

Tree Inscribed By Buffalo Bill Spared As Forest Fire Surrounds It

AP Associated Press

AP News Archive **Sep. 18, 1988** 1:55 PM ET

CODY, WYO. CODY, Wyo. (AP) A forest fire that swept out of Yellowstone National Park threatened a tree inscribed by western showman Buffalo Bill Cody, and his grandson feared the worst for his namesake's landmark. But it survived even though trees six feet away were burned.

The tree's four-foot-thick trunk was inscribed "Camp Monaco 1913" when Buffalo Bill was host to Prince Albert of Monaco on a hunting trip in the Shoshone National Forest. Cody's famous Wild West show was a hit in Europe.

"It was about this time of year when Granddad took the prince up there," grandson Bill Cody said.

He had been worried about the tree ever since the Clover-Mist fire surged into the North Fork drainage about two weeks ago, but a helicopter flight over the area with U.S. Forest Service rangers confirmed the tree was safe. Camp Monaco is a half day's horseback ride from Pahaska Tepee, Buffalo Bill's hunting lodge near Yellowstone's east entrance.

Cody said he had been considering attempting to salvage the inscription if the tree burned, but he started to fear the worst when he saw from the air how much damage the fire had caused. "It was a disaster all the way up the North Fork. On both sides of the river there was nothing but burn, burn, burn," he said.

But when the helicopter approached a meadow near Camp Monaco, Cody spotted a clump of green amid hundred of acres of black. "It looked just like a pinpoint in the middle of a pie," he said. "When I saw the tree was saved I let out a yell. There were burned trees within six feet of it, and a bottle lying about six feet away was scorched."