



Lee Hayes Makes a Pilgrimage

BY ROLAND G. E. ULLMAN

A big cattle man from the West does Broadway.

MAYBE "pilgrimage" is not the right word, but whatever the accurate term should be, it was Lee's first visit to New York. Unexpectedly I was his guide, but only in part his mentor.

It was in 1916, after six o'clock of a mid-autumn evening. I had gone over to the Pennsylvania Station to mail an important west-bound letter. I walked back as far as Thirty-third Street and Broadway, where I paused a moment to debate a bachelor's momentous question: should I go up-town or down-town to eat? My personal debate was rudely interrupted.

Some one came up behind me, gave me a tremendous wallop across the back that knocked the wind out of me, and I heard a great, bull-bass voice boom out: "Say, doc, you old son of a gun, where in hell did you come from?"

I knew that voice. There couldn't be two like it in the whole world. I gasped and sputtered, trying to regain my lost breath, then answered Lee in kind. We shook hands with that profound enthusiasm which only two buddies of the open can have, while vistas of Wyoming star-spangled nights, glowing camp-fires, and restless, milling herds of cattle flashed across my mind. The air seemed suddenly sharper, cleaner, more invigorating. The dusk-dimmed sky-line gave a fleeting impression of the Laramie Range with Labonte Canyon alive with fireflies.

Then the mental mirage exploded into the flashing lights of electric signs. It was Lee Hayes in the flesh, but he was on Broadway.

"I spotted you crossing the street right here a bit ago, but I wasn't right sure it was you, so I kept on your trail while you went to the station to mail that letter; then I followed you back this far. I knew it was you by that time, though I'd never seen you in hard-boiled duds and pressed pants before. I knew you by your gait. Folks can look alike, but they don't often walk alike."

The questions flew back and forth. The answers were rapid and spontaneous. Lee Hayes, the taciturn, was talkative, positively garrulous. Reason enough. Four hours in New York in pre-prohibition days had made it easy for a stranger to find and consume twenty-seven drinks, surprisingly well mixed as to variety, but not potent enough to affect the gait of a Wyoming rancher. The only effect had been to lubricate his tongue.

He had sold several hundred head of horses, it seemed, to the French Government and cleared a profit of forty-six thousand dollars. Forty-five thousand of it he had promptly tucked into bank—he was a knowing *hombre*—the other thousand had gone into his pocket as his roll to take him to Chicago and New York, but especially to New York.

Lee Hayes had lived to be twenty-six years old before he ever saw a trolley-

car. He was one of those rare and unusual beings who had been born in Wyoming. Prior to 1916 his farthest east had been Kansas City and Omaha—as nurse to a train-load of white-faced steers or grass-fattened Mexican “doughies.”

Now was the great adventure—all Pullman!

My turn to explain. I was sales manager for a company with headquarters in New York. Followed a little elucidation on my duties, which he reinterpreted: “So you’re boss of the round-up and keep your punchers herding strays, riding fences, and watching the *cavy*.”

We were getting a little conspicuous. Lee’s six feet four of bronzed, lithe manhood and that booming, bull-bass voice slowed up even the blasé homeward bound. Unconsciously we began to move slowly with the crowd.

“Doc, let’s go eat. It’s my rustle, but you got to show me where. I know what kind of a chuck-wagon I’m looking for, but I forget what you call ’em. It’s one of those places where you sit and eat while the girls come out and dance and sing with music and lights. You know the kind of place I mean.”

“A cabaret, Lee?”

“Yes, that’s it. You always were good on that highfalutin’ lingo. But, mind, nothing but Wyoming horse money’s good to-night. I’ll tie your nose to your latigo if I ketch you ringing in any of your dirty New York money on my game.”

Argument proves useless, so I lead the way to the Pierrot Room at the Martinique, still almost in its heyday for visiting department-store buyers. There is a lively little revue there. We enter conspicuously enough. We are announced by Lee’s sun-baked brunette

complexion, his six feet four of erect and supple grace, his rolling gait of the born rider, and, above all, by his voice, so absolutely untamed to four walls.

Discreet discussion with the head waiter, then all eyes follow us as we are ushered to a ringside table while our guide pockets a five-dollar bill. I detect glances of admiration—especially from the women—at the free-swinging, unconscious giant, and of mild amusement at the suit with quarter-inch checks which I notice for the first time. I suspect it was bought of the Florence Hardware Company, then budding into Douglas’s first department store with a range of wares that included furniture, dynamite, and fulminate-of-mercury caps.

The waiter is patient while we talk, oblivious to his stolid presence. Finally he shuffles and rustles the menus, and the Wyoming scenes fade out and the Pierrot Room rematerializes.

“What shall we eat?” I suggest.

We agree on beefsteak.

“How will you have it—rare, medium, or well done?” asks the waiter with an obsequious pencil poised for action.

Before I can answer, Lee’s voice floods the room like a power amplifier: “Just cripple the beef and lead him in; slit him up the hind leg and we’ll eat him off the hoof.”

It was too sudden, too unexpected for our waiter. Never did I see every vestige of bored composure annihilated so instantaneously from the face of a New York waiter. The effect was electric in the entire room except at a single point.

There was something almost virginal in the complete innocence of Lee Hayes. He was totally unaware of having produced an effect. He was hungry, he wanted beefsteak, he wanted it rare; that was all, except for the alcoholic

abandon of a tongue that sober was extraordinarily close-reined.

But that room had become an audience for our table.

The lengthy order finally recorded, the waiter departed. We resumed conversation, picking up the threads where they had been dropped nearly four years back on a day when Lee had watched me buy a little blue-roan mare with a reputation for diversified bucking.

His appraising eyes had noted her clean limbs, her wide chest, her spirited carriage. He knew my habit of naming even a casual brood-mare.

"What are you going to call her?" he had asked ingenuously as we rode away after the transaction was completed.

"Betsy."

His answer (perforce altered slightly from the picturesque original) was, "Well, Betsy'll break your back for you," and then, as an afterthought, "but she ought to be a good brood-mare."

That was the last time I had seen Lee. A turn of Fate's wheel a few days later had brought me back East for three or four weeks, as I then thought, but they had stretched into as many years.

There were a thousand questions to ask: How were Malcolm Campbell and Peaky Duncan and Big Joe Koleno? Where did May and Harry Gillmore live? Did Babe Tinney, the barber, still win as consistently at poker? And Jack the Dauber and Bob Lester and Cody Shipley and Jim Williams?

The opening number of the revue interrupted us and we turned a little in our chairs to see the chorus make its entrance. The orchestra drowned out the sounds of the dining-room, and the chorus went into action.

I stole a glance at Lee. His eyes, following the movements of the dancers,

were lighted with ecstatic excitement—the same sort of ecstasy one sees in a child watching its first circus. Then while I, too, followed the gyrations and intricate stepping, something clicked in Lee's brain. I was instantly aware of the event, but not fast enough to forestall it.

I looked back at him quickly, but already his hand was coming out of his pocket, and before I could realize what he was planning to do a great handful of silver money went flying out all over the dance-floor, some of the coins first striking against silk-clad and shapely legs before clinking to the floor. The noise was considerable.

Like all truly typical Westerners, Lee was almost unacquainted with pennies and had a strong disdain for paper dollars and two-dollar bills. Silver was the kind of change he wanted and would have. There must have been somewhere between thirty and fifty dollars in quarters, halves, and silver dollars rolling around that floor. Some of the coins were spinning crazily in long arcs, and it seemed as if they were never going to stop spinning and come to rest.

I could hear quick breaths being sucked in all over the room in surprise and astonishment. I could feel the crowd's amusement even before I could hear it. Lee was still too absorbed in the effect on the chorus to be aware of the effect on the audience.

Throw fifty dollars in handy-sized pieces of silver to twelve girls just finishing a dance on a small space and see how minds and muscles co-ordinate to the interrupting idea. The dance, almost over anyway, ended abruptly in a scramble.

Apparently the audience thought this was part of the show, a part that was, perhaps, a pleasant forerunner to the professional goat-getter of the night

club. But it was evident the *maitre d'hôtel* thought otherwise. Supported by a battalion of captains, waiters, and bus boys he moved down on our table. He was voluble, almost vociferous.

It was only then that Lee realized he had departed from conventional behavior at a cabaret, but he was undismayed. He was amused, he grinned disarmingly, and the cohort of waiters and the *maitre d'hôtel* were nonplussed, uncertain.

By now the audience had caught the spirit of the occasion, and all manner of change, though mostly of smaller denominations, was being tossed to the dance-floor. The crowd was with Lee, and he sensed their approval and support instantly. He reached out a long arm, and a powerful hand passed with lightning speed to the back of the neck of the head waiter, who suddenly found himself drawn down in chancery with his head tucked neatly in the bend of Lee's right elbow while a sun-tanned left hand was thrusting a yellow-backed twenty-dollar bill into the hand of his helpless victim.

"Here, take this and call off your pack of slumgullion hounds and make yourself scarce, Old Timer," Lee admonished the head waiter. "We're not breaking china, furniture, nor faces. We're right peaceable and we'll stay thataway if you give us a chance."

I added my assurance of good behavior.

An astonishing number of men can find balm for hurt dignity in a twenty-dollar bill. Peace was restored, but I was more alert to forestall what might be expected from Lee Hayes's stimulation of ideas.

The audience was convinced now that we were part and parcel of the scheduled programme of entertain-

ment. They were enjoying us hugely. I knew we were part of the entertainment, but not according to schedule. I was enjoying it, too, but with apprehension. Lee didn't even know we had any part in it. He thought he was being entertained. So he was, and that made us all about even up.

The waiter arrived, staggering under his loaded tray, and the meal began to array itself before us, a truly Lucullan banquet. The oysters, ordered with misgivings by a man who never before had seen them in their shells or in any way but in cans, delighted him until a little pink crab stirred up new doubts.

"What kind of a new-fangled bug is that?" His stentorian inquiry was almost a challenge. I explained nonchalantly, but Lee was suspicious and left it uneaten, even though I had the good fortune to find a duplicate in one of my oysters and illustrated the proper method of despatch.

The planked beefsteak, gorgeously panoplied with peas, mushrooms, and flutings of mashed potatoes, aroused his enthusiasm. "That's food, doc; that's food and no mistake. That's regular he-grub and I'm all for it, but what kind of a cactus is that?"

I explained that it was the French artichoke he had ordered.

"And to think I insisted on having one of those," remarked Lee dryly. "Well, I'll try your green armadillo once, but I figure on sticking to potatoes for regular meals. Shall I say grace, doc, or will we jest fall to?"

We "fell to," listening the while to a plaintive song dripping with sentiment. Lee liked that, too.

The meal progressed smoothly. We were both hungry and kept busy. Tranquillity prevailed until the first pangs of an outdoor appetite were appeased.

Then in one of those moments of almost intense stillness which seems to hit every large assemblage just about once in an evening, memory came surging up through the alcohol fumes in Lee's brain, and his titanic voice broke that awful moment of silence with a more awful question.

"Say, doc, did Betsy ever break your back for you?" (And again it has been necessary to change a single word.)

A cabaret or a night club crowd likes broad comedy—the broader the more enthusiastic the *accueil*. The breadth of this comedy comment suited the audience, delighted it, overwhelmed it—and me, too.

It was a hysterical greeting for that question, with the explosive quality which surprise gives to laughter. Shrieks, high cackles, and deep-mouthed guffaws burst forth in a perfect flood of sound. Lee liked that. He joined in and so did I, helplessly and with a wry twist. I was profoundly thankful there was not one other soul in that room that knew me. There was no redress. It would never cross the mind of any one there that Betsy was a bucking bronco.

The rest of the evening in the Pierrot Room was uneventful, but the strain did not let up for me. Every time Lee opened his mouth to speak, I trembled for

what picture of my past might come forth for further distortion, but at last the check was paid and we were outward bound.

Lee's next great desire was a burlesque show. He had heard of them but never seen one. The house was crowded, only a proscenium box to be had. More limelight, more difficulties, but I was willing, though I was sure it would be a strain. Not this time. The generous dinner, the warm air, and the drinks brought a great sense of peace and well-being to Lee Hayes, who slept during all but the first ten minutes. Perhaps it was uncharitable, but I did not disturb him until the theatre was nearly empty; then I woke him up and we strolled out into the crisp night-air and down to his hotel, where I found new proof of Lee's sagacity.

Upon his arrival that afternoon, he had decided he could remain in New York five days and no more. Accordingly he had paid in advance for his room, had bought return railroad and Pullman tickets, and had given these and fifty dollars in cash to the hotel clerk to keep for him. With the rest of his roll in his pocket, he had set out to see the sights of New York and have a good time. He did both and he got value received at his own appraisal, and that is all any one can ever hope to do.





Hacking New York

BY ROBERT HAZARD

These are the real experiences of a New York taxi-driver, and in effect they present New York of to-day in a series of graphic short stories.

CAME TO NEW YORK

I CAME to New York just to see the sights, particularly Greenwich Village, and I made some friends in the Village. About that time my money ran low, and I thought I had better get something to do to live on. Hack-driving seemed to be a very handy way to see New York and eat at the same time, so I talked to hack-drivers about the business of getting a license. Following their instructions I first got a chauffeur's license from the State. Then I went over to the taxi-license bureau and got an application.

In the application I was supposed to put down the names of my employers for the past five years. My employers for the previous five years were scattered all over the United States and I had forgotten how many there were, so I got out a newspaper and turned to the legal notices and picked out the names of five bankrupt firms.

I had to declare whether I had ever been in jail or not and, if so, when, where, and how. I had been in jail once out in California along with another fellow, but we had slipped the jailer two dollars and he had locked us in a cell previously occupied by some yeggs who had dynamited a hole in the floor and dug a tunnel out along the sewer-pipes, so we got out and caught the next train. As this left no record, I felt no uneasiness

in answering the question with a "no."

The application required me to have two men in New York who owned their own business make out vouchers for me stating they had known me so long and I was thoroughly honest and reliable, etc., and swear to them before a notary public. I went into the delicatessen-store and bought about a dollar's worth of provisions and got the delicatessen dealer to make one out without having it sworn. I went into the cigar-store next door, bought a carton of Camels, and got him to fill out the other one. Then I had to get my last previous employer sign another voucher for me, swearing that I was of unblemished character and that he was eager to hire me again. I had one of the Greenwich Villagers swear he had employed me as chauffeur. Then I went back to the license bureau, and there are a lot of notary publics located around there who will let you swear to anything for a quarter apiece. As I remember it, there was a dollar's worth of swearing to be done.

Next the hack-drivers told me I would have to stand an examination as to knowledge of the city—all the piers, hotels, out-of-the-way streets, etc. I would have to be finger-printed and would have to leave photographs of myself, which would be investigated by the police department for ten days to see