern New Mexico topography:

It was a rough, rock-built, squalid ranch-house that I lived in, on the Currumpaw. The plaster of the walls was mud, the roof and walls were dry mud, the great river-flat around it was sandy mud, and the hills a mile away were piled-up mud, sculptured by frost and rain into the oddest of mud vagaries, with here and there a

coping of lava to prevent the utter demolition of some necessary mud pinnacle by the indefatigable sculptors named.

The place seemed uninviting to a stranger from the lush and fertile prairies of Manitoba, but the more I saw of it the more it was revealed a paradise. For every cottonwood of the straggling belt that the river used to mark its doubtful course across the plain, and every dwarfed and spiny bush and weedy copse, was teeming with life. And every day and every night I made new friends, or learned new facts about the mudland denizens.⁴³

From these quarters, for nearly a month Seton tried all kinds of devices to trap the King Wolf. He was assisted in this endeavor by two cowboys, Charlie Winn and the roper Billy Allen.⁴⁴

The story of how Seton's ingenuity and persistence finally enabled him to snare the wily despot in January 1894 need not be repeated here. It remains one of the classic animal tales in the annals of the Southwest. In his story of the "King of the Currumpaw," Seton ascribed to Lobo the adventures of several individual wolves observed or reported in the Clayton area and the XIT Ranch in Texas (on which Allen and Winn had previously worked) before narrating the events leading to the old marauder's capture.⁴⁵ He spoke of the episode as "one of the turning points" of his life, and prophetically it was.⁴⁶ When Seton published the narrative in *Scribner's Magazine* in November 1894, the story immediately received world-wide notice. Leo Tolstoy called it "the best wolf story I have ever read."⁴⁷ More important, it marked the beginning of a new style of nature writing for Seton and others. Before his New Mexico venture, Seton admitted to using the archaic method of making animals talk and giving them other anthropomorphic qualities. It was one of these earlier works, "Molly Cottontail," that, according to Seton, inspired Rudyard Kipling to write his *Jungle Tales*. "Lobo," however, was the earliest example of an animal story to adhere strictly to the scientific method.⁴⁸ Seton used the episode in many of his lectures to illustrate man's conflicts with the laws of nature. In time, Lobo's tragic death, and that of his albino mate Blanca, have come to symbolize the extermination of the wolf from the southern Plains.

As his public career mushroomed through the years, Ernest Thompson Seton won considerable fame as a complex and some-

times controversial figure. More than once, he and his works were subject to criticism. An idealist with a towering ego, he had a genuine compassion for society's underdogs and an undying hatred for competition. At the turn of the century, Seton organized a colorful youth movement that stressed mutual aid and his belief that if modern man followed the example of the animal kingdom, as the American Indians in part did, the results would be a decentralized, almost utopian society free of war.⁴⁹ Failing to achieve this goal in the East, Seton in his later years followed what he called the "Buffalo Wind" back to New Mexico. There, near Santa Fe, he established Seton Village, symbolizing his ultimate retreat from a world ridden with economic depression and threatened with global war. By that time, New Mexico was no longer the wild, remote frontier territory he had seen in 1893-1894. It had already become the southwestern mecca known as the Land of Enchantment.

NOTES

1. There is considerable doubt as to the validity of Ernest's claim as heir to the Earl of Winton. Further research has shown that the latter died childless. Because of a promise made to his mother, Ernest went by the "nom-de-plume" of Seton-Thompson (or Ernest E. Thompson), but after her death in 1897, he legally adopted the surname of Seton. Ernest Thompson Seton, *Trail of an Artist-Naturalist: The Autobiography of Ernest Thompson Seton* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941), p. 393 (hereafter cited as Seton, *Autobiography*); John Henry Wadland, *Ernest Thompson Seton: Man in Nature and the Progressive Era, 1889-1915* (New York: Arno Press, 1978), p. 49.

2. Julia M. Seton, *By a Thousand Fires* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1967), pp. 11-12, 41.

3. Farida Wiley, ed., *Ernest Thompson Seton's America* (New York: Devin Adair, 1954), p. xvi (hereafter cited as Wiley, *Seton's America*).

4. Wiley, *Seton's America*, p. xviii; J. M. Seton, *By a Thousand Fires*, p. 87. The original, handwritten journals are in the American Museum of Natural History, New York City. Photocopies are also in the Seton Memorial Library and Museum at Philmont Scout Ranch, Cimarron, N. Mex. Volume 5 is devoted exclusively to Seton's New Mexico venture in 1893-1894.

5. Seton's field trips were temporarily halted in 1886 when an arthritic seizure crippled his right knee and only much later responded to treatment. Consequently, it was during the late 1880s that he first gained notice with the publication of his first scientific articles and short stories. Some of his discoveries

were recorded by the Smithsonian Institution. John A. Garraty and Edward T. James, eds., *Dictionary of American Biography*, Supplement 4, 1946-1950 (New York: Scribner, 1974), p. 735.

6. Seton received this appointment by working through a taxidermy company collecting specimens for the proposed natural history exhibit at the Chicago Exposition. There was no set limit to the term of office, for he served without a regular salary except on specifically appointed missions. The appointment was never revoked, and Seton used that role to political advantage. Even after he became a U.S. citizen in 1931, he could, for the rest of his life, boast that he was still a Manitoba government official. J. M. Seton, *By a Thousand Fires*, p. 103.

7. Wiley, *Seton's America*, p. xv.

8. Seton, in his characteristic humor, recalled in his autobiography: "As I grew old enough to enjoy the standard nursery tales, my favorites were 'Red Riding Hood and the Wolf' and 'The Wolf and the Seven Kids.' Though, low be it spoken—and I tell it with a sense of guilt—in each, I had a measure of sympathy for the wolf. I felt that his case was not properly presented; he acted strictly within the law, and on each occasion he got a very raw deal" (Seton, *Autobiography*, p. 8).

9. Seton, *Autobiography*, pp. 303-4; Seton, "The Journals of Ernest Thompson Seton," 38 vols. (1886-1897), 2: 290.

10. Seton to Fitz-Randolph, 6 October 1893, copy in Seton, "Journals" (17 October 1893-8 February 1894), 5.

11. Seton, "Journals," 5: 3-7.

12. New Mexico Writers' Project, *New Mexico: A Guide to the Colorful State* (New York: Hastings House, 1940), pp. 301-2.

13. Seton, *Autobiography*, p. 314.

14. A. W. Thompson to Seton, 21 December 1943, copy in Seton Papers (SP), Seton Castle, Santa Fe.

15. Seton, "Journals," 5: 9-15.

16. Seton, "Journals," 5: 21.

17. The roadrunner, a member of the cuckoo family and the state bird of New Mexico, was known during that time largely by its Spanish name, "paisano" (Seton, "Journals," 5: 39).

18. Seton pointed out that in the wild, prairie dogs did not live in "towns" with the mounds actually crowding each other. Normally, the mounds were fifty or more feet apart (Seton, "Journals," 5: 29).

19. Seton-Thompson [Seton], *Lives of the Hunted* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), pp. 11, 256.

20. Seton, "Journals," 5: 30-32, 36.

21. Seton, *Lives of Game Animals*, 4 vols. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Doran, 1929), 1: 302.

22. Seton, "The King of the Currumpaw: A Wolf Story," *Scribner's Magazine* 23 (November 1894): 618.

23. Seton, *Lives of Game Animals*, 1: 307.

24. In one incident, which Seton used to illustrate his animal communications theory, he came upon a coyote that had taken some bait at one of his "drags" and that was convulsed with strychnine poisoning. When the naturalist rode up to shoot it, the coyote suddenly vomited up all it had eaten and ran off, gradually working the paralysis out of its legs. Seton concluded that the animal "would ever after know and fear the smell of strychnine," and "teach" others of its kind to do the same (Seton, *Autobiography*, p. 309). Seton later incorporated this incident, along with other coyote observations in New Mexico and the Dakota Badlands, into his short story, "Tito: The Story of the Coyote that Learned How," *Lives of the Hunted*, pp. 290-91.

25. J. M. Seton, *By a Thousand Fires*, p. 115.

26. Seton, *Autobiography*, p. 310.

27. A. W. Thompson to Seton, 21 December 1943, SP.

28. Interview (telephone) with Louise Wells of Clayton, N. Mex., March 1980.

29. Seton, *Autobiography*, pp. 311ff.

30. Seton-Thompson [Seton], *Wild Animals I Have Known, and 200 Drawings* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1898), pp. 237-38.

31. Seton, "Journals," 5: 112, 176-78.

32. Seton, "Journals," 5: 82, 208.

33. Thompson to Seton, 21 December 1943, SP; Seton, *Autobiography*, pp. 374-75.

34. Wadland, *Ernest Thompson Seton*, pp. vi-vii.

35. Seton, *Autobiography*, p. 322.

36. Seton further enhanced his story by saying that the deputy apprehended the Callises the next day. Joe was sentenced to fifteen years in prison and Charley, five. They had served only one year, however, when "politics took the right turn," and both were pardoned. Soon after their release, Seton supposedly received a letter from the outlaw-wolver that read, "Dear friend: We are out of the pen O.K. Come on back, and we'll have some more fun on the Canadian" (Seton, *Autobiography*, p. 323-24).

37. Seton, "Journals," 5: p. 39; *Autobiography*, pp. 311ff.

38. Seton stayed in Toronto for nearly six months, visiting family and friends and writing articles and short stories before returning to New York in late June. From there, he made a second trip to Paris (Seton, "Journals," 2: 305; 5: 84-104, 208-10).

39. Wadland, *Ernest Thompson Seton*, pp. 209-10.

40. Seton, "Journals," 5: 11; *Autobiography*, p. 331.

41. New Mexico Writers' Project, *New Mexico*, p. 302.

42. According to A. W. Thompson, this adobe was once a part of the Tabor sheep ranch. Thompson to Seton, 21 December 1943, SP.

43. Seton, *Lives of the Hunted*, pp. 233-34.

44. Seton, "Journals," 5: 210.

45. Seton, *Lives of Game Animals*, 1: 314.

46. Seton, "Journals," 5: 210.

47. Ralph Wallace, "Wild Animals He Has Known," *Reader's Digest* 49 (September 1946): 59.

48. Seton to Charles F. Lummis, 7 May 1901, original in Archives of the Southwest Museum, Los Angeles; Seton, *Lives of the Hunted*, p. 11.

49. Seton, "Ernest Thompson Seton's Boys," series in *Ladies' Home Journal* 19 (May–November 1902); Seton to Mary Austin, 26 April 1917, SP; Wadland, *Ernest Thompson Seton*, p. viii. Also, see Brian Morris, "Ernest Thompson Seton and the Woodcraft Movement," *Journal of Contemporary History* 5 (1970): 183–94.