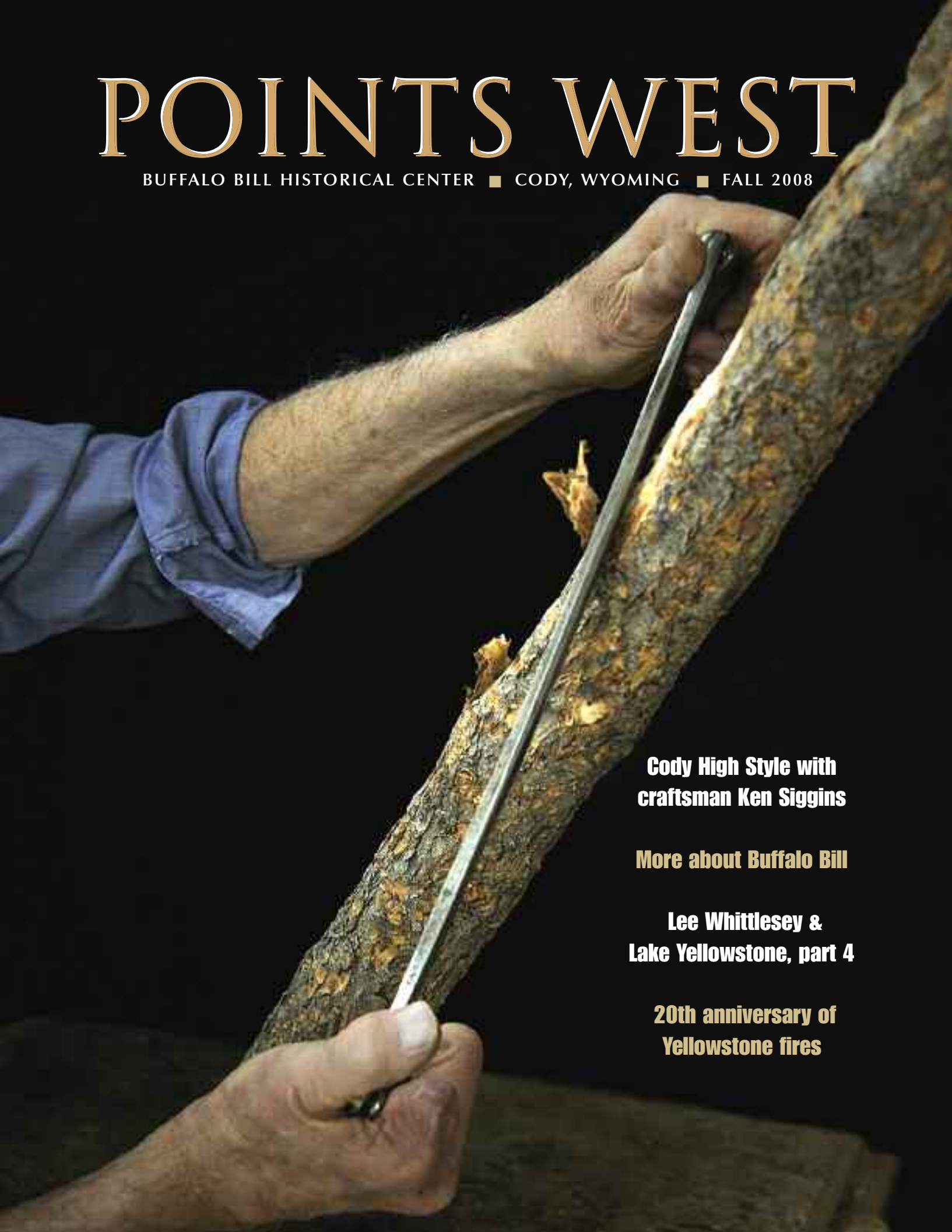


# POINTS WEST

BUFFALO BILL HISTORICAL CENTER ■ CODY, WYOMING ■ FALL 2008



**Cody High Style with  
craftsman Ken Siggins**

**More about Buffalo Bill**

**Lee Whittlesey &  
Lake Yellowstone, part 4**

**20th anniversary of  
Yellowstone fires**



by Bruce Eldredge  
Executive Director

## To the point

Well, it's been a wild ride here at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center this summer with the national economy and high gas prices affecting tourism. From day-to-day, we hardly knew if we were doing better or worse than 2007. If this sounds familiar, then you know what we've been experiencing. Nevertheless, there are a number of constants in the life of the center.

First and foremost, regardless of the national economy or gas prices, our visitors can still expect and experience the finest collections, exhibitions, and programs on the American West. Thousands flocked here to see our five museums and enjoy such programs as the 27th Annual Plains Indian Museum Powwow, a remarkable event that I had the privilege of seeing for the first time.

Secondly, we continue to be recognized for our leadership in the museum field. As you have no doubt noticed from the opposite page, we are now an Affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution—the only one in Wyoming. I urge you to read more about this extraordinary partnership on page eighteen. It truly is a great partnership that promises to bode well for our future.

With this partnership, we're well on our way to becoming one of the top ten to fifteen museums in the country. However, we can't rest on our laurels; there is more work to be done. Our tasks are: Develop a stronger financial base less reliant on annual visitation; as a staff, adopt a more team-oriented approach to our projects and activities; and clearly identify and work toward future goals and objectives. With your help and support, we will continue to move forward as an institution that educates the public about the American West. ■

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The BBHC is a private, non-profit, educational institution dedicated to preserving and interpreting the natural and cultural history of the American West. Founded in 1917, the BBHC is home to the Buffalo Bill Museum, Whitney Gallery of Western Art, Plains Indian Museum, Cody Firearms Museum, Draper Museum of Natural History, and McCracken Research Library.

The mission of *Points West* is to deliver an engaging educational magazine primarily to the patrons of the BBHC. *Points West* will use a multi-disciplinary strategy to connect the reader to the nature and culture of the American West, and the BBHC in particular, through exceptional images and appealing, reader-friendly stories.



## About the cover:

"A man who works with his hands is a laborer; a man who works with his hands and his brain is a craftsman; but a man who works with his hands and his brain and his heart is an artist."  
—Louis Nizer, twentieth-century jurist and author (1902–1994)

One would almost think Nizer had met Ken Siggins, a Cody, Wyoming, furniture maker, since his words describe Siggins to the proverbial "T." As a member of the Cody Western Artisans, Siggins and his fellow craftsmen—who call him "the bridge between Molesworth and today"—are gearing up for *Cody High Style: Designing the West*, September 23–27. Read more about Siggins and his work on page twelve. Cover photo by Chris Gimmeson.



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For the western furniture maker, it all starts with the wood. Against the backdrop of Wyoming's Absaroka Mountains and the valley of the South Fork of the Shoshone River, Cody Western Artisan Ken Siggins searches for just the right timber for his next creation. Follow the progress from log to furniture on page twelve.

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Visit us online . . .

Read more about the Buffalo Bill Historical Center becoming a Smithsonian Affiliate on our Web site,  
[www.bbhc.org/museums/SmithsonianAffiliate.cfm](http://www.bbhc.org/museums/SmithsonianAffiliate.cfm).

Magazine of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center • Cody, Wyoming



Smithsonian Institution  
Affiliations Program

# We want them dead rather than alive:

By Jeremy Johnston

*William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody’s autobiography published in 1879 contained many “true” accounts of him chasing and capturing various desperados in the Wyoming region. “All along the stage route were robbers and man-killers far more vicious than the Indians,” wrote Buffalo Bill. In part two of “Outlaws,” Buffalo Bill relates several stories about Wyoming outlaws, the first encounter of which occurred during his employment with Russell, Majors, and Waddell, when he claimed he worked as a Pony Express rider.*

## Joseph Slade

In 1861, fifteen-year-old Cody found himself working at the Horseshoe Station, located some thirty miles west of Fort Laramie, where he was “occasionally riding pony express and taking care of stock.” A violent gunfighter, Joseph Slade, managed the Horseshoe Station and acted as Buffalo Bill’s boss. Slade’s violent exploits on both sides of the law were well known throughout the West and eventually led to his lynching by an angry group of Montana vigilantes. As a station manager for the Pony Express, Slade killed a number of horse thieves. After killing one such victim, Slade sliced his ears off, dried out the gruesome remains, and carried the trophies in his pocket to honor the event.

Famed writer Mark Twain described a tense encounter in Wyoming with Slade in his travelogue, *Roughing It*. While sitting at the same table with Slade, Twain noticed the coffee pot contained only one cup of coffee yet both their mugs were empty. When Slade offered Twain the last cup of coffee, he quickly refused to take it. Twain said, “although I wanted it, I politely declined. I was afraid he had not killed anybody that morning, and might be needing diversion.” Slade ignored Twain’s refusal and filled the author’s cup with coffee. Twain declared, “I thanked him and drank it, but it gave me no comfort, for I could not feel sure

that he would not be sorry, presently, that he had given it away, and proceed to kill me to distract his thoughts from the loss.”

Unlike Twain, Buffalo Bill did not fear Slade. Instead, he stated in his autobiography that “Slade, although rough at times and always a dangerous character — having killed many a man — was always kind to me. During the two years that I worked for him . . . he never spoke an angry word to me.”

**“Slade, although rough at times . . . was always kind to me.”**

## Hunting bears, eluding outlaws

Buffalo Bill recalled an adventure on a solo bear hunt near Laramie Peak during this time at Horseshoe Station. “Very early in my career as a frontiersman, I had an encounter with a party of these [outlaws] from which I was extremely fortunate to escape with my life,” wrote Buffalo Bill in his autobiography. He did not kill any bears during this hunt: Instead he found himself trapped in a den of horse thieves hoping to escape with his life.

After killing two sage hens for his evening dinner, Buffalo Bill prepared a campsite for the night only to notice a herd of horses grazing near a dugout in the distance. Hoping to find shelter for the night, he walked up to the dwelling and boldly knocked on the door. When the door opened, he found himself face-to-face with “eight as rough and villainous men as I ever saw in my life.” The outlaws recently killed a ranchman and ran off with his horses, and Buffalo Bill observed it “was a hard crowd, and I concluded that the sooner I could get away from them the better it would be for me.” The suspicious outlaws questioned Cody about his presence in the area, if there were others accompanying him, and how he discovered their hideout.

Buffalo Bill barely escaped his would-be



Pre-“Buffalo Bill,” a young William F. Cody, pictured here ca. 1862, worked for the notorious Joseph A. “Jack” Slade. P.69.2078



# Buffalo Bill's fight against Wyoming's outlaws, part 2



Whether stories told in Buffalo Bill's autobiography are actually true is often a subject of debate for historians. A band of outlaws robbing a stagecoach is pictured in this illustration from Cody's book — probably a composite of numerous such incidents.

captors by using a clever ruse: he claimed the need to tend to his horse, which he left back at his campsite. Two outlaws accompanied Buffalo Bill back to his campsite to get his horse and sage hens. While the three men trekked back to the dugout, Buffalo Bill intentionally dropped one of the sage hens and asked the closest outlaw to pick it up. When the villain bent down to retrieve the bird, Buffalo Bill hit the outlaw over the head with his pistol and then shot and killed the other horse thief. Quickly mounting his horse, Buffalo Bill rode off into the darkness.

After hearing the shot, the remaining outlaws rode after the young adventurer. Buffalo Bill eluded the

outlaws, now dangerously close, by abandoning his horse and then setting off on foot back to Horseshoe Station, twenty-five miles away. After returning safely, Buffalo Bill and Slade rode back to the dugout to capture the rest of the horse thieves. There they found only an empty dwelling and a fresh grave with the body of the outlaw killed by Buffalo Bill. Cody later boasted that his "adventure at least resulted in clearing the country of horse thieves. Once the gang had gone, no more depredations occurred for a long time."

## The notorious Bill Bevins

According to Buffalo Bill's autobiography, the most infamous Wyoming bandit he encountered was Bill Bevins. Before the aggrandizement of other legendary outlaws like the Wild Bunch, Bill Bevins was one of the most notorious bandits in Wyoming, making him the perfect foil to Buffalo Bill as a lawman.

As Buffalo Bill told it, Bevins and another outlaw named Williams stole some horses and mules in 1869 from Fort Lyon on the eastern plains of Colorado. General Carr ordered Buffalo Bill, Bill Green, and others to retrieve the stolen livestock and bring the criminals to justice. The posse tracked the desperados to Denver where they arrested Williams, who was trying to sell the government mules at a horse auction with the government horses' brands altered from "US" to "DB." When the posse threatened Williams with lynching, he told the scouts the location of his camp where they would find Bevins. Buffalo Bill and his companions quietly surrounded the camp, then quickly surprised and captured Bevins.

Escorting the captured horse thieves back to Fort Lyon proved to be even more challenging for Cody and his fellow posse members. After traveling seventeen miles east of Denver, in the direction of Fort Lyon, the party camped on Cherry Creek for the night. To prevent Bevins and Williams from escaping, the outlaws' shoes were removed in camp. While Buffalo Bill and his companions slept, Williams kicked a guard into the campfire to give himself and Bevins a chance to escape. Bevins grabbed his shoes and ran off into the darkness. Buffalo Bill, awakened by the noise, managed to confuse Williams, preventing his escape.



Bevins had a knack for escaping captors — even running barefoot in the snow. Buffalo Bill said, “I considered him as ‘game’ a man as I have ever met.” Cody claimed that upon his capture, Bevins requested Cody’s knife to dig the cactus quills from his bare feet.

Green chased after Bevins, firing his pistol at the fleeing outlaw which caused Bevins to drop one of his shoes. Buffalo Bill and Green then mounted their horses and set out to find Bevins, who, despite having only one shoe, managed to cover a great distance through the plains covered with snow and infested with prickly pear cactus. Buffalo Bill later recalled that nearly every one of Bevins’ tracks was spotted with blood.

Cody also said, “Bevin’s run was the most remarkable feat of the kind ever known, either of a white man, or an Indian. A man who could run barefoot in the snow eighteen miles through a prickly pear patch was certainly a ‘tough one,’ and that is the kind of person Bill Bevins was . . . I considered him as ‘game’ a man as I have ever met.”

Once in range, “I told him to halt or I would shoot,” recalled Buffalo Bill. “He knew I was a good shot and coolly sat down to wait for us.” After being caught, the outlaw

requested Buffalo Bill’s knife and proceeded to dig out the cactus quills from the bottom of his bare foot. Buffalo Bill and Green switched off riding one horse and offered the other to Bevins, who reportedly never complained about his poor condition the whole way back to camp.

After joining the rest of the posse with the recaptured Bevins, they continued on their way to Fort Lyon. On the Arkansas River, the posse and their prisoners camped in a vacant cabin. Due to Bevins’ poor condition, the guards relaxed their vigilance, and Williams managed to escape into the night, never to be seen again.

When he reached Fort Lyons with Bevins, Buffalo Bill escorted the prisoner to Bogg’s Ranch on Picket Wire Creek and turned him over to the civil authorities. But Bevins quickly escaped—not to Buffalo Bill’s surprise—and continued to plague the area with his crimes. Buffalo Bill wrote in his autobiography that “I heard no more of [Bevins] until 1872, when I learned that he was skirmishing around on Laramie Plains [southeast Wyoming] at his old tricks. He sent word . . . that if he ever met me again he would kill me on sight.”

## Bevins reappears

Cody summed up the later career of Bevins this way, “He finally was arrested and convicted for robbery and was confined in the prison at Laramie City [present day Laramie, Wyoming]. Again he made his escape, and soon afterward, he organized a desperate gang of outlaws . . . when the stages began to run between Cheyenne and Deadwood [South Dakota] . . . they robbed the coaches and passengers, frequently making large hauls of plunder . . . finally most of the gang were caught, tried and convicted, and sent to the penitentiary for a number of years. Bill Bevins and nearly all of his gang are now confined in the Nebraska state prison, to which they were transferred, from Wyoming.”

Prison records and other historical sources verify Buffalo Bill’s account of Bevins’ later criminal career. On August 13, 1876, near Fort Halleck, Wyoming, Bevins and Herman Lessman, a well-known horse thief, attacked Robert Foote, a prominent rancher. Bevins pinned Foote to the ground and choked him until Mrs. Foote began hitting Bevins with a large stick. When Bevins grabbed for Mrs. Foote, her screams alerted a neighbor who rushed to the scene causing Bevins and Lessman to run away. Law officials captured Bevins near Fort Fetterman, Wyoming, and transported him to the Albany County jail in Laramie to await trial.

While waiting for a court appeal, Bevins escaped with three other prisoners aided by "Pawnee Liz," a local prostitute, who sawed through the bars on the cell window. Bevins soon found his way to the Black Hills where he joined Clark Pelton to form a gang of road agents and robbed three Cheyenne-Deadwood stagecoaches. One robbery resulted in the unfortunate death of Johnny Slaughter, a stagecoach guard.

### Did Calamity Jane enter the picture?

Bevins later fell on hard-times because of a woman of bad character, who some historians claim was Calamity Jane. It is reported that Bevins and Calamity Jane lived as husband and wife, and she rode with his Black Hills gang.

After they fled from the Black Hills to Wyoming, the woman later identified as Calamity Jane overheard Bevins and the other gang members threatening to kill fellow outlaw Robert McKimie who was then buying supplies at

South Pass City. When McKimie returned, Calamity Jane informed him of the band's murderous intentions.

When he learned of the plot, McKimie and the woman rode off with the gang's \$8,000 in plundered gold dust acquired from the stagecoach robberies. This left Bevins with nothing to show for his crimes except a pocket watch he stole from a passenger. During his search for McKimie and the so-called woman of bad character, Bevins was recaptured in Lander, Wyoming, on July 6, 1877, as he ate his dinner.

Albany County Sheriff Daniel Notage escorted Bevins back to the Albany County jail to be sentenced for the attack on Foote. Bevins attempted to escape again by digging a tunnel under the floor. He followed this escape attempt with a successful getaway only to be trapped again and brought back to stand trial. The judge sentenced Bevins to serve eight years in the Wyoming Territorial Prison at Laramie for attacking Robert Foote; he was never tried for the stagecoach robberies.

On August 6, 1877, William Bevins became inmate number 141 at the Wyoming Territorial Prison. Prison records indicate Bevins was 39 years old and he listed his occupation as a farmer. It was noted that his mother lived in Ohio, and he had an uncle who lived at Hat Creek, Wyoming. On February 9, 1877, Bevins was transferred to the Nebraska State Prison where he remained until his release on March 12, 1883, serving five years and seven months.

### Frank Grouard

Surprisingly, Frank Grouard, famed army scout and close acquaintance of Buffalo Bill's, was a friend of Bevins. In the account of his life written by Joe Debarthe, Grouard offered a different perspective of the infamous outlaw.

Grouard met Bevins in the 1860s during the Montana Gold Rush, where Bevins was shot and cut eighteen times for "winning" \$120,000 at the poker tables. In the Black Hills region, Grouard nearly arrested Bevins a number of times for stealing horses and robbing stagecoaches, but he would always let him go "on account of his being so friendly to me in my boyhood when I met him at Helena years before."

In 1886, Grouard met Bevins for the last time, and the former outlaw didn't have a penny to his name. Grouard reported that Bevins died in Spearfish, South Dakota, shortly after their last meeting. "Bevins was between 45 and 50 years old at the time of his death," according to Grouard. "He was an odd man, anyway you could take him.



Cabinet photograph of Martha Jane "Calamity Jane" Cannary, ca. 1896. George W. Potter, Livingston, Montana. P.69.2177





One wonders if fact became legend or vice versa with Cody's Wild West — such as the action-packed drama around the “famous” Deadwood stagecoach, here pictured in the show, ca. 1900. Buffalo Bill claimed the coach was a refurbished stagecoach that had indeed been robbed on the Cheyenne — Deadwood route, later attacked by Indians, and then abandoned alongside the trail where he reclaimed it. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. George Strobel. P.6.59

He would do anything for a friend. He was a perfect type of the western hard man of his time.”

## Sizing things up

Many historians question the accuracy of Buffalo Bill’s autobiography. Unfortunately, many of the events he narrated cannot be verified by outside historical sources. This includes his accounts of his first Indian kill and his service in the Pony Express. In addition, Cody’s account of Bevins’ capture and his barefoot escape does not appear in the Colorado papers; however, the *Colorado Transcript* did report that Bill Green was in “this part of the country on duty, accompanying Bill Cody, Gen. Carr’s chief of scouts.”

Cody’s autobiographical account of Bevins’ later life is fairly close in detail to other accounts depicting Bevins as a shady character with the uncanny ability to escape from justice. Did Buffalo Bill select Bevins to be the

perfect foil in a fictional account of his capture? As with so many historical “myth versus fact” questions, we simply may never know. Until other historical records are uncovered, the answer will remain unclear. ■

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*Professor Jeremy Johnston is a descendant of John B. Goff, a hunting guide for President Teddy Roosevelt. Johnston grew up hearing many a tale about Roosevelt’s life and times. In 2006, Johnston was one of the first recipients of a Cody Institute for Western American Studies research fellowship at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center and is currently in the midst of a second fellowship. He’s been teaching Wyoming and western history at Northwest College in Powell, Wyoming, since 1994, and writes and speaks about Wyoming and the American West in many contexts. “Outlaws” is his third contribution to Points West.*



# Byways, boats and buildings: Yellowstone Lake in history, part 4

By Lee H. Whittlesey



Lake Hotel can be seen from vantage points all around the lake, including this one from the water itself. Jeff Shrin photo, June 2008.

*Lee Whittlesey's manuscript of Yellowstone Lake, of which this is the final installment, was prepared last year to present the history of the lake area as the National Park Service plans a renovation of the site on the north shore. As Whittlesey puts it, "Accordingly, a history of the Lake Village was and is needed in order to provide background for how the present facilities and roadways came to be." While there were many interesting buildings along the lake over the decades, this chapter takes special note of Lake Hotel—the grand hotel that can be seen today from nearly every vantage point around the lake.*

## Early structures at Yellowstone Lake

Buildings existed in the lake area as early as 1875, and probably earlier. Indians frequented the shores of Yellowstone Lake during the summertime prior to the park's establishment in 1872. In his 1880 annual report, Superintendent P.W. Norris mentioned the existence of "skin-covered lodges or circular upright brush heaps called wickeups [*sic*], decaying evidences of which are abundant near . . . the shores of Yellowstone Lake."

Even before that, a July 4, 1872, issue of the *New York Herald* declared that the Yellowstone country was already a great place to visit, touting "a night's lodging in the virgin woods near Yellowstone Lake, where the air is fresh from heaven, and where they have a delicious frost every night in the year." The next year the *New York Times* proclaimed that "it is only necessary to make the Park easily

accessible to make it the most popular Summer resort in the country."

In 1887, the Yellowstone Park Association established a primitive tent camp in the vicinity of what would become Lake Hotel. So far almost nothing has surfaced about this tent camp and its operation, but apparently it operated during the seasons of 1881–1890. W.W. Wylie established a similar camp that same year according to early visitors. Thus, there were evidently two tent camps operating at Lake during those four years. The Wylie camp remained in operation continuously through 1916, when it became the Yellowstone Park Camping Company. In 1919, Lake Lodge was built on the Wylie site.

## Lake Hotel

But Lake Hotel is probably the most recognizable structure on Yellowstone Lake today. Construction began in 1889 and was completed in 1891. The Yellowstone Park Association, a corporation that was owned and operated by the Northern Pacific Railroad, chose the site. At that time, the hotel was less visible from vantage points around Yellowstone Lake because it stood in a thickly forested spot. (Today, those trees are gone and this openness makes the hotel more easily visible from other places around the lakeshore than it was in early days.)

Lake Hotel—where the price of a room was \$4 per night and dropped to \$3 after six days—was originally a "nondescript clapboard" building, erected merely to appease



Early photo of the Lake Hotel entrance, date unknown. National Park Service (NPS) photo.

the need for overnight accommodations. Because it was cheaply and not skillfully built, repairs were necessary in 1894 and 1897, and in 1900, the entire building was re-plastered, repainted, and re-calcimined.

The big renovation in 1903–1904 was designed by, and its construction overseen by, architect Robert Reamer at the same time his crews were building the new Old Faithful Inn forty miles away. The new look gave the hotel the colonial styling that it still has today. With its elegant changes, the hotel quickly was styled the “Lake House” or the “Lake Colonial Hotel,” but in time the name reverted to Lake Hotel. A 1911 Union Pacific Railroad brochure rhapsodized about Lake Hotel:

The Colonial Lake Hotel, situated on the north shore of this grand mountain lake, overlooks the lake nearly 8,000 feet above sea level. Snow-capped mountains surrounding it are very attractive. The Colonial Hotel is modern in every way and has more than 250 rooms, many with private bath. A more restful place cannot be found in the park. Launches and row boats are ever at command, and the best of fishing is found in the lake outlet. Those having time usually stop an extra day at this hotel, while many remain here the greater part of the season.

## Passing the time at Lake Hotel

At Lake, visitors engaged generally in quiet activities. One of the things to do there, besides walking along the lake shore or going fishing or boating, was to visit the dump behind the hotel in order to see bears feeding on garbage. In 1891, a visitor experienced what was probably the very first year of the dump’s existence and recorded an early episode of the long abuse of park bears by park employees:

Off we go, walking, running, flying through those woods in the direction of that bear. There he is! A fine two year old animal, up a tree, with two coach drivers [Joe and Hicks] after him with a rope, and a third driver, in a neighboring tree, prodding him down with a long, heavy pole. It is a holiday for those bold young drivers, and they have been after that bear since early morning. How they enjoy the sport; tis fun for all but the poor bear, who does not dare to come down among the crowd . . . Now look out drivers, if he gets near enough to strike a blow with his paw, it will be many a day before you will manage a four-in-hand [stagecoach]. Up he goes, like a flash, [on] one side of the tree, and “Joe” is clinging to the other side, not two feet away. When the danger is over, a lady’s voice rings out sharp and clear, “Joe, you come down, don’t you let that bear eat you. . .”

One visitor was badly mauled there by a bear in 1902 when he attempted to pet a bear cub right in front of its mother. In 1903, Mrs. N.E. Corthell saw “women in party silks and loaded with diamonds” strutting out to watch the bears feeding.

In 1922–1923, architect Reamer added a four-story extension to the east side of Lake Hotel that contained 122 bedrooms and sixty-six bathrooms. Workmen encountered a geologic obstruction in the ground — a huge rock — and compensated for it by building the wing at a three-degree angle from the original structure. At the same time, Reamer replaced the hotel’s dining room, remodeled the kitchen, and added a fireplace and mantel to the lobby, with a mesh spark screen decorated with pine tree ornamentation. He also converted the space over the old dining room into



Tourists visiting the Fountain Hotel garbage dump in 1899, J. Clumm, NPS photo.



what the company soon called the “Presidential Suite,” probably as much for company president Harry Child to stay there as for later U.S. presidents such as Calvin Coolidge and Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Reamer’s last renovations to Lake Hotel occurred in 1928–1929, when he enclosed a portion of the hotel’s *porte cochere* to provide a larger lobby and built a new *porte cochere* farther east. He also added the hotel’s large one-story lounge—a solarium-type room with a grand piano—extending toward Yellowstone Lake, seventy new light fixtures, and a wall-hung drinking fountain to the right of the fireplace.

In 1927, President Calvin Coolidge stayed in the Lake Hotel, probably in the “Presidential Suite” that Robert Reamer had added. Park Superintendent Horace Albright met “Silent Cal” in the new lounge overlooking Yellowstone Lake. “After a lengthy silence,” wrote Albright, the president “said he had come to a decision. I hoped it was about my suggestion for adding the lovely Teton mountain area to Yellowstone or some such vital question. Not so. Coolidge stated that he wanted to change the itinerary to stay one more day at Lake Hotel so he could take in a new fishing area that sounded good.”

## Closed for war . . . and Depression

World War I caused company officials to keep Lake Hotel closed during the seasons of 1918 and 1919. Workmen began repairs to the hotel in late 1919 that included adding a covered entry to the front of the hotel and a concrete walk to replace the wooden porch. The hotel reopened in 1920.

During the Great Depression, company officials closed Lake Hotel from 1932 through 1936. It reopened in 1937 after receiving new shingles on its roof and a new coat of its familiar yellow paint. At the same time, the hotel’s boilers—which originally powered the steamboat *E.C. Waters*—were converted to oil. In 1940, workmen removed the north wing of the hotel and began construction of cottages there similar to the ones at Mammoth Hotel. However, because of decreased travel and rationing of resources during World War II, officials closed the hotel again from 1942 through 1946.

## Lake Hotel today

Before long, the old Yellowstone Park Company had allowed Lake Hotel and many other park facilities and services to become greatly rundown. During the 1950s, the company even considered razing the hotel, but decided instead to renovate 133 rooms in the east wing, as well as

the kitchen and dining room. They also changed the first floor decor to “birch veneer moderne,” giving the hotel a starkness that was characteristic of that decade and which essentially lasted until 1984.

TWA Services, Inc., which took over the park hotel concessions in November 1979, was committed to great improvements at Lake Hotel. Thus, during the period 1980–1984, the new company, in partnership with the National Park Service, engaged in a thorough remodeling of Lake Hotel, restoring it, as historian Tim Manns noted, “to what we’d like to think of as the 1920s.” In 1991, the hotel celebrated its 100th anniversary with a gala costume ball.

## Final word on Yellowstone Lake

When Dr. F.V. Hayden and his party arrived at Yellowstone Lake on July 28, 1871, he wrote:

The lake lay before us, a vast sheet of quiet water, of a most delicate ultramarine hue, one of the most beautiful scenes I have ever beheld. The entire party were [*sic*] filled with enthusiasm. The great object of all our labors had been reached, and we were amply paid for all our toils. Such a vision is worth a lifetime, and only one of such marvelous beauty will ever greet human eyes.

*Ever since humans first beheld Yellowstone Lake, it has had that same effect on travelers—and Lake Hotel has clearly played a significant role in the visitor experience. For those who’ve never toured Yellowstone National Park, check out [www.nps.gov/lyell](http://www.nps.gov/lyell) and begin planning your trip today. In addition, the Buffalo Bill Historical Center’s Draper Museum of Natural History is the perfect complement to the Yellowstone experience.* ■

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*A prolific writer and sought-after spokesman, Lee Whittlesey is the Yellowstone National Park Historian. His thirty-five years of study about the region have made him an unequivocal expert on the park. Whittlesey has a master’s degree in history from Montana State University and a law degree from the University of Oklahoma. Since 1996, he’s been an adjunct professor of history at Montana State University. In 2001, he received an Honorary Doctorate of Science and Humane Letters from Idaho State University because of his extensive writings—many available through the Buffalo Bill Historical Center store, Museum Selections—and long contributions to the park.*

*(A complete list of works cited is available from the editor.)*

# *A day in the life of a craftsman:*



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# Ken Siggins, Cody Western Artisan



Caption

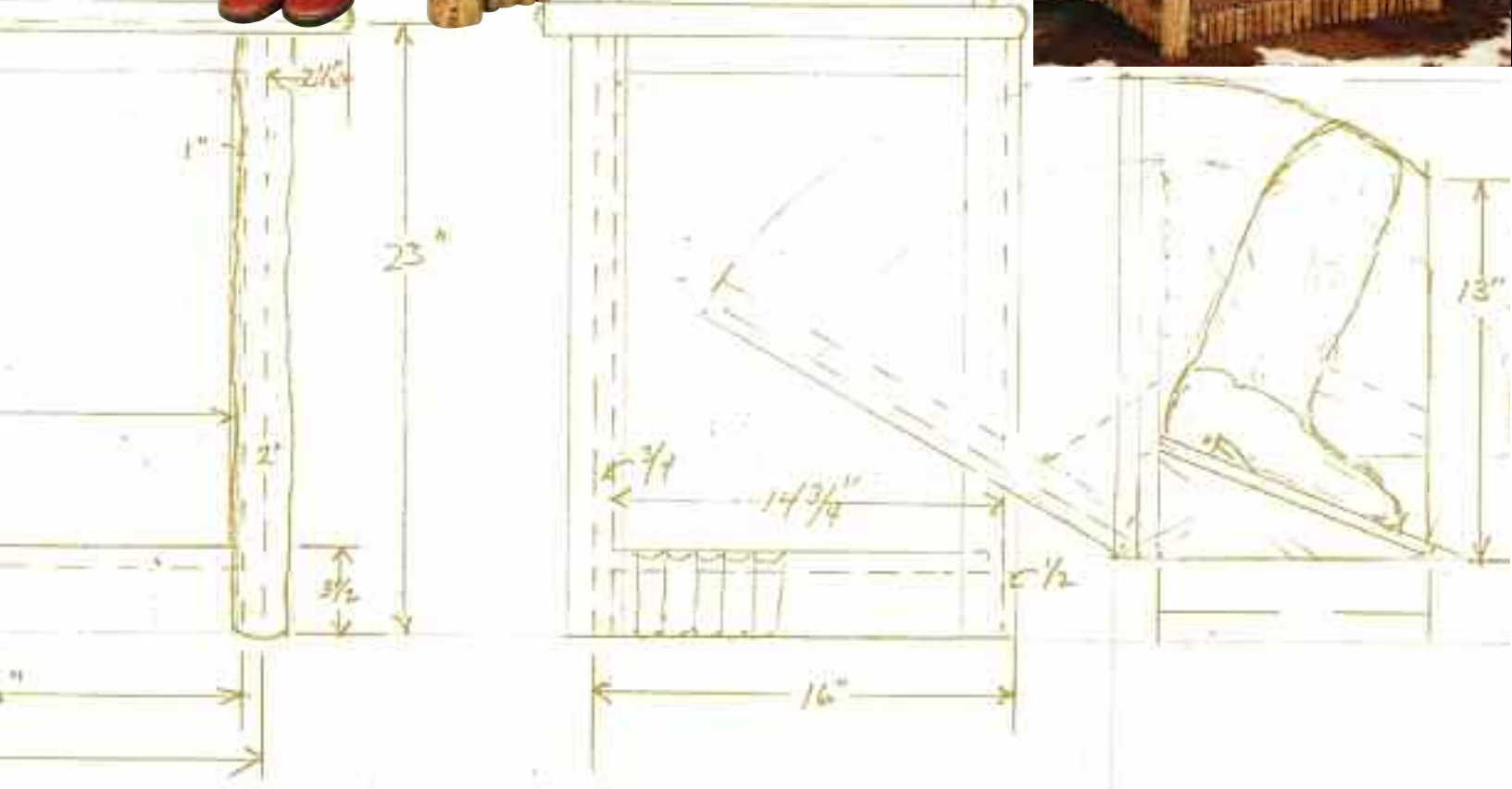


Caption



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# BBHC Bits & Bytes



The Cody Western Artisans banded together in 2007 to create an event to showcase what they called "Cody High Style: Designing the West." The group settled on a guiding principle that the show would "focus on presenting unique creations that honor western tradition and high-quality craftsmanship." Scheduled for September 23–27, 2008, the show includes a retrospective exhibition of furniture, the decorative arts, and fashion, as well as new work, and takes place in the special exhibitions area of the Buffalo Bill Historical center. For a complete list of exhibitors, visit our Web site, [www.codyhighstyle.org](http://www.codyhighstyle.org).

## Cody High Style

For just \$10 and a little bit of luck, you could own this custom-made miniature log house and all the furnishings, handcrafted by some of the premier western furniture makers in the region. The dollhouse-sized home (1 1/4-inch to 1-foot scale) that was designed, constructed, and furnished by members of the Cody Western Artisans, will be raffled off at 4 p.m., MST, December 6, 2008, at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center's Holiday Open House.

Tickets are available through the center's Web site at [www.bbhc.org/CodyHighStyle/Raffle.cfm](http://www.bbhc.org/CodyHighStyle/Raffle.cfm); or call 307.578.4098; or visit the admissions area of the historical center. All proceeds will benefit Cody High Style. Ticket holders must be 18 years or older to enter but need not be present to win. The winner will be responsible for any and all applicable taxes.



## *Rendezvous Royale:* *A Celebration of Arts in Cody, Wyoming*

**R**endezvous Royale is one of the hottest tickets in the Rocky Mountain region. From art and music to fashion and decorative arts, this western arts celebration combines three prestigious events: Cody High Style, the Buffalo Bill Art Show & Sale, and the Patrons Ball. A complete schedule with seminars, round-table discussions, lectures, exhibitions, trunk shows, artist demonstrations, and "Round Town Events" is available at [www.rendezvousroyale.org](http://www.rendezvousroyale.org). All events take place at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center unless otherwise noted. For more details about the events below, contact the center's events office, 307.578.4025.

- **August 28:** *Buffalo Bill Art Show Opening Reception*, 5 p.m. Free to the public. Show open to the public through September 26, 8 a.m.–5 p.m. daily
- **September 23:** *Cody High Style workshops*, 9:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.
- **September 24–27:** *Cody High Style Exhibition*. Free to the public, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- **September 24:** *Cody High Style Fashion Shows*: 5:30 & 7:30 p.m. Celebration of Arts Kick-off party. Free to the public, 7 p.m.
- **September 25:** *Cody High Style Studio Tour*, 9 a.m.
- **September 26:** *Buffalo Bill Art Show Studio Tour*, 9 a.m. Honored Artist Lecture, M.C. Poulsen. Free to the public, 2–3 p.m. *Rendezvous Royale Poster Signing*, 3–5 p.m. *Buffalo Bill Art Show & Sale Dinner & Auction*, 5 p.m.
- **September 27:** *Buffalo Bill Art Show & Sale Quick Draw*, 9 a.m. *31st Annual Buffalo Bill Historical Center Patrons Ball*, 6:30 p.m.

# CALENDAR of Events

For the latest information on BBHC programs and events, please see our Web site at [www.bbhc.org](http://www.bbhc.org) or call 307.587.4771. Unless otherwise noted, all events take place at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>The Whitney Gallery of Western Art will be closed for renovation until June 21, 2009, in preparation for the Whitney's 50th Anniversary Celebration.</p>  <p>Paul Manship (1885–1966), <i>Indian and Pronghorn Antelope</i>, 1914, bronze; Indian, height 13.5 inches; antelope, height 12.5 inches. Gift of the William E. Weiss Fund and Mr. and Mrs. Richard J. Schwartz, 3.89 a/b</p>		<p><b>Wyoming Sagebrush Ecosystem: Sage Grouse and Pronghorn</b> Brian Rutledge, 12:15 p.m. (free lunchtime expedition)</p> <p>7</p>	<p><b>CENTER HOURS</b> OCTOBER: 1–31 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. daily</p> <p>1 <b>October</b> 2</p> 			<p>CFM Records Office open 7 a.m. – 3 p.m. (MDT)</p> <p>4</p>
12	13	14			17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	1 <b>November</b>
2		4	5	6	7	8
						<p><b>Basic Photo Preservation</b> Megan Peacock 10 a.m. – Noon (pre-registration required /fee)</p>
						<p><b>CENTER HOURS</b> NOVEMBER 1 – MARCH 31 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Tues.–Sun.; closed Mondays</p>
						<p>CFM Records Office open 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. (MST)</p>
						<p>CFM Records Office open 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. (MST)</p> 





## Countdown for Whitney 50th Anniversary begins

An alcove is closed. Paintings are stored. Sculptures are moved. Planning is full-speed ahead for the renovation of the Whitney Gallery of Western Art.

While behind-the-scenes work has been going on for months, visitors got a taste of the “new Whitney” with the completion of the *Outdoor Sculpture Guide*, one of the first projects to celebrate the gallery’s 50th anniversary in 2009. Created by the gallery curatorial staff and the historical center’s education and graphics departments, the brochure is a self-guided walking tour of the grounds with each sculpture’s location marked on a map. A downloadable guide is also available on the center’s Web site, [www.bbhc.org/wgwa/index.cfm](http://www.bbhc.org/wgwa/index.cfm).

The Whitney Gallery will close October 1, 2008, as it gets ready to commemorate its 50th anniversary. It will re-open in June 2009 with special events, gallery renovations, publications, and a new artist’s studio.

## Field seminar on grizzly management

This fall, the Draper Museum of Natural History and its curator Charles R. Preston, PhD, partner with the Yellowstone Institute for a field seminar titled “The Human Dimensions of Grizzly Bear Management,” September 9 – 12, 2008. The seminar takes place at the Draper Museum as well as various field locations in the Cody area. The class fee is \$360 with enrollment limited to twelve participants. For more information, contact Sarah Richey at 307.344.5566 or see the Web site, [www.yellowstoneassociation.org](http://www.yellowstoneassociation.org).

## Points West an “e-zine?”

From last winter’s survey, we learned that almost 24 percent of our members spend more than six personal hours per week online. To take advantage of today’s technology, we are considering creating a secure, members-only page on our Web site. It might have transcripts of programs, breaking news, downloadable screensaver photos of our collections, Webcams from around the premises, and much more. To reduce costs, we could also make *Points West* available at this site. But first, we need to know how you feel. **If given the option, would you choose to read *Points West* online and not receive a printed copy?** Please contact us at [editor@bbhc.org](mailto:editor@bbhc.org) or by calling 307.578.4137. Those with e-mail addresses will receive this message in a special e-mail. If you respond to that message, there’s no need to reply a second time.

## Two board members pass on

The *Denver Post* called Cortlandt “Cort” Dietler “a serial entrepreneur” and said that “he is viewed in petroleum circles as a near-legendary figure who helped build Denver’s reputation as a major corporate energy center.” Dietler, also a trustee of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center for the last ten years, died July 10, 2008, in Denver; he was 86 years old.

He once said the key to his success was, “Staying out of jail. That’s helpful.” Ever the wit, he was also the consummate nice guy. The very generous Dietler won numerous industry and community awards throughout his life. He is survived by his wife of sixty years, Martha.

Warren Hunter, avid gun enthusiast and Cody Firearms Museum advisory board member since 1999, passed away on June 19, 2008, in Cody; he was 73. He earned a bachelor’s degree in engineering from the Colorado School of Mines and later was involved in a diverse range of construction projects from dams and atomic power plants to prisons and hotels. He is survived by his wife Rae.

## Historical center now a Smithsonian Affiliate

In June, the Buffalo Bill Historical Center became an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution. The partnership makes it possible for organizations across the country to access Smithsonian collections, programs, and expertise.

“The affiliation with the Smithsonian Institution is an important step that will help bring collections, scholars, and other resources of the nation’s museum to Cody and the Wyoming region,” Bruce Eldredge, the historical center’s executive director, says. “This designation is a first for a Wyoming museum, and we look forward to a significant relationship with the Smithsonian for years to come.”

In addition to borrowing objects, the center can incorporate Smithsonian educational resources into interpretive projects, lectures, traveling exhibitions, workshops, study tours, and other programs. Historical center employees can also participate in a variety of career development opportunities, and the center’s members are eligible for Smithsonian benefits.



## Smithsonian Institution Affiliations Program

For more information on our new affiliation, visit our Web site: [www.bbhc.org/museums/SmithsonianAffiliate.cfm](http://www.bbhc.org/museums/SmithsonianAffiliate.cfm)



# Yellowstone's burning issue: the fires twenty years later

By Charles R. Preston, PhD.



In the summer of 1988, scenes like this ground fire at the Madison River in Yellowstone National Park were alarmingly common. Deanna Marie Dulen, National Park Service (NPS) photo.

Twenty years ago, raging wildfires affected nearly 800,000 acres within the boundaries of Yellowstone National Park, and a total of more than two million acres throughout the Greater Yellowstone region. The flames also ignited a national debate about the causes and consequences of wildfire in natural systems and the fire management policy of the National Park Service. Mass media reports of the fires were peppered with the words “devastating,” “destroyed,” “disaster,” and “death,” referring to the effects of fires on the natural landscape and wildlife of Yellowstone. These words both represented and helped reinforce the general public’s perception of wildland fire as a terrible agent of mass destruction.

## An extreme landscape makeover

Certainly, wildfires like those seen in 1988 can devastate human activities, plans, and economies, and can destroy human life and property. But they are also as integral to the character of the Yellowstone landscape as are earthquakes, volcanoes, wind, and snowfall.

Fire is one of the major forces that has determined which plants and animals occupy the Greater Yellowstone region ever since the last great glaciers retreated. The lodgepole pine, Douglas fir, Engelmann spruce and sub-alpine fir forests that cover most of Yellowstone National Park and the surrounding landscape have been shaped and reshaped by fire for thousands of years. The age of the forest stand, tree species composition, and weather are critical elements that drive the timing and severity of fires.

In 1988, roughly one-third of Yellowstone’s forests were more than 250 years old. At this age, they were reaching a point where they were most vulnerable to natural, stand-replacing fires that would, in effect, perform an “extreme landscape makeover.” All that was needed to initiate the process was an especially dry, hot, windy summer.

## No hint of historic fire season

The spring of 1988 began with no hint of the factors necessary for a drastic makeover. April and May were wet months, with 155 and 181 percent, respectively, of normal



Reid Christie's oil painting, *Lamar Valley-1988*, captures a peaceful moment in Lamar Valley in northern Yellowstone before the fires spread. The casual observer, like the calmly grazing buffalo, may not recognize the significance of the billowing smoke clouds in the distance. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. W.D. Weiss. 12.98.1

rainfall recorded at Mammoth Hot Springs in the northwest corner of the park. Native grasses and other herbaceous plants formed a lush, green cover through much of the region.

But virtually no precipitation fell in June. Dry thunder-and-lightning storms moved across the region, igniting at least eighteen fires. In accordance with the park's fire management plan, these nature-caused fires were evaluated and allowed to burn. As is common with backcountry wildfires, eleven of these blazes burned themselves out; others continued to burn, but created no immediate threat to human life or property.

Even with June's dry weather, however, there was little reason to believe that a historic fire season was eminent. For example, in the fifteen years immediately prior to 1988, 84 percent of nature-caused fires allowed to burn in the park were naturally extinguished after burning less than five acres. Secondly, there was reason to expect some

relief from the dry June conditions because July had been a wet month in the preceding several years. The same was predicted for 1988. In fact, Mammoth Hot Springs recorded more than three times the normal July rainfall in 1987.

## The right ingredients for wildfire

However, 1988 was drastically different: It became the driest Yellowstone summer since recordkeeping began in 1886. Little rain fell in July, and by the middle of the month, the lush green grass of early summer and other plant cover had become dry and brown. Some standing and fallen dead timber registered less than 8 percent moisture content—lower than kiln-dried lumber! Winds and ambient temperatures also picked up, drying the vegetation further and injecting existing blazes with vigor.

By July 15, 1988, it became clear that conditions were ripe for a massive wildfire event. The park's natural fire policy was suspended, and no new naturally-caused fires were allowed to burn without challenge. Under fire management policy, human-caused fires were always suppressed.. An exception was made for lightning-caused fires that ignited near, and were burning into, existing fires.

Nonetheless, fires covered approximately 17,000 acres within the park by July 21, and all fires were being suppressed as fully as resources would allow. But the severe weather conditions (extremely dry, with little humidity even at night; high temperatures; high winds; and high fuel accumulation) presented insurmountable obstacles to fire containment. High winds sometimes blew sparks and firebrands a mile ahead of advancing flames, igniting new fires. This "spotting" phenomenon made the 1988 fires even more difficult to control or even contain.

## Wildfire tally

Eventually, more than \$120 million was spent fighting the fires, with



A firefighter covers a park structure with foam to protect it from the 1988 blaze. Jim Peaco, NPS photo.



roughly 25,000 people involved. More acres burned on August 20, 1988 (frequently called “Black Saturday”), than had burned in a single twenty-four-hour period during any decade since 1872. Core firefighting activities were focused on containment of the outer perimeters and on protecting lives and property. Despite all efforts, fires continued to advance inside and outside park boundaries until rain and snow began falling in September. Heavy snows finally extinguished the last of the flames in November.

The 1988 complex of blazes that affected Yellowstone National Park lands included forty-two fires caused by lightning and nine fires caused by humans. A total of 248 fires started throughout the Greater Yellowstone region in 1988. Of the 793,880 acres that burned inside park boundaries, an estimated 500,000 were affected by fires that began outside the park. The single largest of these, the North Fork fire, was ignited when a woodcutter just outside park boundaries tossed a smoldering cigarette into dry vegetation. That fire was fought from the outset, but it could not be suppressed.

Given the scope and duration of the 1988 Yellowstone fires, it is remarkable that only two fire-related human fatalities were reported. On September 12, Don Kuykendall died when the fire-crew transport plane he was piloting crashed on its return to Jackson, Wyoming. Bureau of Land Management employee Ed Hutton died on October 11 when a falling tree struck him during cleanup operations in the Shoshone National Forest. The fires destroyed between sixty-five and seventy park structures, and most of these were replaced or rehabilitated by the end of 1989.



Larry Mayer of the *Billings Gazette* and Ranger Mike Beater confer at Norris Geyser Basin on “Black Saturday,” August 20, 1988. Jeff Henry, NPS photo.



At least 350 elk died as a direct result of the 1988 fires. NPS photo.

## Wildfire and wildlife

In addition, the fires affected different species of animals and plants in various ways and on different time scales. Dead trees left standing provided nest sites for open-country, cavity-nesting birds such as mountain bluebirds. These tree snags also provided ideal hunting perches with panoramic views for many raptors. On the other hand, birds and mammals of old-growth forests, such as boreal owls and American martens, saw their habitat decline with the fires.

At least 350 elk, 36 deer, 12 moose, 6 black bears, and 9 bison died as an immediate and direct consequence of the fires. During the winter following the fires, most ungulates (hoofed animals) suffered higher-than-average mortality. Wildlife biologists attributed the increased mortality for mule deer and pronghorn more to the extreme summer drought and severe winter of 1988–1989 than to the fires, as their winter range was not affected significantly by the fires. It remains unclear what percentage of increased elk mortality could be attributed to the fires. Summer drought, severe winter weather, high herd density, and higher-than-average hunter harvest all probably played some role in the 40-percent mortality rate in the elk population that year.

Bald eagles, ravens, bears, and small carnivores no doubt benefited from the boon of ungulate carcasses during the winter and spring after the fires. Many raptor and medium-to-small carnivore species also likely benefited from less ground cover to hide rodents and other small mammal prey in the first seasons following the fires.

The distribution of grizzly bear foraging activity changed interestingly

in the years immediately following the fires. Bears spent more time foraging on plants in burned than unburned areas and spent as much as 63 percent less time foraging in some whitebark pine areas affected by fire. Overall, grizzly bear numbers showed no clear response to the 1988 fires.

The moose is the only large mammal to exhibit a long-term decline in, presumably in response to the fires. These fires killed large expanses of spruce and fir, a critical source of winter forage for moose. Given suitable climatic conditions, these spruce-fir stands may again dominate some Yellowstone landscapes through the natural process of forest succession. But in the meantime, most of the open, burned sites formerly covered by spruce-fir provide more suitable conditions for early colonization by lodgepole pine.

## A new forest

Many of the forests that burned in 1988 have already been colonized or repopulated by lodgepole pine seedlings along with a wide diversity of grasses and other non-woody plants. The distribution and growth rate of lodgepole pine following a fire depends on the severity of the burn, soils, sun exposure, seed source, moisture availability, and other characteristics of the site. Many mature lodgepole pine trees produce cones that are sealed tightly by resin. These cones only open with high temperatures, releasing their seeds to the soil. Thus, pre-burn sites with a high number of pines containing these resin-sealed cones contain an excellent seed source following a fire.

Lodgepole seedlings grow especially well in open areas with good exposure to sun. In some areas, the growing

lodgepole pines will eventually create shade for their own seedlings and give way to the more shade-loving spruce and fir trees. In this way, wildfire helps create a mosaic landscape covered by a patchwork of diverse plant communities of different ages and different species composition. Increased plant diversity supports increased animal diversity.

One big surprise that scientists discovered in the aftermath of the 1988 fires was that aspen trees sprang up from seeds in burned areas. This refuted the conventional wisdom that aspen clones in the Northern Rockies did not reproduce by seed, but instead only sprouted from roots of burned trees. In contrast to that opinion, seedling aspen stands became well-established in many areas far from the nearest known aspen clone.

Although they thrived in the first decade after the 1988 fires, many of these aspen stands have now failed. The current warm, dry climate may explain why these aspen seedlings have not survived. It might also help account for the general decline of aspen throughout Yellowstone and the Northern Rockies over the last eighty years or so. In addition, foraging pressure from the large ungulate population may play a role in the drop in the number of aspen stands.

## Twenty years later

Clearly, Yellowstone was not destroyed by the fires of 1988. The landscape and wildlife populations were reshaped by these and subsequent fires as they have been for thousands of years — a testimony to just how dynamic nature can be.



Some lodgepole pine cones are sealed tightly by resin, and only high heat can cause the cones to open and release seeds. The seedlings grow best in open, sunny areas. Ann Deutch, 1989. NPS photo.



Twenty years later, Yellowstone's landscape brims with abundant new life. Jeff Shrin photo, June 2008.





New vegetation — such as along the shore of Yellowstone Lake — is in bright contrast to the fires' charred remains. Jeff Shrin photo, June 2008.

Because wildfires carry enormous potential to harm human communities, management agencies walk a fine line between allowing natural processes to continue to shape wildland areas and protecting human life, property, and economies bordering wildlands. The current National Fire Plan, developed in part from information gleaned from the 1988 Yellowstone experience, emphasizes cooperation among federal agencies in managing wildland fires. It recognizes wildland fire as an essential ecological process and natural change agent which should be allowed to burn when safe to do so. On the other hand, the plan also calls for reduction of fuels as feasible and for aggressive and prompt suppression of fires that are considered a potential threat to human life and property.

Whether the scorching destiny that visited the Greater Yellowstone region in 1988 could have been changed significantly by more aggressive or more proficient fire-fighting before or after July 15, 1988, will no doubt be debated for decades to come. But twenty years after that fateful summer, wildfire is now widely recognized and accepted as a fundamental force of nature that shapes and reshapes the landscapes, wildlife, and human lifestyles of the Greater Yellowstone region. ■

*Charles R. Preston, PhD, is the Founding Curator of the Draper Museum of Natural History at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center. Prior to his present position, his career path included Chairman of the Department of Zoology at the Denver Museum of Natural History, Associate Professor of Biological Sciences at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, and adjunct faculty appointments in biology and environmental science at the University of Colorado (Boulder and Denver), environmental policy and management at the University of Denver, and biological sciences at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.*

*A zoologist and wildlife ecologist by training, Preston currently focuses his research on human dimensions of wildlife management and conservation in North America, especially the Greater Yellowstone region and the American West. A prolific writer, he has authored four books and more than sixty scholarly and popular articles on these subjects.*

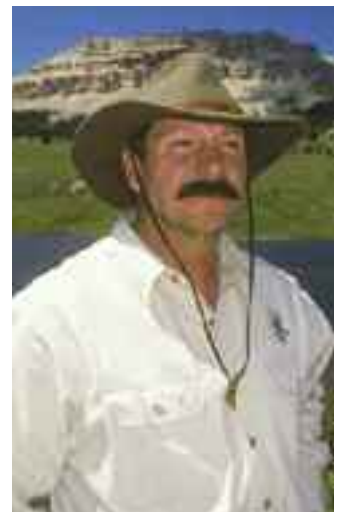
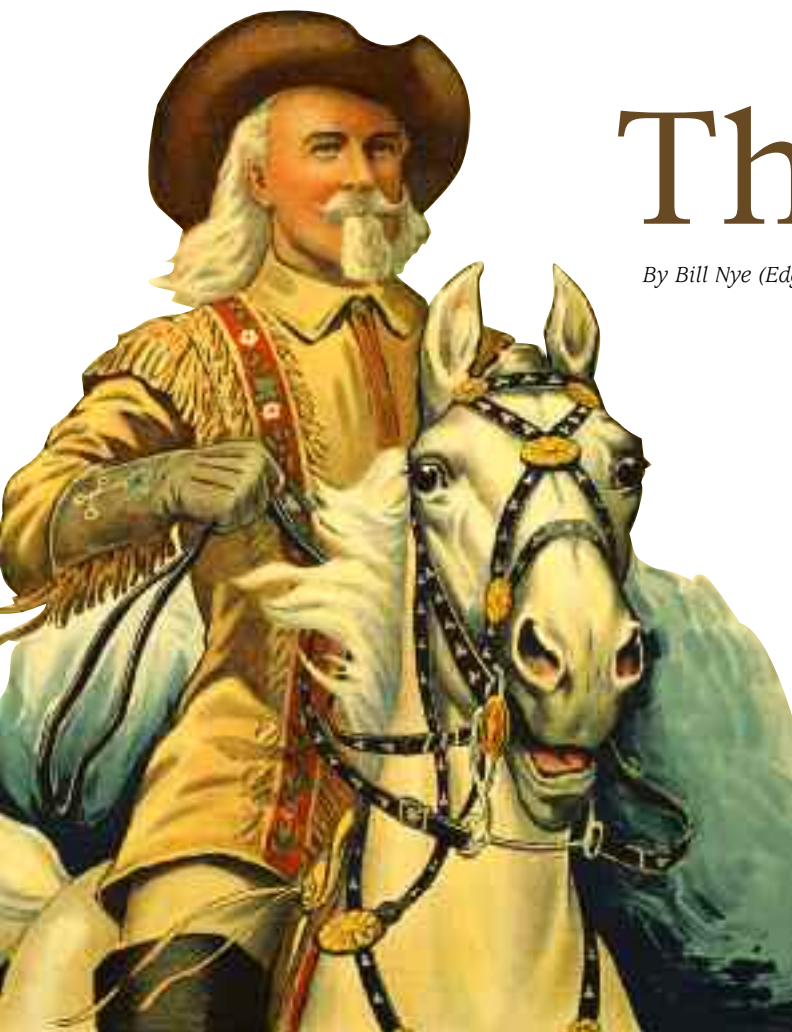


Photo courtesy C.R. Preston.



# The Cowboy

By Bill Nye (Edgar Wilson Nye), New York World, October 30, 1887

NEW YORK: The cable news from London would seem to indicate that the coming year will witness a large hegira [exodus] of armed goslings from England who intends to prosecute the cow gentlemen and Deadwood stage-robbing business on our frontier. It is perhaps unnecessary to state that Buffalo William, the peaceful and courteous hirsute [hairy] wonder from Nebraska, is largely responsible for this. Wherever he has gone with his eccentric, dark-red, self-made Indians and his speckled bronchos, he has sown the seeds of discontent in the grammar schools and bred open rebellion in the primary department.

Look along the red-hot trail of B. William and you will find the American and foreign youth alike turning with undisciplined loathing from his educational pursuits to immerse his legs in a pair of chaparajos, to wield the brief but stinging quirt, to whoop up the red-eyed, haughty and high-tailed Texan Maverick, or shoot large, irregular holes into the otherwise poorly ventilated savage.

And what is to be the result of all this? I do not ask it in a light or flippant manner, but in a tone of deepest solicitude.

Buffalo Bill is encircling the earth with his Wild West show. Everywhere the fever follows his performances. Wherever he goes, high-heeled boots, lariats, tarantula juice, and hair rise to a fictitious value. Boys leave the farm to follow the show away. Picnics lose their flavor and seem flat. Climbing a shag-bark tree to fasten a swing does not seem so

daring a feat as it used to. The custard pie vainly beckons to the young man who is near-sighted and who wears lavender pantaloons to come and sit on it. In the rural district, the watermelon ripens and goes to decay, and petty larceny everywhere seems tame, dull, and flabby. No one wants to steal wealth unless it has gore and hair on it. Dollars or watermelons that can be taken without walking over a corduroy road of dead bodies seem hardly worth taking . . .

And so it is likely to continue while Mr. Bill is on his wild, whooping, shrieking, and Coliseum-storming career. After awhile, it will not be the British Isles alone that will contribute to our languishing frontier cemeteries, but

Buffalo Bill looking dapper on a white horse was exactly the kind of influence Bill Nye rebuked in 1887. Sells Foto Circus, ca. 1914. Erie Litho and Painting Co., Erie, PA. Lithograph, poster (detail), 36.625 x 26.875 inches. Original Buffalo Bill Collection. 1.69.449

*In January of this year, Dr. John Rumm started trailing William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody down some proverbial long-and-winding roads. As Editor-in-Chief of the Digital Buffalo Bill Project at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center, he's discovered many new insights into the life and times of the "Great Showman."*

*This one, from nineteenth-century American humorist Bill Nye — who, in 1881, founded and edited the Laramie Daily Boomerang in Laramie City, Wyoming Territory—has an unexpected twist as Nye, ostensibly perhaps, worries how the world's youth will be affected by Buffalo Bill's Wild West. The subheadings read: "Bill Nye Fears an Incursion of European Amateurs," "Baleful Effects of Buffalo Bill's Show on Old-World Youth," and "The Real and the Ideal Cowboy Contrasted to the Latter's Disadvantage." Granted, the language is certainly not always "politically correct" by twenty-first century standards, but for 1887, it was commonplace.*

**"Buffalo Bill is encircling the earth with his Wild West show. Everywhere the fever follows his performances. Wherever he goes, high-heeled boots, lariats, tarantula juice, and hair rise to a fictitious value."**



# Scourge (1887 Commentary)

saturated with a wild desire to snort across the American plains and provide themselves with Indian Pocahontases, the youth of all lands and all climes will buy wide, white, soft hats, fur pantaloons, with lambrequins [decorative draped cloth] down the sides; the low, gruff-voiced American revolver, with the dry, hacking cough; the noisy and voluminous Mexican spur and the foundering mustang, with one white eye and the gift of appearing to go like a cyclone, while really making mighty poor time. Then they will invade our Western borders and there will not be an Indian apiece for them by next spring.

Already there are not stages enough to rob unless the mail service should be expedited this winter, and unless we can work in the Tantivy [gallop] or have an occasional attack on our fox hunters by the Anglo-and-Clyde-built cowboys, any one can see that we are going to run short of out-door sports. . .

Gentle reader, we stand before the crumbling brink of a great cowboy eruption from England, Ireland, Scotland, the Continent, and the great Orient itself. I do not think that Buffalo Bill had any idea when he started in to rehearse his great society drama and horse play that it would so soon disturb international relations and throng our cactus forests and greasewood vineyards with juvenile cowboys from Greenland's icy mountains and India's coral strands. If he had, he would have hesitated about it. Now, alas! It is too late. He is billed for the Coliseum, and already people from Syrsilla are coming into town, bringing their dinners and hitching their teams up to the fence behind the Coliseum.

Hard, blue preserved seats, I am told, are being erected around the main amphitheatre, and the Roman schools are closed. Everything points toward a great festal day, if that would be the right kind of day to use in this place.



In this ca. 1886–1887 photograph, nine cowboys from Buffalo Bill's Wild West show are pictured in their western finery. Nye contended their glamorous life on the road with the show would lead youth astray. P.6.86

Is it to be wondered at that we will soon see Roman cowboys, who ought to be in school, landing here on our coasts and inquiring at the corner of Broadway and Chambers street where they can find an Indian outbreak to quell? May we not look for the Asian and Chinese contingent by next spring, armed to the teeth, and asking at an intelligence office where the Deadwood stage is expected, so they can attack it and rob it a few times?

Yet who but Colonel Cody would have thought of going to the four corners of the earth with such a show? Who but he would have hired the Coliseum after its long, dull, and disastrous season? Now, however, that he has opened the way it will be no doubt the beginning of an era of prosperity for that great place of amusement, and the Wild West show will be followed very likely by stereopticon entertainments and a humorous lecture. In that way, Buffalo Bill is a benefactor, for the long and painful silence that has settled down for centuries about the galleries and dim foyers of the Coliseum will be broken and the thrilling tones of "Curfew shall not ring tonight" will jar the chinking out of the crumbling walls, that in years past resounded with the applause of the Roman populace as Spartacus told the people that he was not always thus. . .

I can see that in a dramatic way, Buffalo Bill has opened up a new route, besides starting towards America a perfect swarm of amateur cowboys who dare to cross the plains and rescue a beautiful young lady who is walking from Julesburg to Walla Walla wearing a *perle francaise* dress, the front veiled with Hoboken "rick-rack," pompadour panels of crème A-shaped *faille francaise*,

*en bouffant*, lined with oyster velvet and edged with heavy elephant's breath silk curd, while in the V-shaped corsage rustles a large bunch of Marshal O'Neil roses.

I saw one of these kindergarten cowboys get off a train once and go up through the town. Afterwards, I saw him come back. He looked different somehow. When he got off at the station I noticed that he had long hair, which was tied back with a pale blue watered silk ribbon. He had long legs, which seemed to extend from his Adam's apple to the ground. A narrow, red four-in-hand necktie denoted where the legs terminated and the head began.

## He Looked Real Sweet

When he took the return train, there was nothing by which to identify him except a strawberry mark, which he carried carefully concealed in a shawl strap.

Boys who sigh to dash madly across the plains or follow the cowpath to fame do not know of the dangers and desolation such a life involves. There are two classes of cowboys in the West, viz [namely], the working cowboy and the lay-figure cowboy. The latter remains in town and rolls cigarettes which he smokes fiercely through his nose. He talks learnedly of cattle brands, corrals, round-ups, "cavvy [horse string] yards," ranges, bands, bronchos and herds, but doesn't really know a range cow from a Texas steer.

The genuine cowboy is not always beautiful, but he is conversant with his business; knows every brand in his district at least and who owns it; is brave where bravery is most needed, that is, in the discharge of his duty. To stand watch all night in a blizzard and hold a band of restless, bellowing cattle from stampeding, to ride all the next day half asleep in his saddle, to fall occasionally from his pony, when the latter makes a mistake and steps in a prairie-dog village, or to have a collar-bone broken when fifty miles from a physician, are some of the features of cowboy life, which the boys who run from school to cross the Missouri do not consider.

Moreover, it would be well if every boy in America or elsewhere would write in his own hat with a blue pencil that there is no rose-bordered road to success, and that even the man who is born beautiful and marries rich has to fight his way. The great West does not so sorely need pretty men with buckskin clothes as it does good citizens who are willing to work. Wherever the sun shines or grass grows and water runs, the young man who will give a good day's work for a fair day's wages will surely be promoted as he deserves it. It may not be funny, but it is the never-dying truth that industry, integrity, and perseverance are mighty good substitutes for symmetry, genius, and hair. ■



The Wild West certainly had all the trappings of excitement and drama. Here Buffalo Bill shoots glass targets from horseback as a second cowboy tosses the balls, ca. 1908. Original Buffalo Bill Museum Collection. P.69.3





# Buffalo Bill papers project

When Dr. John Rumm arrived at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center earlier this year, he freely admits he didn't know much about Buffalo Bill. But all that changed in the last few months as Rumm, editor-in-chief of the Digital Buffalo Bill Project, became immersed in the life and times of William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody.

The project came about in early 2007, as the Wyoming State Legislature appropriated \$300,000 to launch the "Papers of William F. Cody," an initiative to locate, edit, and publish documentation on the life and times of William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody. Other donors provided matching funding, and the \$600,000 total moved the project into high gear rather quickly, including hiring Rumm. The undertaking represents the nation's first major project to focus on a leading icon of American popular culture.

As editor-in-chief, Rumm was tasked with providing strategic vision, developing interpretive tools and framework, and producing content for the project. One of the first things Rumm did was to re-christen the initiative "The Digital Buffalo Bill Project," a name that, according to Rumm "signifies how ours is one of the first documentary editing projects to exist as 'born-digital.'" In other words, from the beginning, the project's materials will be available electronically first, rather than being digitized after publication in book form."

For Rumm, much of the delight has come from discoveries he's made that provide fresh insights into Cody's character. One early find, for example, was a fragment of what he believes is Cody's initial draft of his autobiography, which was published in 1879. "People have debated for years whether or not Cody actually 'wrote' his autobiography himself, or whether a ghost-writer produced it. Judging from this fragment, I'm pretty confident he produced the initial draft himself," Rumm concludes. In addition, he collected humorist Bill Nye's "The Cowboy

Scourge," which appears on the preceding pages.

A prolific writer and lecturer, Rumm earned his bachelor degree in history of science and technology from Ohio State University and his master's degree in history of technology and American History from the University of Delaware. There he also received a certificate in museum studies and earned his doctorate in American History.

Prior to his arrival in Cody, Rumm served in a number of diverse capacities, including executive positions with several museums and historical organizations — including the Smithsonian Institution — as well as a reference archivist, an adjunct instructor of history at several colleges, a field historian, and an editorial assistant with the Thomas Edison Papers at the Edison National Historical Site in West Orange, New Jersey.

However, no sooner had Rumm become adept at trailing William F. Cody through history, when he was named acting curator of the center's Buffalo Bill Museum — making him all the more occupied with the life and times of the Great Showman. Since that appointment, Dr. Gretchen Adams, assistant professor of history at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, will take on the Digital Buffalo Bill editor-in-chief duties.

"I've always liked the quote by novelist Henry Miller: 'One's destination is never a place, but rather a new way of looking at things,'" Rumm observes. "Coming back to the West after being away for so long — I lived in New Mexico as a child — has been eye-opening for me. And nothing has been more eye-opening or engaging than to look at the western experience through the eyes of Buffalo Bill." ■



Dr. John Rumm



The Digital Buffalo Bill Project seeks all manner of materials about the legendary showman, William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody, including show programs, souvenirs, and newspaper accounts of Cody's Wild West show. Here he and the Indians in the cast are pictured along the beach near Cliff House, San Francisco, California, September 7-14, 1902. P.69.14

## **BUFFALO BILL MUSEUM:** **Annie Oakley's pillow cover**

This linen pillow cover was embroidered by Annie Oakley over the signatures of Wild West performers and friends. These signatures were added between the years 1887–1897 based on the dates included with several of them. Oakley used different colors of braided thread, similar to today's embroidery thread, to enhance the signatures; edged the entire cover with cord; and attached a pair of multi-colored tassels at each corner.



Annie Oakley pillow. Gift of Mr. Robert Smith. 1.69.2120

Among the well-known performers' signatures on the cover are Buffalo Bill, Jule Keen, and Johnnie Baker. Cody family members include J(ulia). A. Goodman and George Cody Goodman.

There are a number of other signatures that are not so easily identified. Several friends or acquaintances added the town of Rock Island, Illinois, after their names: William Alexander Johnson Thompson, F.A. Jones, M. Frances Thompson, Dr. Hawthorne, and a name that appears to be F.H. Greene. Davenport, Iowa, was also represented by Carl William Paulsen and Conrad Frederick Kruse. Unfortunately, the dates do not match the locations where the Wild West was performing at the time, so they are of no help. Still other friends chose to add their fraternity letters after their signatures such as Phi Delta Theta and Delta Tau Delta.

It remains a mystery how Oakley chose who should be on the pillow cover and why. Obviously, the Wild West performers were important to her, and perhaps at some later date, with research on another Annie Oakley topic, the mystery will be solved.

## **DRAPER MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY:** **Ferruginous hawk**

Natural history museum collections preserve a record of life on earth. Well-documented biological specimens are prepared according to strict standards and studied by scientists from around the world. Each of these specimens contains unique scientific information, and

research collections are therefore the most highly valued and carefully conserved materials in natural history museums.

Scientists may examine a specimen to document a number of characteristics of a given species, or specimens may be prepared as mounts for public exhibition and educational use. The preserved wings, talons, and skull of this ferruginous hawk (*Buteo regalis*) provide a good example of a specimen prepared for educational programming.

The broad wings of this hawk enable it to soar easily in open country, but limit its effectiveness in forested environments. The long, sharp talons and stout legs allow the ferruginous hawk to kill relatively large prey, including jackrabbits and cottontails. The sharp beak and large gape make it easy for this raptor to easily tear through flesh and bolt down large chunks of food. Participants in this summer's *Celebrating Raptors* program were able to handle such specimens to develop a greater connection with our natural world.



Ferruginous hawk. Scientific name: *Buteo regalis*. Received from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. NH.304.37

## **WHITNEY GALLERY OF WESTERN ART:** **Paxson's *Custer's Last Stand***

Edgar S. Paxson came to Montana in 1877, a year after the Battle of Little Bighorn. The artist was fascinated by the battle and said, "I will paint that scene . . . during my leisure hours. I kept dabbling with brush. Each day I saw some improvement." He was determined to paint the battle scene as accurately as possible, ". . . and for twenty years gathered data, sifted and resifted it, conversed with participants on either side, visited the scene, and became as familiar with the ground and the circumstances as with my own home." Paxson interviewed Plains Indian leaders, such as Rain-In-the-Face, Gall, and Sitting Bull, as well as ninety-six soldiers from the related campaign. He also contacted Edward S. Godfrey, a lieutenant in Captain



Benteen's force who witnessed the scene after the battle. About 1895, Paxson began his work on the final six-foot by nine-foot canvas, *Custer's Last Stand*. Amazingly, the painting includes over two-hundred figures. Paxson sketched each figure separately before adding him to the canvas. In his sketch of a dying trumpeter, for example, it is evident that the artist was experimenting with the natural placement of the left foot, along with shading and drapery of the uniform. When comparing the same figure as incorporated onto the final canvas, few subtle changes are present. This sketch offers a rare glimpse into the artist's working process.



Edgar Samuel Paxson (1852–1919). *Custer's Last Stand*, 1899. Oil on canvas, 70.5 x 106 inches. 19.69

Left: Trumpeter, enlarged detail.



Right: Edgar Samuel Paxson (1852–1919). *Study for Dying Trumpeter*, ca. 1897. Pencil on paper, 9 x 7.5 inches. 27.71.1



### PLAINS INDIAN MUSEUM: Fan-shaped pin

The Native American Church combines elements of traditional tribal religions and Christianity. Developed during the 1890s, this religious movement continues to be an important force in the lives of many Plains Indian people.

This intricate Northern Cheyenne ceremonial fan-shaped pin with blue, black, and white beads, and leather, ca. 1950, would have been worn to a Native American

Church meeting. Other objects used in such gatherings included decorated fans, rattles, staffs, and hand-carved, painted boxes used to carry the accoutrements.



Beaded pin. Anne Black Collection. NA.502.47.4

### CODY FIREARMS MUSEUM: Winchester roller skates

Gun makers pioneered the technology that eventually placed so many inexpensive machine-made goods in the hands of consumers. Indeed, along with pistols and rifles, arms manufacturers such as Remington, Stevens, and Winchester also used their equipment for the production of tools and general hardware offerings.

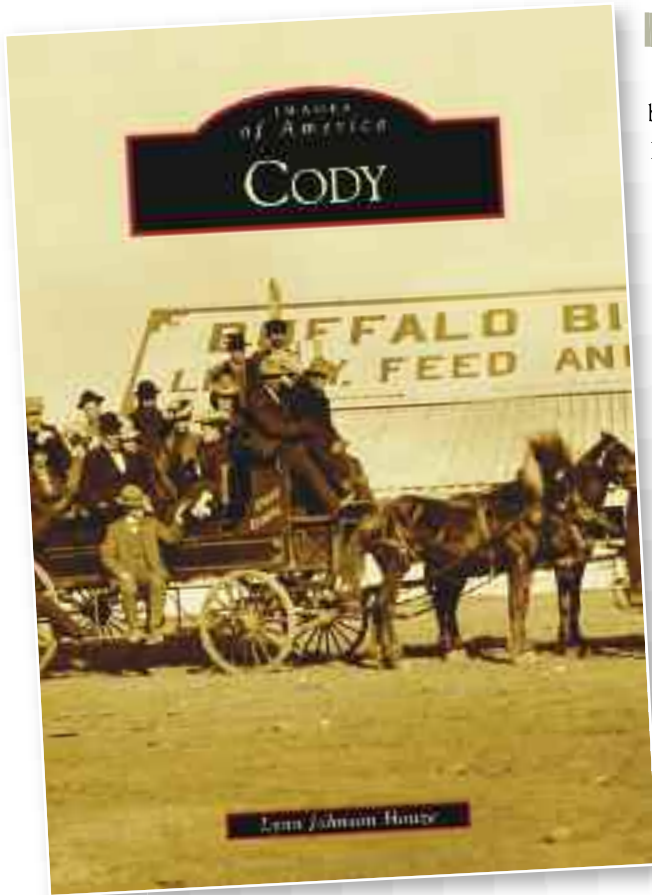
At the turn of the twentieth century, the Winchester Repeating Arms Company put its name on everything from garden tools to washing machines, promoting those products as being “as good as the gun.” During this time, Winchester manufactured a host of goods such as safety razors and blades, screwdrivers, saws, flashlights, scissors, fishing reels — and even roller skates like the ones pictured here.

It was Dr. James L. Plimpton of Medfield, Massachusetts, who is credited with inventing the roller skate in 1863. Three years later, Everett H. Barney, of Springfield, Massachusetts, patented a metal clamp to fasten the skater's shoes to the metal roller skates. In 1920, the company was purchased by the Winchester Repeating Arms Company.

By 1929, Winchester had all but halted its production of these general consumer goods and tools due to their unprofitability. Because of the relatively short production period, these items — including the skates — are highly-prized collectibles.



Winchester roller skates, ca. 1920. Gift of L.D. and Betty Henderson. 1983.3.27



### Images of America: Cody

by Lynn Johnson Houze

Review by Arcadia Publishing, Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina

Illustrated, 128 pages, 214 photographs. Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2008. ISBN 0738548359. \$19.99.

Readers of *Points West* are no doubt familiar with the establishment of the town of Cody, Wyoming. Founded in 1896 by William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody and members of the Shoshone Land and Irrigation Company, Cody lies fifty-three miles east of Yellowstone National Park. The Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad’s arrival in 1901 coincided with Cody’s incorporation as a town. The Irma Hotel, named for Buffalo Bill’s youngest daughter, opened in 1902 and provided visitors with a modern, luxurious place to stay.

In 1909, Cody became the county seat of the newly formed Park County. Cody and the surrounding areas are known for their superb scenery, excellent hunting and fishing, gas and mineral reserves, and vast ranching lands.

This is the story told by author Lynn Houze in *Cody*, a new book in Arcadia Publishing’s “Images of America” series.

“During the past sixteen years of working with local photographs—first at the Park County Historical Archives and now at the

Buffalo Bill Historical Center [in Cody]—I came across many wonderful images that had not previously been published,” Houze says. “I wanted to share these with the public.”

Houze researched the various photograph collections at the county archives, the historical center, the Wyoming State Archives, and the American Heritage Center at the University of Wyoming in Laramie. “I wanted to obtain a feel for the subjects covered and decide if there were enough images from which to choose in each subject area,” Houze explains. “Then, I chose the topics and chapters I wanted to include in the book.

“I think the readers will especially enjoy the chapters on the Buffalo Bill Dam, the rodeo, and the historic homes. My hope is that *Cody* will be a resource for anyone wanting to know how the town began and then how it evolved into the city of today.”

Houze has lived in Cody since 1983. She worked at the Park County Historical Archives for seven years where she developed her interest in local history. Since 2000, she has been the curatorial assistant of the Buffalo Bill Museum at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody, delving into William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody’s life in Cody as well as with Buffalo Bill’s Wild West.

She belongs to the local historical society, the Wyoming State Historical Society, and several other historic-minded organizations. In 1996, she was part of the Cody Centennial Committee which coordinated the 100th anniversary of the founding of the town, the occasion of the release of Houze’s first book on the history of Cody, *Buffalo Bill’s Town in the Rockies*, (which she co-authored). ■

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*Images of America: Cody* and *Buffalo Bill’s Town in the Rockies* are available in the historical center’s store, Museum Selections.





Outlaws of necessity brought lawmen, and in his own writings, William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody paid tribute to famous western lawmen. He noted he was close friends with many such individuals, especially James Butler “Wild Bill” Hickok.

“Wild Bill I had known since 1857,” wrote Buffalo Bill in his autobiography. “He and I shared the pleasure of walking a thousand miles to the Missouri River after the bull train in which we both were employed had been burned . . . Afterward we rode the Pony Express together.”

Buffalo Bill also praised Hickok’s skill with a pistol and included a number of exciting narratives about Hickok’s fights in his autobiography. Hickok was murdered playing poker in Deadwood, South Dakota, on August 2, 1876. Here, some unidentified people and Cody, third from left, are pictured at his friend’s grave in Deadwood about 1914. Original Buffalo Bill Museum Collection. P.69.1069

*The Buffalo Bill Historical Center’s McCracken Research Library archives is steward to over 500,000 historic photographs and negatives about the West, including the William F. Cody collection. Contact Archivist Megan Peacock at [meganp@bbhc.org](mailto:meganp@bbhc.org) or 307.587.2619 for more information.* ■

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