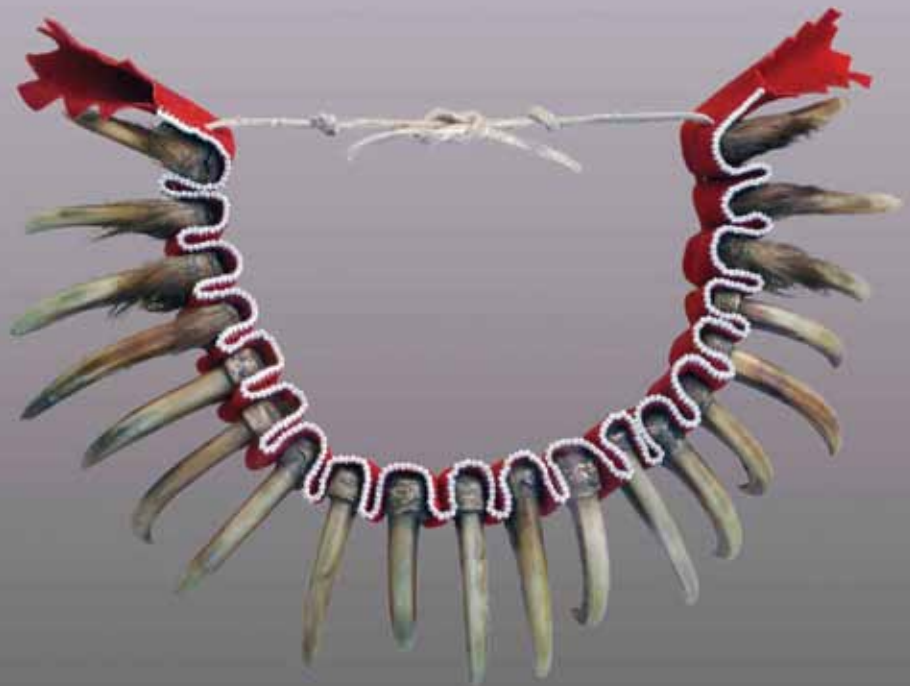


# POINTS WEST

BUFFALO BILL HISTORICAL CENTER ■ CODY, WYOMING ■ WINTER 2009



*Splendid Heritage: Perspectives on American Indian Art*, opening May 1, 2010



By Bruce Eldredge  
Executive Director

## Did You Know ...

- If Facebook were a country, it would be the world's fourth largest in population—between the United States and Indonesia. (Since Facebook recently announced that it now has 300 million users, it just might move up in the ranks.)
- Since its startup in March 2006, Twitter has had 5.2 billion “tweets.”
- It took thirty-eight years for radio to reach fifty million users; television, thirteen years; and the Internet, four years. Facebook, on the other hand, added a hundred million users in less than nine months.

If none of this makes any sense, you're not alone. I confess: It wasn't that long ago when I knew nothing about “social media.” Now, I can say with confidence that—while I still might not understand it completely—there is one thing of which I am certain: It's *big*.

Millions of people every day connect with individuals all over the globe through Internet sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, and everything in between. Given that number, the basic statistical probability of users clicking on a particular Web site are sizeable. At the Buffalo Bill Historical Center, we like those odds.

As we roll out a brand new Web site in early 2010, we plan to incorporate a number of social media features: video, real-time webcams, insider blogs, trip-planning features, on-the-spot reporting, behind the scenes looks, interactive things to do for kids, new visitor service options, breaking news, and, of course, our extraordinary collections in virtual galleries. We hope to foster relationships with our Web site visitors who love the American West as much as we do.

To that end, we're focusing on what one social media pro called “findability.” Our job is to be easily discovered (“findable”), easily navigated, and easily remembered. If we're successful, we know our online guests will tell their family and friends, exactly why social media is called “digital word of mouth.”

And the one thing I do know is that “word of mouth”—digital and otherwise—is still the best way for people to find out about and to get to know the Buffalo Bill Historical Center.

Let us know how we do. ■

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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, McCracken Research Library, and Cody Institute for Western American Studies.

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:

1. Shirt, ca. 1860, Plains Sioux, tanned deerskin, porcupine quills, glass seed beads, human hair, sinew, mineral pigments. WC8803013
2. Courting Fan, ca. 1840, Plains, Sioux, pine wood, pigment. WC8401020
3. Parfleche Case, ca. 1885, Plains, Sioux, cow rawhide (domesticated cattle), paint. WC8708920
4. Bear Claw Necklace, ca. 1860, Plains, Sioux, grizzly bear claws, wool trade cloth, glass beads, tanned rawhide. WC8708308

# Contents



These Sioux children, dressed in traditional regalia, stand among tipis behind the scene at Buffalo Bill's Wild West show, probably about 1910. Readers can find this image—and more than 13,000 others (with more added daily)—in the Buffalo Bill Historical Center's online digital image collection at [www.bbhc.org/hmrcollection.cfm](http://www.bbhc.org/hmrcollection.cfm).

The online image project was supported by the Online Computer Library Center, Mrs. Lynne Cheney, and a grant from the Wyoming Cultural Trust Fund, a program of the Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources. This hand-colored photograph is part of the original Buffalo Bill Museum Collection. P.69.857



## FEATURES

- 4 **Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show: The Old Glory Blowout.** A man with white hair flying rides a fierce white horse; his polished rifle snaps silver slugs like pebble asteroids through a circle of stars. By Charles Sabukewicz
- 8 **Cody's Fairy Godmother: Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney and her memorial sculpture, Buffalo Bill – The Scout.** When Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney accepted the commission to create a monumental tribute to Buffalo Bill, she prepared herself to take on the complicated task of memorializing one of the most famous American figures in history. By Christine C. Brindza
- 13 **Letters from the West: a New Yorker in Wyoming, 1874 – 1878, part 2.** The Fourth I dont know as yet whare I will spend it, but expect it will be here among the sage brush and Indians. there is some twenty wight [white] men here now and some emigrants coming in with thair Famileys to settle here. By Karling Clymer Abernathy
- 20 **The "Poet Scout": Captain Jack Crawford.** "... [Crawford] had an incredibly interesting life. He was a prolific author of poetry and short stories, as well as a public speaker on issues of temperance and reform. His use of vernacular in his writings sheds new light on the popular culture of this era."
- 22 **Fields of Discovery.** Shoulder-to-shoulder with other researchers, Cody area students participated in Optically Stimulated Luminescence (OSL) dating—a cutting-edge procedure that dates soil minerals based on how long ago they were exposed to sunlight. By Emily Hansel
- 24 **In our Backyard. Night travelers: debunked and demystified.** We've all heard the folklore tales: Bats get tangled in hair; bats are vampires; bats attack people; bats are blind; bats carry rabies; and bats are flying mice. With one exception, none of these superstitions are true. By Philip and Susan McClinton

## DEPARTMENTS

- 15 **BBHC BITS AND BYTES**, also continued on page 18  
News, activities, events, and Patrons Post
- 16 **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**
- 19 **WAYS OF GIVING**  
By Wendy Schneider
- 28 **TREASURES FROM OUR WEST**  
This month's look at our collections
- 30 **BETWEEN THE BOOKENDS**  
*Red Desert: History of Place.* By Annie Proulx, with photographs by Martin Stupich. Review by Dr. John Rumm
- 31 **A THOUSAND WORDS**



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Magazine of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center • Cody, Wyoming



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WINTER 2009 ■ 3

# BUFFALO BILL'S WILD WEST SHOW

## *The Old Glory Blowout*

by Charles Sabukewicz

*[To me] Buffalo Bill's history in many ways parallels that of America's: a great nation with great early success that eventually led to the burden of too much of it . . . In many ways, our country has been a Wild West show.*

Streetlamps wink in the vaporous light.

Long, rolling blasts of snow  
howl like a furious sea.

Wind booms in the chimney.

I have been dreaming,  
but for how long?

A small boy sits at the window.  
a story book on his knees.

It is *The Wild West*  
opened at a brightly painted circus.  
It is only then that the lights blink out.

In an ancient amusement house,  
an old, mechanical woman in black  
laughs from moldy porcelain teeth;  
her eyes flick green in condescension.

The awkward gears engage,  
her movements stiff and jerky  
behind the faded glass.

She deals the Ace of Spades.  
Another: the magic figure of a King.  
The game has ended, time to go home.

A man with white hair flying  
rides a fierce white horse;  
his polished rifle snaps silver slugs  
like pebble asteroids  
through a circle of stars.

Buffalo  
Bill's  
Wild West  
lithograph  
poster,  
ca. 1890.  
A. Hoen &  
Co., Baltimore.  
Gift of The Coe  
Foundation.  
1.69.454



Buffalo Bill galloping in an arena, undated. Vincent Mercaldo Collection. P.71.1325

The moon is a moment out of the clouds.

Its gorgeous light bends  
on plumcake white chimneypots and walls.  
An old dog casts his silver bark  
out to the night  
then settles in a dream.

It is not until you are old  
that you will be born, singing  
like a broken tambourine  
out to the unforgiving stars,  
obedient to the clear arrangement  
of the stars in the Hunter's belt,  
the icicle's exact release  
of the first thimble of spring,  
doom burning green, bringing  
the green light singing out of the earth,  
like an old piano faithful  
to the seamstress' faithful song.

Buffalo Bill rides  
like an angry buck leather lead dealer  
ring slinging rainbow dreaming man,  
out of the dignity of beauty,  
long hair flying out to defy  
the Indians' scalping knives.

Sitting Bull digs his knees  
into his pony's sides,  
dashing like a piston's natural burning  
into a ringbolt of stars.

Annie leans pert and steady,  
her squared shoulders,  
aiming love out of a rifle's sigh,  
torn like a message  
from the poem of a rainbow,  
of a taxi in rain, an immigrant's aching love  
endured on the strong Atlantic.

The glass spheres are flung,  
and Annie shoots.  
Her rifle snaps smoke;  
the glass balls splatter.  
Cody's pearl-gripped pistol  
mutters profane bullet whispers  
and the Indian brave leans  
with quick imaginative fingers  
over a fading fire. Children. Tents.  
The wind bends East.



Buffalo Bill's Wild West lithograph poster, ca. 1893. A. Hoen & Co., Baltimore. Gift of the Coe Foundation. 1.69.77



Buffalo Bill's Wild West lithograph poster, ca. 1890. A. Hoen & Co., Baltimore. Gift of the Coe Foundation. 1.69.73

Buffalo Bill's  
Wild West in  
New York City  
lithograph  
poster,  
ca. 1895.  
The  
Springer  
Litho Co.,  
New York.  
1.69.20



Old Glory flying red, white and blue,  
songs teased out of banjo and fiddle,  
dirtclods flung as ponies race  
sweat leather buckles lean breathe  
into the land  
a man a woman a child crying  
out of the Garden  
written in memory,  
burning like fire in a dead man's pocket,  
like the catapult uplunge  
of the rocket in flight.

When you are old it comes to you  
squarebraced rig leaning  
like a jigsaw sail  
shouldered into the sea,  
weather-braced and merry.

I have no other country. This is my land.

Banner of red, white and blue  
under the golden, military eagle.  
Ponies' sharp hooves prancing toward us,  
Dirt flying, drums beating,  
blue caps and Union buckles,  
antique glint of rebel bayonets,  
all on a field of green;  
all on a ghost gray horse  
the lonely history hero  
singing our error  
to the skies.

Thundering into trenches,  
men with square faces under  
shiny helmet disks  
mirror the machine guns' fiery stitches;  
the '39 Ford bends like a shuttle  
onto the burning airfield.

The Arizona  
leans like a tower  
and falls and a young man smirks  
at the blind eyed doctor blooming  
over the gray damp dawn  
pink like violets and sharps;  
the hard Atlantic men  
lean into the gale,  
their cargo full of slaves.

Nebraska boys. Ohio  
boys. They all come marching.



Buffalo Bill's Wild  
West lithograph poster,  
ca. 1887. A. Hoen & Co.,  
Baltimore. Gift of The Coe  
Foundation. 1.69.171



Buffalo Bill's Wild West /  
Sells-Floto Circus poster,  
ca. 1913. U.S. Lithograph  
Co., Russell-Morgan Print,  
Cincinnati & New York.  
Original Buffalo Bill Museum  
Collection. 1.69.362

The electric dynamo  
spins on its steel spine;  
thundering power slams into cables,  
hurtling speedbolts  
in black wires out  
over the listening land,  
the curved electric arc  
into the electric city.

Red and white stripes bundle into soft folds,  
blue, and then white stars  
crumble and fold into the bluecoat's arms,  
under the tragic white clouds  
puffing like summer furnaces up  
into the airy cool stream  
at the edge  
of the littleboy's fingertips reaching  
from the highest clodrooted tree,  
reaching for the dreams, reaching  
as the page browns in an ancient book,  
crumbling.

I will never be young again, ever.

Swans file out on the cream of the lake;  
a pony's sharp hooves spark on the ice;  
his steambloom nostrils  
flare to the goodbye sun  
the bloom of the morning.

I am this America, and ever I will be.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Charles Sabukewicz should know a thing or two about poetry. After all, he taught high school English for thirty years at Middlebury, Vermont. But even with a childhood in Rhode Island and a career in Vermont, the 70-year-old has always loved the West. He sent this poem, part of a larger collection, to Dr. John Rumm, curator of western American history at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center.*

*"My point in this piece, spoken through the 'I' of the poem, is that it is time to embrace more fully our history," Sabukewicz wrote to Rumm, "and realize that we are an aging country, and begin our future with this knowledge."*

While including poetry is atypical for *Points West*, we simply had to share this one with you.



William F.  
"Buffalo  
Bill" Cody,  
ca. 1912.  
The  
Bradford-  
Decker  
Collection.  
P.69.171



"Positively the last appearance" of Buffalo Bill, 1910. U.S. Lithograph Co., Russell-Morgan Print, Cincinnati & New York. Original Mary Jester Allen Collection. 1.69.137

# Cody's Fairy Godmother

## Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney and her memorial sculpture, *Buffalo Bill – The Scout*

Gertrude  
Vanderbilt  
Whitney  
in 1923.  
Original  
Buffalo  
Bill  
Museum  
Collection.  
P.69.511



William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody, ca. 1876. P.6.134

By Christine C. Brindza

*As Points West wraps up the Whitney Gallery of Western Art's fiftieth anniversary series, featured in the last few issues, Christine Brindza tells how it all started.*

Controversy is difficult to avoid in most large undertakings, and the creation of a Buffalo Bill memorial was no exception. When Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney accepted the commission to create a monumental tribute to Buffalo Bill, she prepared herself to take on the complicated task of memorializing one of the most famous American figures in history. She used both her artistic abilities and social status to produce and fund this work of art that would define a town,

inspire a museum, and hold a place in American art and history. Her sculpture exceeded her wildest expectations.

### A suitable memorial

Upon the death of Colonel William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody in 1917, interest swept the nation to construct a memorial to the legendary western pioneer and Wild West showman. The location for the memorial site was logically within the town he founded: Cody, Wyoming. The spearhead organization, the Buffalo Bill Memorial Association, was formed to produce a fitting tribute to their founder and hero.

The Wyoming legislature appropriated \$5,000, but the United States entered World War I in 1917, and the as-

sociation refocused its efforts until the war ended. In 1921, the funds were re-appropriated: \$4,000 for six and a half acres of land, two of which were to be set aside as a park where the memorial would stand.

Eventually, the idea of a memorial took the form of a sculpture, and the Memorial Association began the task of finding a suitable artist. Buffalo Bill's niece Mary Jester Allen was first to personally approach Whitney for the commission. Allen, who lived in New York City at the time, received numerous letters from association trustees, coaxing her to contact the artist.

Another Cody area ranch owner, William Robertson Coe, a New York businessman and lover of western



Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, shown here in her New York studio in this undated photograph, was the Buffalo Bill Memorial Association's choice to create a monument to their namesake. Mary Jester Allen Collection. P.69.1316



Whitney studied photographs of Buffalo Bill on horseback, perhaps this one, from 1910. P.6.805

Americana, was also asked to contact Whitney, with whom he'd become acquainted in Long Island. He wrote to her, forwarding a letter from association member and author Caroline Lockhart, who explained the proposition. Lockhart, who soon became the owner of the *Cody Enterprise*, wrote, "The subject of a suitable memorial for Col. Cody is now agitating our peaceful village and I am writing to you to know if you would be interested in seeing

---

**"The subject of a suitable memorial for Col. Cody is now agitating our peaceful village . . ."**

---

if we could not get a spirited and really good statue of Buffalo Bill on horseback done by somebody like Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney?"

When Allen visited Whitney and made the proposal, the artist agreed to the commission. Reflecting back

on her visit, Allen recalled how Whitney reacted to the idea. "She had the entire thing right there. She never wanted 'to do anything as much as this statue of her Wild West hero of her youth.' She really wanted to do it, was already absorbed in her dream."

Whitney may have felt a small personal connection with Buffalo Bill. She saw his Wild West show in 1908, and the press referred to her as "the only woman sculptor with whom the Colonel was

acquainted." Still, she likely did not take the commission for personal reasons, but wanted to display her abilities in sculpture. She immersed herself in the subject by reading Buffalo Bill's autobiography and other stories of the West. She studied

equestrian sculpture, photographs of Buffalo Bill and cowboys, and planned to import a horse and rider as models.

## Critics abound

Having a memorial—in a small town of 1,500 people—to one of the nation's most well-known heroes, was simply remarkable, but to have such a well-connected sculptor undertake the project seemed even more so. If the Memorial Association wanted to bring attention and prestige to Cody, Wyoming, Whitney could make it happen. The attention that resulted, however, was not as expected.

When Whitney announced that she finalized a model of the memorial sculpture, every detail of the work found scrutiny. Newspapers from Cody, Wyoming, to New York City recorded her progress by publishing articles about a purported controversy.

Her concept for the memorial was to portray Buffalo Bill as a scout for the army, during an early part of his career. Whitney wanted to capture this hero pioneering the western frontier rather than the older and more mature Wild West showman. She envisioned the bronze sculpture on a granite plinth with a stream flowing nearby to symbolize Buffalo Bill's contributions as an engineer and involvement in irrigation projects.

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**“... the horse looked like it had been wounded in the neck ...”**

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Whitney presented the Memorial Association with her proposal in January 1923. The model depicted Col. Cody as a scout on horseback, holding his '73

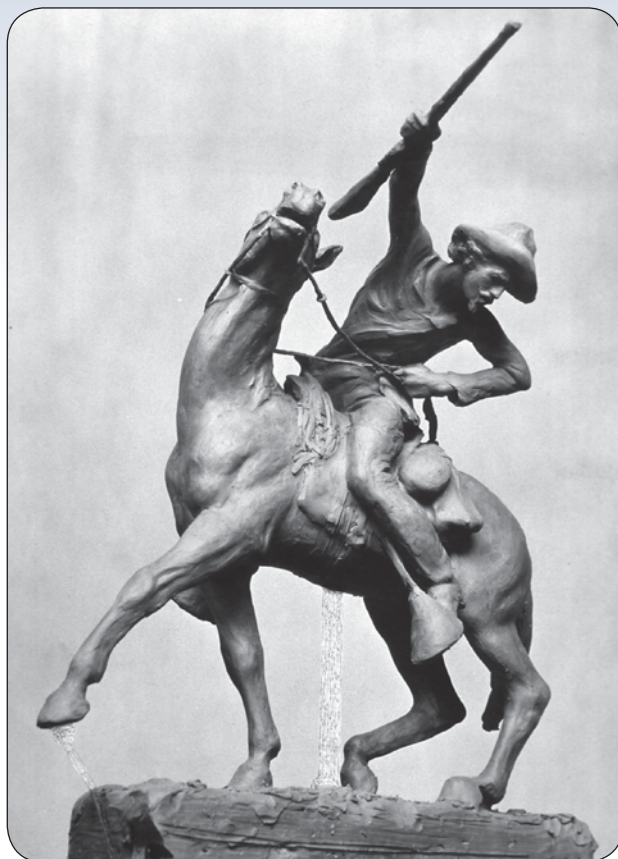
Winchester in the air to signal troops to follow while peering down at a trail. By February, criticism of the model was a national sensation.

As recorded in an area newspaper at the time, when Whitney presented the Memorial Association with the small model of the sculpture, they were not completely satisfied. They agreed to accept the sculpture model if “the animal, including its tail, is ‘slenderized,’ its right hind foot brought down to earth instead of being permitted to coquet in the air, and a dent put in Col. Cody’s hat.” The horse was considered too “eastern” to be one that Buffalo Bill would have ridden. General Nelson A. Miles, for whom Buffalo Bill did his famous scouting, was also disappointed in the sculpture and thought the horse looked like it had been wounded in the neck—its position all wrong.

On May 20, 1923, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* published an article regarding the Association’s reaction in “Did Mrs. Whitney Go Wrong on Buffalo Bill’s Horse?” The author wrote how the Memorial Association “... could not conceal their disappointment in Mrs. Whitney’s conception of a western hero’s horse. They declared it was not a faithful representation of the type of mount Buffalo Bill always rode.” The article also mentioned other experts who were just as positive that Buffalo Bill’s horse might have been exactly like the one in Whitney’s model. Nevertheless, the Association wanted a realistic and, to them, a “historically accurate” portrait of Buffalo Bill and his horse—ideas that later they would say were only “suggestions.”

### **In pursuit of historical accuracy**

Some say that Allen, in efforts to assist Whitney in obtaining “historical accuracy,” provided personal items of her uncle to the sculptor. “Even the clothes worn by the model were those worn by Buffalo Bill in his scouting days.” A proper “western” horse from Buffalo Bill’s TE Ranch outside of Cody was shipped out by train to New York City, along with two genuine “cowboys” sent along as proposed models. Smokey the horse was ridden back and forth through the city’s Central Park for Whitney’s observation.



Supposedly, the Memorial Association wasn't happy with Whitney's model, pictured here, considering the horse too “eastern.” Original Buffalo Bill Museum Collection photo. P.69.1327



Before it traveled to Wyoming, Whitney posed with her sculpture of Cody, ca. 1923. Original Buffalo Bill Museum Collection photo. P.69.185



The unveiling of *Buffalo Bill - The Scout*, July 4, 1924. Mary Jester Allen Collection. P.41.503

Several accounts claimed that Lloyd and George Coleman, the cowboys who accompanied the horse to New York, were models for the Buffalo Bill figure. But an unidentified press release stated that they only took care of and rode Smokey when photographed for movement. Whitney used her own model for the actual sculpture. The model's true identity remains a mystery.

Whitney may have felt that her artistic abilities were hindered if she made all of the requested adjustments, but she abided by her patrons' wishes and made some changes. Even though satisfied with the final outcome of the work, Whitney seemed somewhat unsettled. She wrote in her journal after the debut of *Buffalo Bill - The Scout* in New York's Central Park, "I happen to like my conceptions; I couldn't do them if I didn't. The fact that they always fall short of my ideals is painful . . . I suffer because I know they could be so much finer, but I

enjoy because the child has been born and is my own."

### The home stretch

On July 9, 1922, Whitney had taken a train to Cody, Wyoming, to inspect the site for the sculpture, a location that she disliked. Instead she bought forty acres nearby in view of the Shoshone Canyon and the nearby red buttes, as well as Rattlesnake, Cedar, and Carter mountains. She also hired an architect, Albert R. Ross from New York, to design and construct the base of *The Scout*, to be built from natural materials found within the region. The architect contracted a local company, Kimball and Kimball Engineering, to build a "miniature Cedar Mountain" for the sculpture.

The stones used for the plinth were taken from the Shoshone Canyon located twenty-five miles away and weighed several tons each. Ross secured a dragline from Casper,

Wyoming, a day's trip at the time, and cement came from Billings, Montana, another day's trip. In May 1924, Mrs. Juliana Force, Whitney's trusted secretary, came to inspect the site and approved the base construction.

Cast at Roman Bronze Works in Brooklyn, New York, *Buffalo Bill - The Scout* was well received upon its debut. For one week in June 1924, it stood on display in New York City's Central Park, placed near other portrait sculptures that included Beethoven and Shakespeare. The following week, the bronze sculpture—standing over twelve feet high—arrived by train in Cody, Wyoming. The town was quite excited when *The Scout* finally appeared on a flatbed railroad car. The work, first considered incorrect, was now hailed as a masterpiece. "It is an achievement upon which no one can look without a genuine glow of enthusiasm for it and its creator," reported the *Cody Enterprise*. All criticism had died away.



The “new” Buffalo Bill Museum opened in 1927 and was located just south and east of the Scout. The original building currently serves as the Cody Country Chamber of Commerce. F.J. Hiscock Photo. Mary Jester Allen Collection. P.41.502

The Buffalo Bill memorial’s unveiling took place on July 4, 1924, with an estimated 6,000 – 10,000 people attending. A time capsule was inserted in the base, where it remains to this day, and Jane Cody Garlow, Buffalo Bill’s granddaughter and the “prettiest girl in Cody,” pulled the cord to reveal the sculpture. Interestingly, Whitney did not attend the unveiling, but traveled to France instead as her focus moved to other commissions.

Not only did the townspeople of Cody consider the sculpture a masterpiece, it found international acclaim as well. Whitney’s model of *The Scout*, exhibited at the Paris Salon, received the “award of honor” by the French Government. Perhaps the suggestions given by the Memorial Association aided in Whitney’s success with the sculpture. Whitney wrote to Allen, “I want to thank you for all you have done for me, your keen interest in my work, your backing under all circumstances, and your loyalty to me has helped more than I can say . . .”

Within the next few years, a plan emerged for a museum to be placed within the vicinity of the Buffalo Bill memorial. In 1927, Mary Jester Allen opened the Buffalo Bill Museum adjacent to the sculpture. She continued correspondence with Whitney, and in

the mid-1930s, traveled to New York to ask Whitney if she would consider one more donation: the property surrounding *Buffalo Bill – The Scout* to be used for future projects of the association. Whitney obliged and “. . . came like a Fairy Godmother and lay at our feet the things we most want and need,” wrote Mary Frost, president of the Wyoming Federation of Business and Professional Women’s Clubs, on April 9, 1935.

### Standing watch for eighty years

Juliana Force was contacted in 1936 regarding yet another proposal from Cody. This time, because of the gracious donations Whitney made to their town, the citizens planned to name an art colony after her. Force responded promptly, saying, “Although Mrs. Whitney was very sympathetic with any efforts of this kind, she very much disliked and objected to the idea of her name being used.” Whitney founded the Whitney Museum of American Art, an arts center in New York that was still in its infancy at the time, and wanted it to be kept an unassociated and distinct institution.

In the 1950s, when the Memorial Association wanted to use the land

donated by Whitney, her son, Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney, became a large contributor to what would become the Buffalo Bill Historical Center. He donated over \$250,000 in his mother’s memory to establish the Whitney Gallery of Western Art, dedicated in 1959, and *Buffalo Bill – The Scout* stood as the cornerstone of the collection. It is unknown if Whitney knew about his mother’s wishes regarding the use of her name, or, if so many years later, she would have minded at all.

*The Scout* has stood watch over his town for over eighty years—an idea that emerged as an iconographic image of the West and of the town of Cody, symbolizing both the memory of Buffalo Bill and the “western” ideals he represents. Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney left her own mark on the nation, not only as one of the first women to successfully take on a monumental sculpture of this magnitude, but because of her other contributions in philanthropy and the arts. Without Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, there would be no *Buffalo Bill – The Scout* or Buffalo Bill Historical Center.

Through the vision of an artist and the drive of townspeople, a great dream became reality. ■



Christine Brindza is the Acting Curator of the Whitney Gallery of Western Art. For a list of works cited, contact the editor.

# LETTERS FROM THE WEST:

## *a New-Yorker in Wyoming, 1874 – 1878, part 2*

By Karling Clymer Abernathy

*In the September 2009 issue of Points West, Karling Abernathy introduced the letters of Charles Rapp, a New Yorker who came to Wyoming in the mid 1870s. His correspondence offers a glimpse of European-American culture and attitudes toward Native Americans at the time, mind-sets that many today would find distasteful at best, but more likely, appalling.*

*Those attitudes aside, Abernathy has carefully transcribed the letters, wondering first, why Rapp, if he had any inkling of impending trouble with the Indians, didn't tell someone in authority, as she mentioned in part one. In this installment, she asks how Rapp came to know about Custer's defeat.*

### **JUNE 26, 1876, CAMP CENTENNIAL, to Eva**

Charles Rapp called his location Camp Centennial because of Eva Shepherd's reference to the nation's centennial that year and that "everything has Centennial attached to it at home." How ironic that Rapp wrote the following letter on the date of the Battle of the Little Bighorn or Greasy Grass:

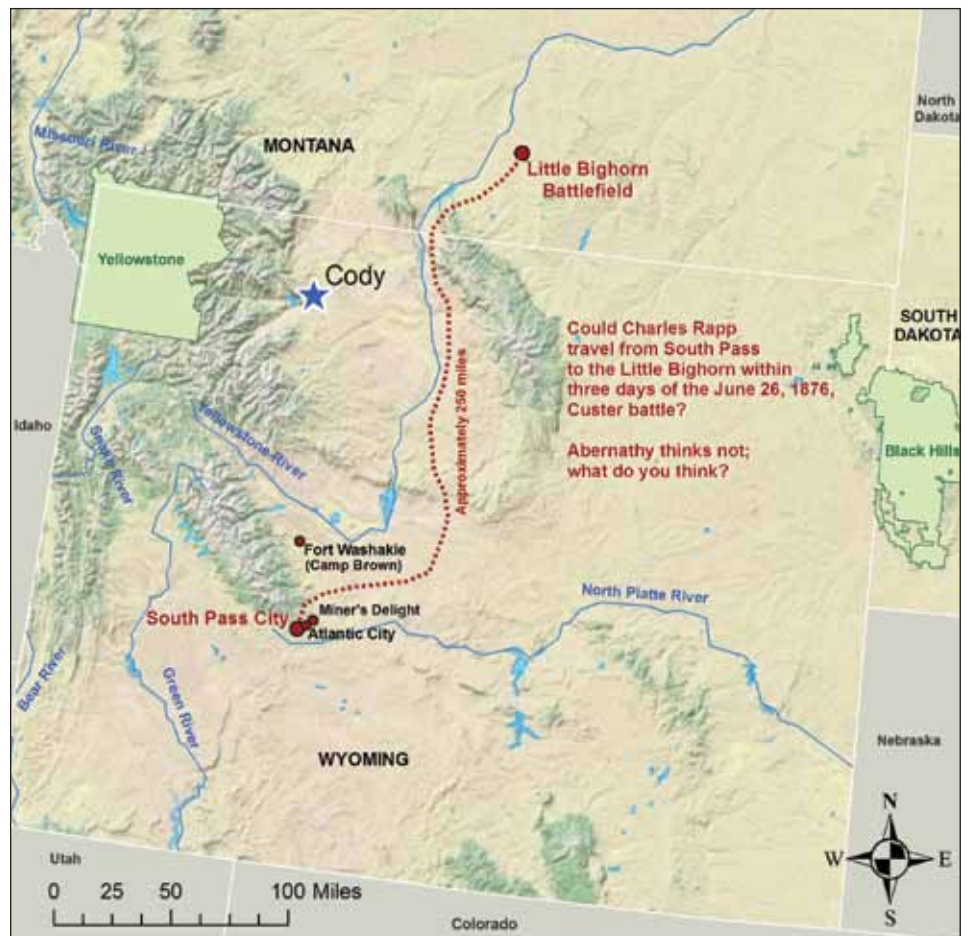
... I was on my Ponie Agoing visiting to see Mr Washikee the cheif of the Snake Indians. he has been with Gen Crook and helped him to fight A Battle with the sioux. the result was that Gen Crook lost nine men killed and twenty two wounded, while the sioux loss is not knowen as thay never will let the enemy know how much thair loss is if

thay can prevent it. Washikee made me A presant of A very nice Ponie and A Bridle made of Hair, and wanted me to go to the sioux country with him. But I declined going . . .

the Fourth I dont know as yet whare I will spend it, but expect it will be here among the sage brush and Indians. there is some twenty wight [white] men here now and some emigrants coming in with thair Famileys to settle here. there is quite A settlement over at Lander now, and is increasing all the time.

they have got A Post Office thare now and Mr Simms has moved and is Post master . . . you can direct your mail to Lander if you wish

Rapp makes reference to the fluctuating population due to the nature of gold discoveries and to military and Sioux loss of life. His contact with Washakie might imply that Rapp had some standing with the area native people, and his enumeration of battle losses suggests either a recent newspaper account or very wide-ranging word-of-mouth.



Map created by Spencer Smith. ArcGIS Desktop. Vers. 9.3.1 Computer Software. ESRI, 2009

**OCTOBER 1, 1876, LANDER CITY,**  
*to Eva*

In the fall of 1876, Charles Rapp talks of the event that colored discussion over many a campfire and table in 1876 and beyond, the Battle of the Little Bighorn that had taken place the previous summer:

the Sioux war is very near over with for this season, and I cannot see that thair is any more done than when thay started in last spring. . . . the scene at the Custer Battle ground was Heartrending and one never to be forgotten. I was thare three days after the Battle, and I never want to witness anything of the kind again. how many A poor child was left Fatherless by that days work, and how many A Poor Mother mourns the loss of her dear boy, for the most of them were young men, lots of them only in thair teens

this is the most Pleasant day that we have had for some time. most of the men are out fishing[,] those that are not writeing Home. the Shoshone Indians have very near all left and gone out hunting for thair winters meat and Robes. thay will be gone some time and I am glad of it, as they are A bother around camp . . .

How Rapp came to be close to the battleground of the Little Bighorn—if indeed he was—is a mystery. Was he prospecting in Montana? Was “Camp Centennial” of the June 26, 1876, letter far from Lander City, but close enough that he paid attention to its population and goings-on? Did he have another mission to accomplish? We don’t know the answers to these questions with any certainty.

It is very unlikely that he could have made the nearly 250-mile journey from the South Pass area to the battleground

in three days. It is equally unlikely that the news would have reached Lander or South Pass so quickly. At the time, telegraph lines were still sketchy in the West as a whole. General Alfred Terry’s first report following the battle, including his telegram to the Adjutant General of the Military of the Division of the Missouri, was not sent until June 27, 1876. Similarly, Private Thomas Coleman in *I Buried Custer: The diary of Pvt. Thomas W. Coleman, 7th U.S. Cavalry* didn’t make this entry until June 28, 1876:

. . . Oh what a slaughter how Manny homes are Made desolate by the Sad disaster eavery one of them were Scalped and otherwise Mutilated but the General he lay with a smile on his face the Indians eaven respected the great Chief My Company buried 30 of E Company the[y] were in a line not 10 feet apart

Given the inconsistencies in his locations as related to the battle site, it doesn’t seem possible Rapp would have been at the Little Bighorn. Did he read a newspaper account and claim the experience as his own? Perhaps, but again we can’t know with any certainty. Other military accounts of the incident (William H. White, 1935; Major General John Gibbon, 1877) mention few or no civilians, adding to the unlikelihood that Rapp visited the site.

**APRIL 26, 1877, LANDER CITY,**  
*to Eva*

By the following spring, Charles Rapp had returned to the South Pass area. He makes no mention of finding gold, but perhaps he would not: He may have feared his letters might be opened, or it could be that modesty precluded discussion of money at that time. He does, however, give us a continuing picture of disputes with Native Americans and a window into

what life was like—for both European Americans and Native Americans—in the area during this time:

the Indians are worse than ever this spring, stealing everything thay can lay thair hands on, and murdering everybody that thay can. thay have run of [off] Twenty Head of Horses from here again, and killed three men, and wounded one Poor Fellow so bad that it took him six days to go thirty [miles] and he got in here with boath of his feet frozen, and so weak that he could hardly stand. he had nothing to eat for four days but roots, but A man that understands roots can live for some time on them . . .

Charles Rapp remained in Wyoming into mid-1878. If what he writes about the Custer battle is true, as a common man who was warned of an impending battle and then witnessed (perhaps) its results, did he feel any regret that he took no action? Did he even make the connection between the two events? Could he have sounded an alarm and somehow have changed a historical event?

That is yet another question for the ages.

Look for another Charles Rapp story in 2010. ■

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*Karling Abernathy is a Wyoming native with a bachelor's in English education from the University of Wyoming and a master's in library science from the State University of New York at Albany. A member of the Atlantic City [Wyoming] Historical Society, she has worked on an oral-history project of the South Pass area and continues to learn its importance to the development of the West. For the past five years, she's worked as a cataloguer at the Historical Center's McCracken Research Library.*

## Warren Newman named CFM curator

Following an extensive and lengthy search, the Buffalo Bill Historical Center found the talent and experience it needed within its organization, naming Warren Newman as the new curator of the Cody Firearms Museum. Newman had been curatorial assistant of the Museum since April 2000, with stretches during that time as interim curator. He was also curator of *Colt: The Legacy of a Legend*, a major exhibition at the Center in 2003. Prior to 2000, Newman served for four years as a volunteer research assistant and firearms cataloguer in the Cody Firearms Museum.



Warren Newman,  
new CFM curator

A retired, highly-decorated U.S. Navy Captain, Newman was called to active duty in 1961. He served at sea in destroyer escorts, destroyers, guided missile destroyers, and an attack aircraft carrier in the Caribbean, Mediterranean, and Western Pacific areas of operations. He also served with the U.S. Marines in the fabled Sixth Regiment of the Second Marine Division, and was awarded a lifetime honorary regimental membership.

Newman is a graduate of the prestigious Chapman Academy of Practical Shooting and holds the Navy Expert Pistol Medal. He is certified by the National Rifle Association as an instructor in pistol, rifle, home firearms safety, and personal protection courses, which he has taught for several years in Cody. Newman is a frequently published author on firearms with numerous essays and articles. ■

## Plains Indian Museum book wins award



Plains Indian Museum Curator Emma Hansen's *Memory and Vision* wins award.

*Memory and Vision: Arts, Cultures, and Lives of Plains Indian Peoples*, a book by Plains Indian Museum Curator Emma Hansen, has

»» Continued on page 18

## Patrons Post

*It pays to be a patron!*



Charles M. Russell (1864 – 1926). *Merry Christmas*, ca. 1910. Watercolor on paper, 6.125 x 5.81 inches. Gift of William E. Weiss. 29.73.1

*“Mr. Claus, all I want for Christmas is a membership to the Buffalo Bill Historical Center.”*

A membership to the Historical Center makes a perfect present. Members receive a subscription to *Points West*, discounts in the Museum Store, free admission, and many other valuable benefits.

Give your family and friends a membership to the finest western museum complex in the world – the Buffalo Bill Historical Center. It's a western adventure that lasts all year long!

**Shop for membership any time of the year at**  
[www.bbhc.org/join](http://www.bbhc.org/join) or call 307.578.4032.

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.

*Saturday*

**MARCH 1 – April 30: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. daily**

9

**New Year's Day**  
Center closed

- *Winter Wonder Workshops*, January 23, February 20, March 20. Workshops in history, natural history, and art for children ages 4 – 13. \$7 for members, \$9 for non-members.



»» Continued from page 15

been awarded the distinction of “outstanding” by University Press Books, an organization for works published by university presses.

The annual ratings are handed out by the University Press Books committee, selected specifically for public and secondary school libraries. Outstanding titles are defined as “having exceptional editorial content and subject matter, and are essential to most library collections.” The selections are labeled “collection development tools” to enhance school and public libraries.

*Memory and Vision* is available at the Historical Center’s museum store. ■

## Traces of Tradition kicks off 2010 summer season

The Buffalo Bill Historical Center has a new reason for individuals to be excited about spring. On Mother’s Day weekend, May 7 – 9, 2010, the Center introduces *Traces of Tradition Fest: How we live, work, and play in the West*. This new celebration mixes popular programs of the past, such as *Frontier Festival* and *Cowboy Songs & Range Ballads*, and folds in new and dynamic experiences for visitors.

*Traces* coincides with Cody Wild West Days, an event that includes an annual horse auction in downtown Cody as well as a rodeo. In addition, the Center’s annual Spring Open House moves to the same weekend.

Watch for a complete schedule of events in the spring 2010 issue of *Points West*. ■



Doll, ca. 1800, subarctic, Swampy Cree. Wool cloth, cotton cloth, glass seed beads, tanned hide, wool yarn, wood, sinew, thread, human hair. WC8905031

## BBHC & Utah Museum of Fine Arts partner in *Splendid Heritage*

The Buffalo Bill Historical Center is gearing up for its summer exhibition *Splendid Heritage: Perspectives on American Indian Art*, opening May 1. Originating from the Utah Museum of Fine Arts, *Heritage* features more than 140 objects of eighteenth and nineteenth century Plains, Plateau, and Northeastern American Indian origin from the private collection of John and Marva Warnock. Prior to the exhibition’s debut in Salt Lake City, the majority of the objects had never been on public view.

The exhibition is co-curated by Plains Indian Museum Curator Emma Hansen who says that “such works are powerful and often multi-layered expressions of cultural knowledge, biographical and historical experiences, and a spirituality that guides all aspects of the artists’ lives.”

Read more about *Splendid Heritage* in the spring 2010 issue of *Points West*. ■

Reminder: The 2008 Buffalo Bill Historical Center Annual Report is now available at [www.bbhc.org](http://www.bbhc.org).

# Ways of Giving



Wendy Schneider

By Wendy Schneider,  
*Director of Development*

**T**ake Buffalo Bill; add a museum complex in his name; factor in a black-tie event, and you're bound to engage some really bighearted folks who love what you're doing and say, "Count me in!" Such is the case with Trustee Naoma Tate, who tells why her "way of giving" includes the Buffalo Bill Historical Center.

"When I was young, I remember the two things my grandfather talked about the most for his entire life. First, he talked about World War I and being shipped to France where he fought in the trenches and was gassed," recounts Naoma Tate, a generous donor and trustee of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center. "The other thing was seeing Buffalo Bill's Wild West in Philadelphia when my grandfather was a very young boy. Why would the two things that stood out in his mind be war and Buffalo Bill? There must have been something so magical about seeing Buffalo Bill perform." For Naoma, this memory sparked a lifelong interest in Buffalo Bill and the story of the American West.

"So I majored in history at the University of Utah," Naoma says, "and while there, I decided to write a paper about Buffalo Bill. I couldn't figure out why, if he was such an incredible person, history wasn't treating him better. He was such a magnetic personality and a big thinker, and I've always wanted to make sure his story was told properly."

That desire is one of the reasons Naoma became involved with the Historical Center as an advisor and later as a trustee. "You wonder how a man like Buffalo Bill had such big dreams, and I like people who have big dreams," she explains. "So that is another reason to get involved here."

The Tates first became acquainted with the Historical Center in 1980 when Naoma and her late husband, Hal, were invited to Patrons Ball. They loved the town of Cody and became especially interested in the Historical Center where Hal served as a trustee from 1987 until his death in 2003.

Today, Naoma loves living in Wyoming and spending time at the family ranch southwest of Cody, where she especially enjoys the scenery and interaction with the animals. "About ten years ago, a young bear climbed up a chokecherry tree

onto our roof where he sat eating the fermented berries," she relates. "He sat on the top of the roof eating for about an hour until he tumbled off the roof—he was a little tipsy. He hurried up and jumped up like he always meant to fall off the roof!"

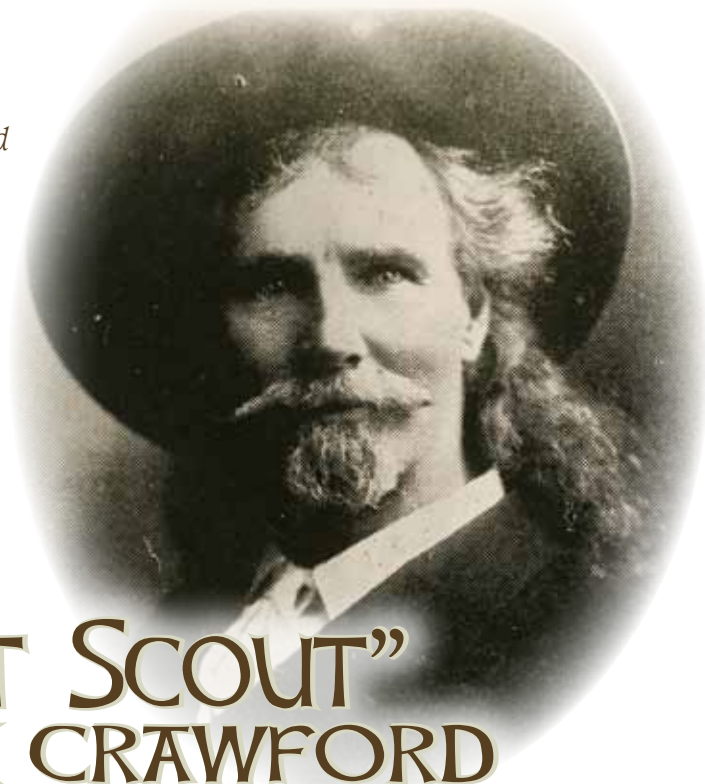
Spending countless hours working on behalf of the Historical Center, Naoma is especially excited to be part of planning for and making possible the re-installation of the Buffalo Bill Museum beginning in 2011. "This will give us the opportunity to put the whole story together in a little bit easier way for people to understand," she says. "We're hoping we can get those 9 and 10-year-olds to catch a little of the magic that Buffalo Bill's Wild West must have generated—just like my grandfather did more than a century ago."

Naoma is a woman with a big heart, a generous spirit, and the drive to make things happen. "My husband was a big dreamer, and he made things happen," she reflects. "I guess my passion in life is to carry on his legacy of making things happen. When I see something that will make the world better, I don't just want to talk about it—I want to do it!" ■



Naoma Tate

*From the “A thousand words” featured photograph in last summer’s Points West, readers will no doubt recall the image of John Wallace “Captain Jack” Crawford standing at the site of the Panama Canal when it was simply a great big “ditch.” In words and images discovered almost daily, researchers at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center are learning more about the “Poet Scout.”*



## THE “POET SCOUT” CAPTAIN JACK CRAWFORD

John Wallace

“Captain Jack” Crawford (1847 – 1917).

Undated image. Vincent Mercaldo Collection. P.71.212

“Crawford had an incredibly interesting life,” says Samantha Harper, the processing archivist at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center’s McCracken Research Library. “He was a prolific author of poetry and short stories, as well as a public speaker on issues of temperance and reform. His use of vernacular in his writings sheds new light on the popular culture of this era.”

Unfortunately, he constantly compared himself to Buffalo Bill Cody, according to Harper, and suffered under the misguided belief that he was in some way less successful than his friend. She suggests that it’s possible to learn as much about the culture of the Gilded Age (an age of wealth, industry, and opulence in America from post-Civil War times to World War I) by studying these two men, their assumptions about what constituted success,

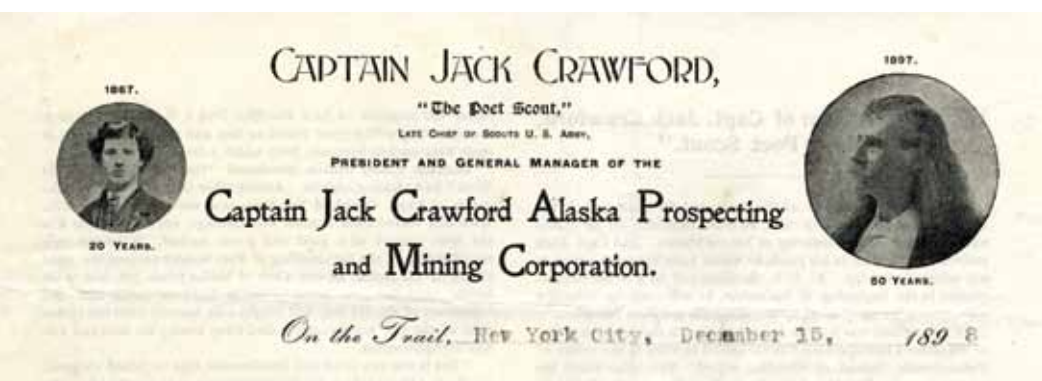
and their ultimately misguided investments, as from “any thorough reading about the period.”

An Irish immigrant, Crawford and his father joined the Union Army in the Civil War, serving in the 48th Pennsylvania Volunteers. The younger Crawford was wounded four times, the last of which occurred at Spottsylvania where, while he recuperated, a nun taught him to read and write. When the war ended, he returned to Pennsylvania where he married and started a family.

After serving in the 1874 Custer expedition to the Black Hills of the South Dakota Territory, Crawford settled in the area where he reported on conditions in the region for the *Omaha Daily Bee*. He also became Chief of Scouts for the Black Hills Rangers, and, after Custer’s defeat at the Battle of the Little Bighorn in 1876, Crawford joined the Fifth

Calvary at the urging of his friend, William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody. In fall 1876, he joined Cody’s theatrical troupe for the winter season and starred as “Captain Jack” opposite “Buffalo Bill” in western melodramas.

In spring 1878, Crawford journeyed to the gold fields of the Caribou Region in British Columbia, but had little luck as a miner. A year later, he traveled to San Francisco to negotiate the publication of his first book, *The Poet Scout*, and then



Portion of the letterhead of Crawford’s Alaska Prospecting and Mining Corporation, December 15, 1898. JC729



Crawford's "Arctic Gardeners' Retreat in Klondike," ca. 1890s. Hegg

Photo. Dawson, Yukon Territory, Canada. Inscription: For Captain Jack With The Best Wishes of J.A. Acklen. JC60

scouted for the U.S. Army in New Mexico for their campaign against the Apaches. Crawford liked the area so much that he stayed there after resigning from the Army in 1880. He became post trader at isolated Fort Craig where the family lived for nearly two decades, even after the troops withdrew and the fort closed.

Crawford continued to prospect, perform, and write. *The Poet Scout* was enlarged and reprinted in 1886, followed by three other books, several plays in which he took the central roles, and more than a hundred short stories.

Because of a promise he made to his mother, Crawford never touched a drop of whisky. Proud of his sobriety, he later became a special agent of the Justice Department under President William Henry Harrison, responsible for the capture of outlaws and "bootleggers" who sold whiskey to Native Americans throughout the Southwest.

In 1893, Crawford began devoting his work time exclusively to his career as an entertainer, and within five years, he became

one of the country's most popular platform entertainers. But, stricken by "Klondike gold rush fever" in 1899,

he headed north to Canada, a move fraught with financial difficulty; he returned to the stage two years later. Estranged from his wife, Crawford died at his Long Island, New York, home in 1917.

In fall 2008, the children of Harriet Richardson, a direct descendant of Crawford, donated her collection of memorabilia, acquired over the course of her life. "We are so thankful to the Richardson family for their gift and are pleased to note that this collection is being digitized and made available through our Web site," says Dr. Kurt Graham, Director of the McCracken Research Library. "Researchers can now access this material from anywhere in the world, which we hope will lead to additional scholarship on Captain Jack, his associates, and the world in which they lived." ■

### SCOUTLETS BY CAPTAIN JACK CRAWFORD

If the children love  
me, surely  
It is genuine—and purely  
Unaffected and unselfish  
as a mother ever gave.

And as long as I  
can reach them

I shall always try  
to teach them,

That the modest,  
unassuming are the  
bravest of the brave!

Undated, JC1433

# Fields of discovery

By Emily Hansel

*"When I'm just walking around, I see butterflies everywhere. I never knew there were so many!"*

A student said this to me as we were packing up our van to return to Cody after a two-day Yellowstone excursion. I smiled at her, although firecrackers were exploding in my head. "I couldn't have said it better myself," I replied.

"Seeing nature in a whole new way" was the purpose of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center's Discovery Field

In June, we focused—quite literally—on capturing the natural world through digital photography. Our original plan was to take the students to nearby Heart Mountain, but it rained for two weeks prior to our trip. The clay soils of Heart Mountain became so slick that we couldn't drive to the trailhead, so we opted instead to explore the Northfork corridor between Cody and Yellowstone National Park.

With their natural inclination toward technology, engaging middle-school students has never been so easy. We

was the one on our hike who had to ask *them* when we were going to turn around!

Our July field trip was a "Butterfly Bonanza," but the exploration of butterflies was only half our "discovering." For three of the fourteen students, this field trip was their first venture into Yellowstone National Park, and for another three, their first tent camping experience. I could tell that nerves were running rampant as the volume and speed of their chitchat increased as we got closer and closer to our campsite.

It took us close to an hour to set up our tents, and some were "hearing" bears at every quiet moment. But once we explained how to be safe in bear country—and where to find the port-a-potty—camp quieted down for at least a little bit and allowed us to prepare dinner.

In my experience with kids in the outdoors, I've learned many things, but one of the most important is this: Most kids, especially middle-schoolers, are very fussy about their food. Yet, if they make it themselves, it's the greatest dish ever served. We taught them to make their own tinfoil dinners (a favorite of Boy and Girl Scouts around the country) and then completed our meal with a few s'mores. With full bellies, they nestled into their tents for card games. Despite the giggles, which only *seemed* to last until dawn, we all got a decent night's rest.

The next morning, we began our



Students survey a plot with Dr. Lawrence Todd.

Trip series this summer. Students from around the region participated in these overnight programs, offered once a month through our education department. We designed the field trips to encourage middle-school students to observe nature and feel more comfortable learning and playing in the Greater Yellowstone region.

used digital cameras to help focus their attention on the most minute details of nature. We spent hours examining how ants decomposed a log and how flowers sprouted from old stumps. They looked at nature from various and interesting perspectives, which they captured through their lenses. Furthermore, at the end of the day, I



butterfly inventory with the assistance of some great instructors from the Yellowstone Institute. The count was part of a national survey to determine the diversity and abundance of butterflies across the country. Scientists do not yet know much basic information about butterflies such as courtship behaviors, preferred flowers, and migration. Surveys like this one in Yellowstone provide good baseline data for scientists and help us better understand the needs and threats to these friendly fliers.

Over the course of the day, citizen scientists like us recorded more than fifty different species in and around the park. Our students recognized how fun and meaningful this project was and jumped in with both feet. For four hours, they ran through meadows with their nets outstretched, chasing down colorful *and* drab looking butterflies, and finding some “rare” species such as Hayden’s Ringlet that are found nowhere else in the world!

With our last field trip in August, we examined the “Ancient Lives and Current Clues” of Native Americans who inhabited this region before Euro-American settlement. Dr. Larry Todd, prominent archeologist and Draper Museum of Natural History Advisory Board member, guided us through this experience on a site in the Shoshone National Forest.

In two days, the students were immersed in an archeological study. They set up camp (this time without port-a-potties), formulated research questions, surveyed the site on both a macro and micro-scale, and recorded their findings in journals and GPS units.

Shoulder-to-shoulder with other researchers, the students participated in Optically Stimulated Luminescence (OSL) dating—a cutting-edge procedure that dates soil minerals based on how long ago they were exposed to sunlight. Students also found time to relax and enjoy the landscape around them. They tossed atlats, hiked a beautiful ridge with an amazing view, told stories around the campfire, played cards, and learned to canoe. In their own words, these are some of their comments about what they learned:

**“I really enjoyed learning about the people who stood right here 10,000 years ago.”**

**“I learned what to expect if you go into a career in archeology.”**

**“I learned that archeology can be super fun instead of work.”**

**“I realized how much I love the mountains.”**

**“I learned that I can have patience.”**

**“I learned that I could keep warm at night if I snuggle all the way to the bottom of my sleeping bag.”**

**“I learned that I am not as quiet as I think I am.”**

So, what did I learn from all this? How do I see the world around me differently than I did at the beginning of the summer? First, I don’t see uninspired teens and pre-teens ignoring the world around them as they focus on iPods and cell phones. I see young people who are struggling to find their passion in life; I see potential young minds that are waiting to be engaged. Finally, in the grand scheme of things, it doesn’t take much to stimulate them—a little positive encouragement, our own contagious enthusiasm, and a place in nature to explore, play, and experiment. Like the natural world, kids continually amaze me. With their raw emotions and endless energy, they taught me to look more closely, change my perspective, and begin to understand. ■

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*Emily Hansel serves as interpretive specialist and natural science educator with the Buffalo Bill Historical Center’s education department. For information about Discovery Field Trips, and other natural history opportunities for kids, contact her at [emilyh@bbhc.org](mailto:emilyh@bbhc.org) or 307.578.4110.*

## In our backyard: Yellowstone



Philip and  
a California myotis  
rescued from BBHC  
in 2008

# Night travelers

## *debunked and demystified*

By Philip and Susan McClinton

*One evening last August, Susan and I watched with awe as yet another rescued bat spread its wings and took flight off our deck from its temporary “prison,” a small ice chest. Barely the length of one of my fingers, she was the seventh “night traveler” in three years rescued from the Buffalo Bill Historical Center. After she’d fed on the grasshopper I offered and lapped water from an eyedropper, she took to the skies, spent a few minutes finding her bearings, and then disappeared from sight.*

### *Just say the word*

Just saying the word “bat” conjures up feelings of dread, fear, loathing, and suspicion. We’ve all heard the myths and folklore: Bats get tangled in hair; bats are vampires; bats attack people; bats are blind; bats carry rabies; and bats are flying mice. With one exception, none of these are true.

In fact, the fear generated by all these myths causes far more damage than the species itself. Dr. Merlin D. Tuttle—world renowned bat researcher, aficionado, and founder

of Bat Conservation International—writes in his book *America’s Neighborhood Bats* that people have actually injured themselves while trying to elude bats they thought were rabid; nearly drowned by falling off boat docks trying to escape bats chasing mosquitoes; and in one instance, a homeowner fumigated his house to rid it of bats and destroyed his home in the process!

As curatorial assistant at the Center’s Draper Museum of Natural History, I’ve had the opportunity to dispel fears about the small mammals by revealing their natural history and behavior to employees and visitors here. Admittedly, the science of bats is still sketchy at best, adding to their mystique. What we do know is that bats have significant benefits for mankind, but experience a number of challenges.

### *Bats, bats, bats*

Bats belong to the order *Chiroptera*, which literally means “hand wing.” With extremely elongated fingers and a wing membrane stretched between,

the bat’s wing anatomically resembles the human hand. The so-called “New World” species, in particular, exhibit a broad variety of flight habits attributed to different wing morphologies and shoulder structure.

Bats account for nearly one quarter of all mammal species, second only to rodents in ubiquity. They occupy all areas on earth, except the Arctic and the Antarctic and a few islands, and are the only true flying mammal. The smallest bat weighs less than a penny and is about the size of a bumblebee, and the largest—flying foxes of the “Old World” order—can have wingspans of up to six feet. Today’s bats exhibit two remarkable specialties: flight and echolocation.

### *Originators of sonar*

Most smaller bats of the New World navigate by echolocation; that is, they send out a series of clicks or high frequency sounds to “see” everything, even something as fine as human hair! These ultrasonic sounds—beyond the hearing range of most humans—are used to locate prey, avoid obstacles,

and navigate, a process researched for navigational aids for the blind.

The sounds are produced in the bat's larynx, which is similar to humans and other animals. This echolocation is very sophisticated as bats send out high frequency clicks through their mouths and at different wavelengths, depending on the species. The pulses function in much the same way as our modern sonar. A returning echo allows bats to determine distance, direction, presence, and velocity of movement, as well as texture, size, and shape of an object. Many of a bat's specialized facial and body features have developed to maximize the effectiveness of its echolocation.

### *Nature's natural pesticide ... and more*

With the exception of three species of nectar-feeding bats in the desert southwest, all bat species in the

they lap blood with their specialized tongues—a serious problem since their saliva contains anticoagulant, causing wounds to bleed for a long time, and risking secondary infections. Occasionally, they may feed on humans, but these incidences are rare.

### *Living quarters*

Bats can roost in a variety of shelters such as caves, buildings, bridges, trees, cliff faces, animal burrows, flowers, termite nests, and even large tropical spider webs. Many species adapt to a particular roost and can't survive elsewhere. Roost selection depends on a narrow set of factors including light intensity, safety from predators, humidity, and temperature.

Many species of bats are colonial while others are solitary, thus adding another element to the importance of roost site selection. Energy use

moisture loss. Bats can remain in hibernation for up to six months where they live on highly-specialized, stored fat reserves that make the reduction in metabolism possible. Consequently, hibernacula are especially sensitive to human encroachment.

Unnecessary disturbances put bats at risk by making extra demands on this critical energy reserve that cannot be replaced immediately. This may lead to shortages of the fat reserve resulting in death by starvation to individuals and/or the colony. Other species can survive short-term exposure to subfreezing temperatures and can over-winter on cliff faces or outer building walls.

Bats are loyal to birth and hibernaculum sites, but exactly how they find their way to these places over long distances is unknown. Possibilities include identifying landmarks and learned behavior passed from one generation to another. Colonial bats create nursery colonies where pregnant females give birth to their young—usually just one offspring a year, making bats the slowest reproducing mammals for their size. Surprisingly, even among hundreds of thousands of young, mothers recognize their individual baby by smell and voice, and in colonies of Brazilian free-tailed bats, feeding the young may be a communal activity. For unknown reasons, males remain segregated from the young and females in these nursery colonies.

### *Fly-by-nights*

Most bats are nocturnal, flying primarily at twilight. This has distinct advantages, not the least of which is avoiding predators. Next, many of the bat's prey are also active at night, providing almost unlimited access to food. Moreover, many flowers that open only at night are pollinated solely by bats. Finally, daytime activity



Bat out flight at Frio Cave near Concan, Texas, 2005. Thomas Kunz, Boston University. Photo courtesy Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

United States feed almost exclusively on twilight-flying insects such as moths, flies, mosquitoes, katydids, cicadas, and the like. Bats worldwide can also eat small animals, fish, fruit, nectar, and pollen.

Three species of bats found primarily in the tropical and subtropical regions of the New World are blood feeders. They land on the ground, climb onto the victim (usually livestock or wild animals), and use their highly modified teeth to make a small v-shaped wound. Then,

also plays an important role in choosing a beneficial roost site. Bats can modify their roost selection by huddling tightly together to conserve energy and produce an elevated body temperature. The concentration of many small bats functions thermally like that of a large bat.

Hibernacula (where bats hibernate) occur in many locations, too. Temperature is critical to permit the optimum low metabolic rate required for hibernating, and humidity must be high enough to prevent too much

carries a higher expenditure of metabolic energy resources because of excessive heat and low humidity. Being active at night allows the bats to expend less energy and conserve water because of lower temperatures and higher humidity.

Bats emerging to forage at night from their roost are an awesome spectacle. Many have been awed by the sight of bats emerging from Carlsbad National Caverns, a seemingly endless “river” flowing from the cavern mouth. These gigantic columns of bats can be visible for up to two miles and may achieve an altitude of more than ten thousand feet. Brazilian free-tailed bats often form colonies of over twenty million individuals (240 metric tons!) in a single cave, specifically Bracken Cave in Texas.

### *Worth their weight in insecticide and fertilizer*

Because many other plant and animal species depend on them for their survival, bats are often called “keystone” species. Bats are the major predators of night-flying insects: One mouse-eared bat can consume up to six hundred mosquitoes in an hour; the twenty million free-tailed bats from Bracken Cave eat 250,000 pounds of insects in a single night. A big brown bat can consume 1,200 insects in one hour.

In addition, many economically valuable plants depend on bats for pollination, and others rely on bats for seed dispersal in reforestation. As well, bat guano (feces) is a source of organic fertilizer and continues to be a beneficial resource in underdeveloped countries.

### *Debunking myths and superstitions*

The large bats of Asia and the Pacific Islands are held in high regard

and considered omens of esteem and good luck, but the bats of the New World are persecuted and feared. Ignorance plays an important role in the way individuals view bats, and people often grossly embellish stories of negative encounters.

Many believe that bats are blind and can become tangled in a person’s hair. It’s true that bats may accidentally tangle in the hair but only if the person is flailing about to drive the bat away. And while bats’ eyes are normally small, their vision is quite good at moderate distances. Others believe that most bats are vampires, but as mentioned previously, only three species are “vampires” and pose no serious threat to humans.

Bats are not flying mice, although they may resemble mice to a certain degree. Bats can only transmit two diseases to humans, rabies and histoplasmosis (a fungal disease), and the instances of either are rare and often greatly exaggerated. Bats are actually of great benefit to mankind and the production of food crops because they eliminate insect pests. In basic terms, bats are the only nocturnal predator of great numbers to feed on night-time insect pests.

### *Rabies and histoplasmosis*

Bats do not “carry” rabies; rather, they contract it like other mammals. Only .5 percent of bats actually get the disease—comparable to the rate of rabies in other mammals. Unlike dogs, cats, and other wild mammals, they seldom become aggressive after catching rabies. There are only one or two human deaths per year from bat rabies in the U.S., which means one is more likely to catch polio, leprosy, or the plague than to contract rabies from a bat.

Rabies is nearly always transmitted through a bite. According to the Centers for Disease Control, people

cannot catch rabies just by seeing a bat in an attic or cave, or from a distance. Rabies can be contracted by an infected bat’s bite, or, rarely, by inhaling dust containing the virus. Contact with urine, guano, or fur of the bat (even though bats should never be handled) does not spread rabies. Finally, the idea that bat colonies in urban settings lead to more cases of rabies is a fallacy. The largest urban bat populations consist almost exclusively of colonial species, and there is no evidence linking them to increased transmission to humans.

The fungus that causes histoplasmosis can be present wherever bat guano accumulates and can infect persons who come in contact with it. Antifungal medications are used to treat severe cases of acute histoplasmosis.

### *White-nose syndrome: the grim reaper*



Little brown bat; close-up of nose with fungus, New York, October 2008. Photo courtesy Ryan von Linder, New York Department of Environmental Conservation.

In winter 2006 – 2007, white-nose syndrome was discovered in eastern New York and is now rapidly spreading to other parts of the northeast. This syndrome is deadly to bats, already killing more than four hundred thousand with a 90 – 100 percent mortality rate at affected sites since the outbreak. Prognosis is grim because so little is known about the syndrome. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologists, along with other federal, state, and local agencies, and university researchers, are working to

obtain as much information as possible in order to halt the spread. As Dr. Thomas Kunz, director of the Center for Ecology and Conservation Biology at Boston University recently testified to Congress, “We are witnessing one of the most precipitous declines of wildlife in North America.”

The syndrome appears as a white fungus on the nose and wings of affected bats and is transmitted bat-to-bat. Humans who encroach in caves where bats are hibernating may come in contact with the fungus and spread it from cave to cave. Consequently, the bats are in danger of losing their fat reserves needed for hibernation and may leave the hibernacula in winter and die. Numerous caves in the affected areas have been closed, and cavers are being warned to stay away from other caves in the affected areas to help slow the spread of the syndrome. Currently, officials know of no risk to humans from this syndrome but urge all precautions be taken when entering caves or handling bats.

## *Species in jeopardy*

Yes, bats today face considerable harm from many sources—so much so that six species of bats in the U.S. are endangered, and others may be eventually included. First, destruction and/or disturbance of habitat are contributing to the decline of bats worldwide. Bars or grilles are now placed over mines and caves to protect bats inside from encroaching humans.

Urban sprawl and development are also contributing factors to habitat loss. Moreover, since bats are intensely feared, they are relentlessly persecuted in many areas and are burned, poisoned, or dynamited to extinguish their populations. Unnecessary banding of bats, a means of identification, can put them at risk by stressing them physically and can cause injury if the

bands are applied incorrectly.

Likewise, indiscriminate use of pesticides is decimating populations worldwide. The toxic concentrations of pesticide in insects are passed along the food chain (“bio-magnification”) to bats, birds, and other organisms. Finally, chemicals used against wood-boring insects—as well as the chemical chlorophacinone, which is used to eliminate bats in homes—are very dangerous to these species; the latter is also hazardous to humans.

Families can help by building bat houses to help protect bats in their area. Plans are numerous, vary in size and shape, and are adapted to species, climate, and social group. Bat house plans and related information are available on numerous Web sites by entering “bat house” in your Internet browser’s search field.

## *Beneficial bats*

As one of the most important indicators of a healthy environment, bats act as biological sentinels to warn us of potentially lethal levels of pollution and pesticide use. Their

potential and real value to man is undeniable, providing a natural control of many insect pests and pollinating plants. Tuttle puts it best: “. . . we need bats whether we like them or not; their loss poses serious, potentially irreversible consequences to the environment that we all must share.” ■

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*Philip L. McClinton is the curatorial assistant for the Draper Museum of Natural History. Susan F. McClinton served as the information and education specialist on grizzly bears for the Shoshone National Forest in Cody, Wyoming, during the summer of 2005. Both have master’s degrees in biology from Sul Ross State University in Alpine, Texas, and each has a keen interest in animal behavior, conservation, and wildlife education. The McClintons have published and presented a number of articles and reports about their work.*

*All images courtesy Philip and Susan McClinton unless indicated otherwise. For further reading, tips on handling injured or dead bats, contacting lawmakers, or how to keep abreast of the status of bats, contact the editor.*



Amy, the McClinton’s cat, greets the most recent rescue from the Buffalo Bill Historical Center, a small-footed myotis.

# Treasures from our West

## QUEEN VICTORIA'S PENDANT

Queen Victoria gave this pendant, or watch fob, to Buffalo Bill while his Wild West performed in England. Made of gold and surrounded by diamonds, the words, “HONI · SOIT · QUI · MAL · Y · PENSE” translate roughly “Evil to him who thinks evil of others.” The inscription on the reverse reads: “Presented to Buffalo Bill by Queen Victoria on June 25, 1892.”

The occasion was a command performance at Windsor Castle by Buffalo Bill. The original note from Her Majesty requested that only the Cossacks perform, but their part of the show was short, and Nate Salsbury, the Wild West’s business manager and Buffalo Bill’s partner, decided that it would be too costly to send only that group. The cast was divided, with some performing for the Queen, and the rest staying in London for their regular afternoon show. The Earl’s Court audience was fine with this arrangement once they learned that Buffalo Bill was performing at Windsor Castle by “Royal Command.”

The Buffalo Bill Historical Center purchased the pendant from the Irma Cody Garlow family along with other family items many years ago. We are fortunate that the pendant stayed in the Cody/Garlow family as many of William F. Cody’s treasures and mementos were either given away or lost over the years. ■



Buffalo Bill Museum.  
Garlow Collection.  
1.69.309



## RED BULL MASK, NEIL “TALL EAGLE” PARSONS

Artwork from the American West includes many diverse styles; the Historical Center’s collection ranges from Charles Russell’s classic cowboy paintings to Neil “Tall Eagle” Parsons’s abstracted images. Parsons’s painting *Red Bull Mask* is inspired by a traditional Plains Indian mask shaped like a buffalo bull’s head. The curved, blue lines across the top represent a bull’s horns, and the blue circles resemble eyes and nostrils. Tribal colors, nature motifs, and symmetry found in traditional Native American artwork influenced Parsons, a member of the Blackfeet Nation.

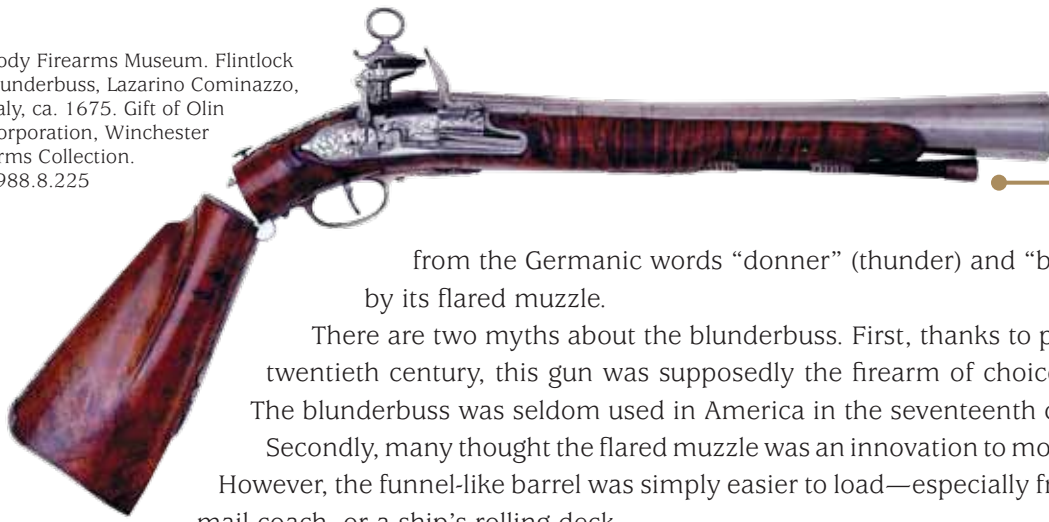
To create *Red Bull Mask*, Parsons painted and dripped acrylic paint on one side of the paper. Then he folded the paper in half, reproducing a mirror image on the other side, and creating a symmetrical abstract painting. Parsons believes his work is related to traditional Native American arts, such as beadwork. In his words, “Abstract beadwork speaks the same language as abstract painting.”

By combining a modern, abstract image with traditional Plains Indian art, Parsons shows how contemporary Native Americans absorb influences from modern culture while still maintaining their individual cultural identity. ■

Whitney Gallery of Western Art. Neil “Tall Eagle” Parsons (b. 1938). *Red Bull Mask*, 2008. Acrylic on paper. Gift of the artist. 45.09

Cody Firearms Museum. Flintlock blunderbuss, Lazarino Cominazzo, Italy, ca. 1675. Gift of Olin Corporation, Winchester Arms Collection. 1988.8.225

## BLUNDERBUSS, ABOUT 1690



“Blunderbuss” comes from the Germanic words “donner” (thunder) and “bücshe” (gun) and is recognized by its flared muzzle.

There are two myths about the blunderbuss. First, thanks to popular media at the turn of the twentieth century, this gun was supposedly the firearm of choice for the Pilgrims. The truth is: The blunderbuss was seldom used in America in the seventeenth century.

Secondly, many thought the flared muzzle was an innovation to more widely disperse ammunition. However, the funnel-like barrel was simply easier to load—especially from a bouncing horse, a rocking mail coach, or a ship’s rolling deck.

This particular gun has a feature not usually seen on other European blunderbusses: a folding stock. ■

## PARTIAL BISON SKELETON

The American bison (*Bison bison*), also known as buffalo, once ranged throughout the American West and across the Mississippi River into the eastern woodlands. It is an icon of the American West, representing both the West’s failures and successes. The bison is a survivor—shaped by its environment, including both animal and human predators—and was a critical source of physical sustenance and spiritual strength among Plains Indian peoples.

Local Cody, Wyoming, residents Lawrence and Joyce Hake discovered this partial skeleton—possibly several hundred years old—while they were excavating their lawn during property improvements. They subsequently donated the twenty-six bones to the Buffalo Bill Historical Center.

Under the supervision of Curatorial Assistant Philip McClinton, volunteer Richard Gruber cleaned the skeleton, and McClinton noticed the butcher marks on vertebrae and pelvic bones indicating this animal once sustained earlier



Draper Museum of Natural History. Gift of Lawrence and Joyce Hake. DRA.305.134

residents of Wyoming’s Bighorn Basin. This specimen documents the presence of bison and bison hunters in what is now the Cody city limits.

We’ve submitted one bone for radio-carbon dating, which should help us pinpoint when this animal lived and died, giving us better understanding of the lives of bison and people who shared this land before us. ■

## PAINTED BUFFALO HIDE

Plains Native peoples commemorated important events with painted images on tanned buffalo hides. The paintings depicted stories of family history, battles, and visions. One particular record, a “winter count,” included images to commemorate a special event each year.

The painted hides served as tipi coverings, clothing, and bedding. As robes, they were worn with the warm fur on the inside against the body, the painted side on the outside, and traditionally wrapped around the body with the head end to the left.

This robe depicts a successful buffalo hunt: men on horseback, wearing capotes (long, hooded cloaks) and carrying rifles, chase the buffalo. After the kill, they begin skinning and butchering the buffalo while their horses wait to carry the meat and hides back to camp. ■



Plains Indian Museum. Painted buffalo hide, Hidatsa, ca. 1875. Gift of William L. Cone. NA.702.30

## Red Desert: History of Place

By Annie Proulx, with photographs by Martin Stupich

**Review by** Dr. John Rumm, the Ernest J. Goppert Curator of Western American History at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center.

Recipient of a Pulitzer Prize for *The Shipping News*, and a prolific author of novels and short stories, Annie Proulx justifiably belongs in the pantheon of “great living American fiction writers.” What may come as a surprise, though, is that Proulx received both her undergraduate and graduate degrees in history. In *Red Desert: History of a Place*, Proulx brilliantly combines both her literary and historical gifts in producing a marvelous book about Wyoming’s Red Desert. Strictly speaking, Proulx “edited” *Red Desert*, but she contributed ten of the book’s twenty-seven essays and an introduction, and her influence graces the entire volume.

Sprawling across some ten million acres in southwestern Wyoming, the Red Desert was, as Proulx writes, “once the largest area of unfenced land left in the United States,” and remains one of the world’s most extensive desert ecosystems. Paradoxically, however, this vast region has merited scant attention. Invited to introduce a book of photographs documenting the Red Desert, Proulx was stunned to find that virtually nothing had been written about it. She assembled a team of faculty and students from the

University of Wyoming, government scientists, and freelance experts who together produced this landmark volume that offers a paradigm for future collaborative studies of other ecosystems.

The book is divided into three sections, with the first, some seventy pages, consisting of Martin Stupich’s photographs of the Red Desert. Animated by a passion for his subject and armed with a keen eye for detail, Stupich captures both the sublime landscapes of the Red Desert and the ignoble ways in which humans have intruded upon them.

The remaining two-thirds of the book is divided between “Natural History” and “Human History.” Essays on geology, hydrology, environmental change, paleontology, flora and fauna, and conservation comprise the natural history section. Proulx and Dudley Gardner, a historical archeologist, wrote nearly all of the essays in the section on human history with topics ranging from early peoples to military forts, railroads, ranching, irrigation, mining, and outlaws. A gifted storyteller, Proulx demonstrates a flair for breathing life into dusty history.

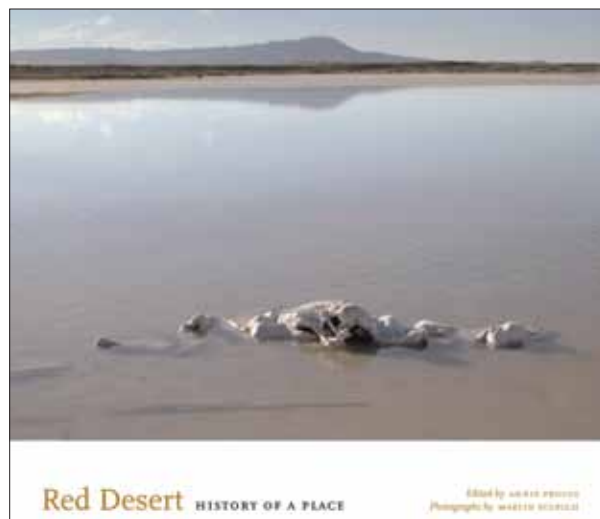
Overall, the quality of essays in

*Red Desert* is excellent, with sparkling prose and insightful nuggets on nearly every page. The subtitle of Jeffrey A. Lockwood’s outstanding essay on Red Desert insects, “An Exercise in Scientific Humility,” expresses one of the book’s key themes: humbleness and exhilaration over what the Red Desert can teach us. Another theme is the constancy of change—the myriad ways in which natural processes and human agency have affected this ecosystem. A third theme—implicit in some essays, more strident in others—is what the future holds. Whether the future yields a requiem for the Red Desert, or its redemption, remains to be seen.

*Red Desert* is not without its flaws. Some redundancies exist—for example, Andrea Orabona’s excellent essay on avifauna of the Red Desert overlaps, to some extent, Gary P. Beauvais’s essay on vertebrates. Few authors reference Stupich’s photographs, while the textual portion of the volume has almost no illustrations. The book’s endpaper maps of the Red Desert region are hard to follow; better, and more, maps would serve readers well. Finally, more rigorous text-editing would have reconciled inconsistencies in citation formats and in how species’ names are given.

Still, these are mere trifles. A veritable feast for the mind, *Red Desert* is a book that should be savored, and, like its namesake, “read.”

*Red Desert: History of a Place.* Edited by Annie Proulx, with photographs by Martin Stupich. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008. 412 pp., 72 color illustrations. ISBN: 978-0-292-71420-5. \$50 hardcover. ■





A winter outing at Sleeping Giant Ski area, ca. 1950. MS 89 Jack Richard Photograph Collection. PN.89.114.21358.05

***R**eared on a dude ranch west of Cody, I learned to love and respect the mountains and valleys, the wildlife, the people, and their way of life. All these I have been photographing for more years than I care to count. —Jack Richard, 1985*

Indeed, Jack Richard (1909 – 1992) was the quintessential chronicler of life in the Cody community, Shoshone National Forest, and the Yellowstone National Park areas of northwest Wyoming. He started out as a journalist in 1931, and by 1953, he'd become a full time photographer with works in many national magazines,

including *Sports Afield*, *Life*, and *National Geographic*. That professional career spanned over fifty years, and now the Buffalo Bill Historical Center is the repository of the Jack Richard Collection, more than 160,000 negatives and 100,000 prints, plus memorabilia and photographic equipment.

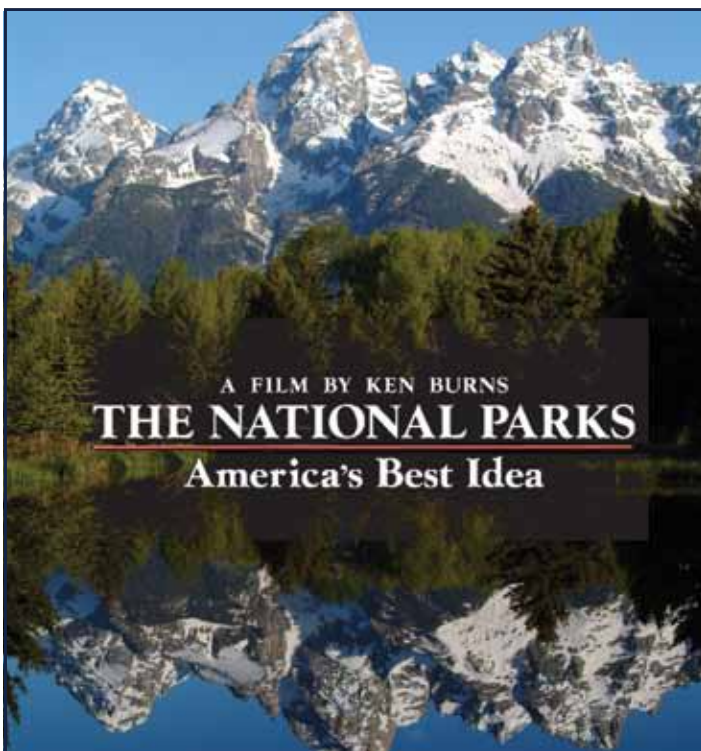
This photograph of skiers at Sleeping Giant Ski Area—first opened in 1936 and just four miles east of Yellowstone Park—is dated about 1950. Under the coordination of the non-profit Yellowstone Recreations Foundation, it opens yet again at Thanksgiving for the 2009 – 2010 season. ■

See thousands of historic photographs from the archives of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center online at [www.bbhc.org/hmrl/collection.cfm](http://www.bbhc.org/hmrl/collection.cfm).



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