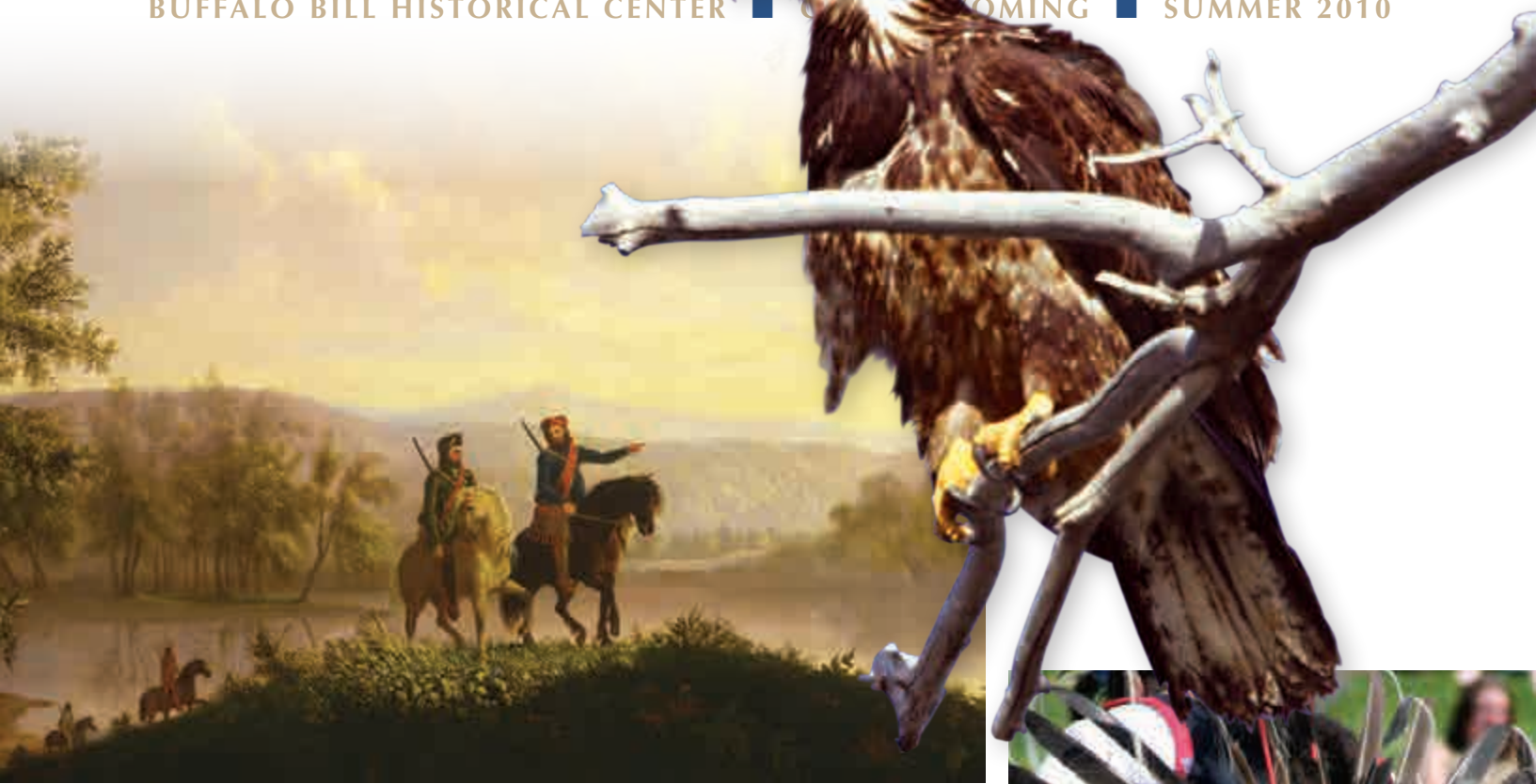


# POINTS WEST

BUFFALO BILL HISTORICAL CENTER ■ COMING ■ SUMMER 2010



*We believe in the spirit of  
the American West*

BUFFALO BILL'S WILD WEST



■ See our new Credo. Page 19





By Bruce Eldredge  
Executive Director

On the cover of this issue of *Points West* is a selection of photographs from stories within these pages along with the words, “We believe in the Spirit of the American West.” Believe me when I tell you: You’re going to see a lot more of this phrase!

At our January Board of Trustees meeting, we adopted a statement of what we do and what we believe (see page 19). We call it a “Credo,” which is a set of beliefs or ideals conveyed in a concise written form; a credo defines the boundaries within which a group of people operate. In the case of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center, it provides the criteria by which all activities, programs, exhibitions, and acquisitions are measured—a principle we readily accept.

With this credo, we’re dedicating ourselves to the care and cultivation of the Spirit of the American West so it remains relevant for generations to come. Like anything that’s vibrant and alive, we know this spirit can potentially wither and die without our full attention to its care.

In a sense, we’re picking up where William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody left off. He loved the West and with his Wild West and other exploits, he liked nothing better than taking the West to the world.

As he wrote in his autobiography, “But the West of the old times, with its strong characters, its stern battles and its tremendous stretches of loneliness, can never be blotted from my mind. Nor can it, I hope, be blotted from the memory of the American people, to whom it has now become a priceless possession.”

We, like our namesake, are committed to ensuring that the Spirit of the American West—a spirit that is central to American democracy, an iconic image of freedom worldwide, and the spirit of optimism itself—is passed along, intact, to our children and grandchildren, and for generations to come.

Consider this your invitation to join the celebration! ■

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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, its collections include: Buffalo Bill and the West he lived and loved, historic photographs and documents, firearms, natural history of the Greater Yellowstone region, Plains Indians, and masterworks of western art.

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:

Each issue of *Points West* is a celebration of the Spirit of the American West. Look for these images as you explore this edition.



The Plains Indian Museum Powwow, June 19 – 20, draws more than 225 dancers from 42 tribes and more than 4,000 spectators. See page 18.

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Magazine of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center • Cody, Wyoming



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SUMMER 2010 ■ 3



# Truth, myth, and imagination

## ART OF THE BATTLE OF LITTLE BIGHORN

By Christine C. Brindza

**T**his summer, the Whitney Gallery of Western Art at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center presents a small exhibition of work depicting the Battle of Little Bighorn. From the Center's collection, several paintings, prints, and sketches are on display in the Whitney Gallery, offering a glimpse into those fateful days in the summer of 1876. Here, Acting Curator Christine Brindza conveys some of the ways the battle has been interpreted through art.

Various called the Battle of Little Bighorn, the Battle of Greasy Grass, Custer's Last

Stand, Custer's Last Fight, and several other names depending on cultural and historical perspective, the Battle of Little Bighorn remains shrouded in mystery. Since the date of the battle, June 25 – 26, 1876, this event in U.S. history has captivated the American public. More than 263 members of the United States Seventh Cavalry, under the leadership of George Armstrong Custer, fought Lakota and Cheyenne Native Americans in southeast Montana and perished. As early as two weeks after the battle, artists attempted to recreate the mysteries of the battle in newspaper illustrations and major-scale works on canvas.

Some of these early artists served as historians, whether intentionally or not, revealing details of the battle in their work. Others merely created a work of art based on imagination. Regardless, as the public saw



One of the first depictions of the battle was William de la Montagne Cary's, "The Battle on the Little Big Horn River—The Death Struggle of General Custer," *Daily Graphic and Illustrated Evening Newspaper*, New York, New York, July 19, 1876. Don Russell Collection. Gift of the heirs of Don Russell. MS62.1.O.3.27

George  
Arm-  
strong  
Custer.  
Matthew  
Brady,  
photog-  
rapher,  
ca. 1865.  
Vincent  
Mercaldo  
Collection.  
P.71.1925.3  
(detail)



these early images, their views of the battle were shaped by the artwork, and therefore, helped create myths and legends that resonate even today.

Historical accuracy has plagued the Battle of Little Bighorn for well over a century. Numerous accounts from all sides of the battle were recorded, including warriors involved, soldiers first at the scene after the battle, and witnesses of the battle. Research continues to develop new accounts of what really happened that summer in 1876, but no one can be certain. Artists choose their own version of history to create in their work.

## *The public sees the first images of the battle*

Artists provided incorrect information about the battle that was sometimes mistaken for truth. For example, William de la Montagne Cary (1840 – 1922), captured the imagination of the public in his *The Battle on the Little Big Horn River—The Death Struggle of General Custer*, which appeared in the *New York Daily Graphic and Illustrated Evening Newspaper* on July 19, 1876. This was among the first renditions of the event seen by the general masses.

Cary's work aided in establishing the

image of a heroic “last stand” which the public believed. Here, Custer is the central figure with a saber in his right hand, a revolver in his left. Actually, there were no sabers carried by Custer or his men at the battlefield that day. Interestingly, the original caption under the image reads that it was drawn “from sketches and description by our special correspondent.” This illustration, inaccuracies included, set the standard of images to follow.

At the end of the nineteenth century, John Mulvany (1844 – 1906) portrayed Custer as the focal point in *Custer's Last Rally*. The artist visited the battle site in 1879, made sketches of the terrain, and visited the Lakota on the reservation. He created a painting measuring twenty by eleven feet, taking two years to complete it. Mulvany's work received much praise. A review from poet Walt Whitman stated, “. . . the whole scene, inexpressible, dreadful, yet with an attraction and beauty that will remain forever in my memory.” Later Mulvany painted a smaller version, which was reproduced as a photogravure, or print, one of which is in the collection of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center.

Another unlikely source promoted the imagery of the Battle of Little Big-

horn: the Anheuser-Busch Company in St. Louis, Missouri. This company produced a lithograph of *Custer's Last Fight*, credited to Cassilly Adams, artist (1843 – 1921) and Otto Becker, lithographer (1854 – 1945).

Adams first painted the original work in 1885. He used Lakota Indians as models in battle dress and U.S. cavalrymen in uniforms of the period, and based his image on the accounts available at the time. The painting originally included two side panels depicting fictional events in Custer's life, but those are now lost. The artist wanted to present the painting to the U.S. government as a historical record after the work toured the country, but that never occurred.

Adams's painting was sold to a bar owner who displayed the work until one of his creditors, the Anheuser-Busch Company, obtained the painting as debt settlement. Adolphus Busch was interested in the subject of the Battle of Little Bighorn and found the painting intriguing. Thinking he could market the image, he hired Otto Becker's Lithographic and Engraving Firm of Milwaukee to create a version of Adams's painting. Becker reworked the composition, making some changes in scenery, and the figures



John Mulvany (1844 – 1906). *Custer's Last Rally*, 1881. Sepia toned photogravure, 20.5 x 32.375. Original Buffalo Bill Museum Collection. 149.69



Cassilly Adams (1843 – 1921), artist. Otto Becker (1854 – 1945), lithographer. *Custer's Last Fight*, 1896. Colored lithograph, 31.125 x 41.75 inches. Gift of The Coe Foundation. 1.69.420B



# BATTLE OF LITTLE BIGHORN

of Native Americans and cavalry. The lithograph was given to every bar that sold Bock beer, but even bars that did not sell the product obtained copies because of its growing popularity. It is estimated that 150,000 copies of the lithograph were distributed across the country during its first runs.

In 1895, the Seventh Cavalry possessed the original work by Adams. Unfortunately, the painting was moved from fort to fort, and all the while was severely neglected. The painting found a more permanent home in the Seventh Cavalry officer's club building at Fort Bliss, Texas, from 1938 until 1946, where, sadly, it was destroyed by fire. The lithograph went on to become among the most recognizable of Battle of Little Bighorn depictions.

## *Native American painted hide*

The Battle of Little Bighorn is viewed differently by Native Americans than by Euro-Americans. The most popular battle depictions were usually by male Euro-Americans. Recently, however, artwork based on Native American accounts

has gained more recognition. Artistic representations from Native American people show a distinctive angle of the event never before explored—or previously ignored.

Native American Plains Indians painted hides, often made of deer or bison, with natural pigments found from the environment. In her book *Memory and Vision, Arts, Cultures, and Lives of Plains Indian Peoples*, Buffalo Bill Historical Center Plains Indian Museum Curator Emma I. Hansen wrote, “Men recorded their accomplishments in hunting and warfare through paintings on hides, tipi liners, tipi covers, and their own shirts and leggings.” Such paintings were accompanied by storytelling of oral histories. The hides, tipis, and clothing sometimes depicted warriors engaged in battle or a particular event of the tribe. Individuals represented can be identified through specific clothing or features such as hairstyles or accessories; some remain anonymous.

A tanned deer hide from the Plains Indian Museum collection, dating to

the late nineteenth century, shows a battle scene between Native Americans and U.S. Army soldiers—an account of Custer's famous Last Stand. The painted hide is of Lakota origin. Warriors are both on foot and on horseback; the soldiers are dressed in blue and yellow uniforms. Custer, a soldier with yellow hair and wearing buckskin, stands armed with two revolvers at center left.

Depictions by Plains Indians from following the Battle of Little Bighorn were not published or as widely available as the Euro-American accounts. More recently, these views have gained more attention because of the vital perspective presented. Accounts of the battle recorded on hides are thought to be truer records of history, though the oral histories were sometimes lost or misinterpreted over time.

## *Paxson's version*

Edgar S. Paxson's *Custer's Last Stand*, finished in 1899, became one of the best-known images of the event, both glorifying the battle and creating a so-called martyred Custer. The oil on canvas is a large-scale history painting, a narrative of the event thoroughly researched.

Born in East Hamburg, New York, Paxson (1852 – 1919) moved to Montana about a year after the Battle of Little Bighorn. The artist was engrossed by the event and decided that someday “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 scene as accurately as possible and said that he, “. . . for twenty years gathered data, sifted and resifted it, conversed with participants on either side, visited the scene and became as familiar



Painted deer hide of the Battle of Little Bighorn, Lakota, ca. 1895. Gift of Robert G. Charles. NA.702.4

with the ground and the circumstances as with my own home.”

Paxson also interviewed ninety-six soldiers from the related campaign and contacted Edward S. Godfrey, a Lieutenant in Captain Benteen’s force who saw the scene after the battle. In addition, Paxson interviewed Plains Indian leaders involved with the confrontation and visited the battle site several times. Among his

friends were Rain-In-the-Face, Gall, and Sitting Bull.

Creating many preliminary sketches for his *Custer’s Last Stand*, Paxson worked and reworked the figures he incorporated into his final canvas. The Whitney Gallery of Western Art collection has several of these sketches on display throughout the summer, along with some personal items that belonged to Paxson, such as paint brushes and other artist tools.

The final version of *Custer’s Last Stand* is a densely-packed canvas that shows action and drama—much derived from the artist’s imagination. It includes more than two hundred figures and at least twenty-five portraits. The painting traveled to numerous places for display and resided in Montana before it found a permanent home at the Historical Center in 1969. It has fascinated viewers from its first debut to the present, where it is on display in the Whitney Gallery of Western Art.

## Battle of Greasy Grass

Allan Mardon (b. 1931) completed *The Battle of Greasy Grass* in 1996, portraying Custer’s “last stand” from



Edgar S. Paxson (1852 – 1919). *Custer’s Last Stand*, 1899. Oil on canvas, 70.5 x 106 inches. Museum purchase. 19.69

a contemporary context, using Native American accounts of the battle. Mardon, a non-Native American, created his work to be “historically accurate,” but in accordance with a modern, Native American perspective.

Mardon chose a significant title for his work. The Battle of Greasy Grass is the Lakota title for the famous battle named after the waters by the battle site—the Greasy Grass. It is also known as the Little Bighorn River. Using the Native American name for the battle clearly demonstrates what account

the artist followed. Mardon incorporated a twenty-four hour period onto one painting, giving hourly accounts of points during the battle, beginning at 3 p.m. June 25 until 3 p.m. June 26, when Sitting Bull called back his warriors. It took one year for Mardon to research the battle and one year to paint the large scale oil on linen. He also created the intricate frame for the piece.

Using the directions given by the battle’s participants and witnesses, Mardon inserted locations of specific events related to the conflict. After the battle, there were problems in determining locations and directions from both soldier and Native American accounts. Mardon addressed this issue by placing a compass in the upper left corner of the painting, signaling two Norths. The Native American warriors guided themselves by the position of the sun, moon, and the stars; soldiers judged direction by magnetism of the



Allan Mardon (b. 1931). *The Battle of Greasy Grass*, 1996. Oil on linen, 76 x 136 inches. Museum Purchase with funds from the William E. Weiss Memorial Fund, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon H. Barrows, and the Franklin A. West Memorial Fund. 6.01



# BATTLE OF LITTLE BIGHORN

North and South Poles.

In *The Battle of Greasy Grass*, Mardon included individuals mostly ignored or unheard of in other battle representations. Though he did paint Custer and other well known people, Mardon incorporated others such as Kate Bighead, a Cheyenne woman who witnessed the battle from a distance. He also included Mark Kellogg, a reporter from the *Bismarck Tribune*, who was killed during the battle. Kellogg is shown with scattered papers alongside his body, symbolizing how the account he may have written was forever lost. An African American present at the battle is in Mardon's work as well—the scout, Isaiah Dorman, who also perished at the scene. Mardon broke away from the accepted ideology of the Battle of Little Bighorn, shedding new light on an old story.

## *Contemporary Native American artists*

Earl Biss (1947 – 1998), artist and member of the Crow nation, focused not on the battle, but on the most well-known individual from the battle, George Armstrong Custer. Biss, a renowned abstract expressionist, conveyed emotion through color and line in the portrait *General Custer in Blue and Green*, 1996, using strengths from both his cultural background and artistic training. He looked for

inspiration from the past and his cultural experience, but brought it into a contemporary context.

Biss was the great grandson of White Man Runs Him, a Crow who was hired to track the Lakota for Custer. Therefore, the artist had a personal connection with those he painted. Biss was strongly influenced by the photograph of Custer taken by Matthew Brady on May 23, 1865, known to be Custer's favorite portrait of himself. The Battle of Little Bighorn is not the subject of this painting; it is of Custer alone, who for years was involved in the lives of



Fritz Scholder (1937 – 2005). *American Landscape*, 1976. Lithograph on paper, 30 x 22.5 inches. Gift of Jack and Carol O'Grady. 7.08



Above: Fritz Scholder (1937 – 2005). *Custer and 20,000 Indians*, 1969. Oil on canvas, 29.75 x 40 inches. Gift of Janis and Wiley T. Buchanan III. 7.08

Left: Earl Biss (1947 – 1998). *General Custer in Blue and Green*, 1996. Oil on canvas, 39.875 x 30 inches. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Charles B. Israel of Aspen, Colorado. 18.00





Today, the peaceful Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument belies the carnage of June 25 – 26, 1876. Wikimedia. Photographer unknown. 1994

Biss's people. Biss feeds into the myth of the Battle of Little Bighorn through the man whose actions during the battle are still controversial.

Luiseno artist Fritz Scholder (1937 – 2005), combined two famous Battle of Little Bighorn images and made significant commentary to deep-seated historical views. In his *Custer and 20,000 Indians*, completed in 1969, Scholder referenced the early historic newspaper illustration by William de la Montagne Cary, *The Death Struggle of General Custer*, and took it a step further. The central figure in Cary's image was of Custer, and to emphasize that focus, Scholder eliminated any other figures surrounding Custer in his work. The field of black with scarlet slashes in the background represents a mass of Native American warriors. Custer appears to be combating them single-handedly, enhancing the perception of Custer's martyrdom. Scholder gave a modern, satirical twist to the event, meant to provoke thought.

In 1976, the centennial anniversary

of the Battle of Little Bighorn and the bicentennial of the United States, Scholder created his own version of Paxson's *Custer's Last Stand*. He understood the popularity and significance of this painting and produced his own rendering of it titled *American Landscape*. As a counterpoint to Paxson's famous painting, Scholder reversed and distorted the original Paxson scene, recreating it in black and white, thereby altering the myth surrounding the event itself. Scholder wanted to draw attention to how the battle and Custer have been permanently affixed to the American psyche and the American landscape.

## *The Battle of Little Bighorn today*

From William de la Montagne Cary and Edgar S. Paxson to Fritz Scholder and Allan Mardon, art representing the Battle of Little Bighorn evolved in many forms. When news of the event first reached the public in 1876, the emphasis was on getting imagery to

the masses, often at the expense of accuracy. The conflict and persons involved were viewed much differently than today. In contemporary times, though, artists are able to develop a more comprehensive perspective, tapping into well-established historical resources from multiple viewpoints.

Clearly, the Battle of Little Bighorn still resides in American public consciousness. When one examines the numerous perspectives of this event, both past and present, it can be better understood. In the same way, if we can better comprehend our past, we may learn and understand more about each other. ■

*For a list of references, contact the editor.*

Christine C. Brindza currently serves as the Acting Curator of the Whitney Gallery of Western Art. Recently, she curated the exhibition *Curator's Choice: The Art of Frederic Remington*, on view at the Historical Center. She completed work with the curator on the Whitney Gallery's 50th Anniversary Celebration in June 2009 which included a full reinstallation, publication, and celebratory events. At the same time, she spearheaded two special exhibitions: *An Artist with the Corps of Discovery: One Hundred Paintings Illustrating the Journals of Lewis and Clark*, featuring the artwork of Charles Fritz and *To the Western Ocean: Paintings Depicting the Members of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*.

In 2008, Brindza shared her research in a presentation to the Custer Battlefield Historical Museum Association Symposium in Hardin, Montana. She has a Master of Arts degree in Archival, Museum, and Editing Studies and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Art History from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

## BUFFALO BILL'S WILD COWGIRL FALLS IN LOVE

# *A romance of the Congress of the Rough Riders in Madison Square Garden*



Blanche McKenny. Sketch with newspaper article. *New York Journal*, April 3, 1898.

*New York Journal*, April 3, 1898

A romance is budding amid the dust and tanbark of Colonel Cody's Wild West Show and Congress of Rough Riders.

It is a story of how Venus followed in the wake of Mars and proves that if young people of marriageable age and personal attractions discuss the Cuban situation, heart complications are likely to follow.

The hero of this tale of patriotism, rough riding and hearts is handsome Sergeant Hugh Thomason, U.S.A.; the heroine, winsome Blanche McKenny, the queen of the cowgirls. Both are members of Colonel Cody's Congress of Rough Riders.

Sergeant Thomason is young, brave and ambitious. Miss McKenny is young, attractive and worldly. Both are favorites of the gallant Colonel, and both had heard much about each other before their meeting two weeks ago. Each was distinctly interested in the other before and on sight.

They met on the tanbark one evening before the performance at Brooklyn.

The Sergeant doffed his cap. The cowgirl looked up at six foot two inches and smiled engagingly. The first two minutes they talked of the weather and show business. The next two, they told each other why they were with the Congress of Rough Riders.

The Sergeant desired opportunities for travel. The Western girl wanted to

raise her record of horsemanship by a season or two of emulation of the gauchos and other wild riders in the Colonel's "aggregation."

Then they fell to talking of the suffering Cubans. The Sergeant noted that Miss McKenny's hazel eyes filled with tears at the thought of the wicked reconcentrados. He liked this. Men don't like to be deluged in tears, but not one among them but likes to see the soft moisture of pity in Beauty's eyes. He denounced President McKinley's dilatory policy. She said all the bands in the United States should gather about the White House and play "Yankee Doodle" for the President's inspiration.

The Sergeant remarked that Governor "Bob" Taylor of Tennessee had promised to make him a colonel in the event of a war with Spain.

"Will you go?" demanded the girl.

"Go?" The soldier folded his arms and looked upon her from his lofty height. "Do you take me for a coward? Of course I'll go."

Miss McKenny clapped her hands:

Buffalo Bill's Wild West arena with Buffalo Bill on horseback and Indians practicing a riding drill, ca. 1885. P.6.354





very small, well manicured hands they are, though they have handled a lasso, shot wolves, and guided bronchos.

"And I will"—[she said.]

Miss McKenny made an offer on the spot. Not an offer of marriage. She is very conventional in her view of matrimonial advances. The especial pride of her riding stable is a magnificent chestnut whose title, Jay Grego, may be found registered in Bruce's stud book. Miss McKenny said she would give Jay Grego to the Sergeant if he went to battle with the Spaniards.

"I will ride Jay Grego at the head of my regiment," he promised.

"And I will have my hair cut close, wear a boy's suit and ride Jay Grego's sister to battle," said Miss McKenny.

The soldier and the cowgirl clasped hands. Sergeant Thomason's clasp must have been excessively cordial, for when the girl of the plains drew her hand away blushes chased each other over her cheek and brow.

The young people have sought each

other's society on every conceivable pretext since they made the compact. Miss McKenny violates discipline by looking over her shoulder at the following squad of cavalry when she rides in the grand entrance and exit of the show. "I do so admire soldiers. My father was a soldier," she says.

Every one else in the Wild West Show and Congress of Rough Riders smiles in approval. The married members smile reminiscently, the unmarried anticipatingly. Sergeant Thomason and Miss McKenny are furnishing the romance of the Wild West season.

The queen of the cowgirls is tall and slight. Her figure sways like a reed under a blowing wind. Her face is a pure oval with a youthful roundness of the cheeks and of a healthful red-brown tint, framed in dark brown hair, which though fastened in a net when she rides, lets a few insurgent ringlets wander out upon her forehead.

Her features are delicate and regular. The face might escape notice

in a crowd were it not that a pair of mischievous, restless hazel eyes challenge attention. An alertness of expression, like that of the trained soldier, marks this young woman, and she walks with a free, gliding motion suggestive of the boundless liberty of her Western prairies. She has small, white, well-kept hands, and the slender feet of a patrician damsel. From the vast silences of the prairies, where the wind whispers over its grasses, she has brought a voice as low, as sweet, as correctly modulated as you could find in any drawing room.

She was educated in the public schools of Kansas, and an Illinois university. That training was supplemented by the broad, inspirational culture of the plains. She sings prettily in a clear, flutelike soprano. She is an accomplished pianist. She embroiders. She would make an excellent housewife. She can broil kidneys.

In the late seventies, a soldierly figure might have been seen



Buffalo Bill's Wild West show parade, 1884. Broadway and Union Square, New York City. Vincent Mercaldo Collection. P.71.1307

# Buffalo Bill's Wild Cowgirl Falls in Love



Blanche couldn't help looking over her shoulder at the cavalry. Wild West poster, ca. 1895. Four-color lithograph, A. Hoen & Co., Baltimore, MD. Gift of The Coe Foundation. 1.69.170

cantering across the plains to one of the primitive sod houses of Western Kansas. After a ride of twenty miles, he alighted carefully, drew something soft and white and weakly protesting from beneath his overcoat, and showed it to two elderly ladies who came from the house to meet him. The rider was A.C. McKenny, one of the most brilliant cavalrymen of the late war, and the soft, protesting bundle his five-week-old daughter Blanche, whose infantile charms he displayed with pride of her grandmother and great grandmother.

And so her career as a rider began. She was bred and all but born in the saddle. Her passion for horses is inherited from the dashing cavalryman, her father.

"I have been Pa's jockey ever since I can remember," she says.

A hundred-mile ride on the windswept plains of her native Kansas is nothing for this girl. Once she was leading five horses from Republic, Kansas, to Superior, Nebraska, distant

from each other a hundred miles. She was driving in a light buggy. A horse was fastened to either side of the harness of the horse she was driving. Through the back window of the buggy she drew the halter reins of two others, and the fifth horse's halter rein was fastened to that of one of the horses in the rear. A snow storm overtook them and the girl lost her way at night. She tied the horses so they formed a living barricade, and wrapped in buffalo robes, slept under an osage orange hedge.

She has lassoed and tamed wild steers.

She has killed many a skulking wolf of the plains and has nine snapping wolf cubs at home as pets.

Many a jackrabbit hunt has she organized, and in one hunt, killed thirty-six of the long-eared, fleet-footed animals.

She has killed more rattlesnakes than she can count by a blow from the stock of her riding whip. On the wild vastness of her Kansas home, this girl

is fearless. She confesses to having had a tremor or two in New York.

She's afraid of trolleys.

"I am not afraid of horses nor wolves nor Indians. You cannot produce anything that I am afraid of in the West," she says. "We are safe under God's protection there. Here all you seem to have is police protection."

Miss McKenny and her fair companions, Miss Lizzie Williams and Miss Mabel Hackney, have lived in the sod houses of the frontier, made of layers of fresh sod instead of bricks, and with straw- and sod-covered roofs. They have known the thrill produced by the ominous warning of a rattler that glided snakily in upon the ground floor of their homes, and once one of them found a snake crushed beneath the mattress of her bed where it had crawled for warmth.

Miss McKenny wears the gold medal of the world's championship as a long distance rider. She won this distinction in Pittsburgh two years ago when she rode twenty miles in thirty-eight minutes, changing horses every mile, and then, as she puts it, "having time to spare."

Two years ago, Miss McKenny was the rage of Omaha society. Colonel Cody gave a reception for her in the Nebraska metropolis after she won the world's honors as a long-distance rider. Society went in obedience to curiosity. It stayed until the hours set for the reception were long passed. They saw a lovely young woman in white, filmy evening gown; a brilliant but modest young woman, who rumor said had a stock ranch of 320 acres, a stable full of race horses, one of which was valued at \$20,000. It [society] was fascinated. Invitations to the most exclusive functions rained upon her. She accepted some and refused some of them, but did both with indifference. She was stifled



in the city. She pined for the broad spaces of her home on the ranch, for the music of her horses' neighing, and she fled.

"We went to some of the stores yesterday with a lady who wanted us to be impressed," said Miss McKenny. "We were sorry to disappoint her, but we were really not impressed at all. There are great stores in our beautiful West, a fact of which she did not seem to be aware. We dined with her at the Waldorf-Astoria. It was a beautiful hotel, but do you know what I thought while I was there? The big hotel owes its beauty to the fact that it reminds us of nature. There are the marble and granite for instance, and the palms. We can see marble and granite in the quarries of the West, and it seems more beautiful to me there.

"Oh, I wouldn't live in New York for worlds! Why, even the wares in the great stores are dirty. You don't see accumulations of dust and soot in the stores in the West!

"It is filthy underground here, filthy above ground, and filthy even where the buildings extend almost into the skies.

"On the rolling meadows of the West land, one scents only the perfume of new-mown hay and the odor of the fresh wildflowers growing in profusion along the clear rivers. Here you have

the dirty streams flowing sluggishly to the sea, bearing garbage and disease upon their bosoms. There are no fields of tall grass, no rocks and crags, no stately forests from which blow pine-scented breezes. It is all so artificial and handmade. Even the women and the men seem unreal and unnatural. They live on luxury. They pander to their appetites alone.

"When we dined at the Waldorf-Astoria, the lady who took us about asked us to have a cocktail. We were horrified. I have never drunk intoxicating liquor in my life. I never will. She told us to notice how many of the ladies were drinking cocktails and champagne, and I thought: 'The Waldorf-Astoria sheltered a good deal of sin, for where there is liquor there is intoxication, and where there is intoxication there is sin.'

"I have seen the saddest and most shocking sight in New York I ever saw in my life. Looking from our window in what is said to be the heart of New York, I saw a woman drunk and reeling. You could not see a sight like that on our beautiful prairies.

"Cities must scramble to come up to Denver and Omaha!"

The spectacle of the drunken woman haunted this girl who had herded and branded her own cattle, and mounted and tamed fiery broncos

and wild steers that would brook no touch but hers. She returned to it:

"Oh, when I saw the drunken woman I could not keep back the tears of sympathy," she said. "But when I saw the women drinking at the hotel, I had none. I saw that it was the beginning. The drunken woman may have besotted herself to drown bitter memories, but those well-dressed women should not have bitter memories.

"I do not even admire your women. They seem to me as wooden as the dummies in the show windows."

And pretty Mabel Hackney, cousin of the Younger brothers, bandits, and gentle Lizzie Williams, who is one of the famous riders of the West, and who owns 620 acres of land and a stable, including the finest filly west of the Mississippi, nodded assent.

Such is the heroine of the Wild West romance.

The hero is tall, and straight as an Indian, blue-eyed and fair-haired, with the bronze of the West on his face. He is a graduate of the Michigan Military Academy. At one time he was the youngest sergeant in the United States service. He has been stationed at Fort Wingate, New Mexico; Fort Niobrara, Nebraska; Fort Lewis, Wyoming; and Fort Myer, Virginia. He showed much valor in the field



Could the second image have been fashioned after Blanche McKenny? Wild West poster, ca. 1910. Four-color lithograph, U.S. Lithograph Co., Russell-Morgan Print. Original Buffalo Bill Museum Collection. 1.69.112



# Buffalo Bill's Wild Cowgirl Falls in Love

against the Navajos and Apaches. He left Troop F, of the Sixth United States Cavalry, the “Gallant Sixth,” to see the world, which travel opens. He has all the bravery of his native Tennessee county, which sent out the Eighteenth

Tennessee, said to be the bravest regiment in the Confederate Army.

He longs for the opportunity a war with Spain would afford to men such as himself. Granted that opportunity and he will ride in the front of battle

on Jay Grego, Miss McKenny's pride of horses.

And if he returns, the Wild West show people believe he will receive the sweetest of rewards—Blanche McKenny's charming self. ■

## — EPILOG —

### *Separate lives—the soldier and the cowgirl*

By John Rumm, PhD

Romance, alas, is often fleeting and short-lived. The courtship of Blanche McKenny and Hugh Thomason, though rich with promise, proved unrequited: the relationship ended when Thomason left to serve in the Spanish-American War, and both moved on with separate lives.

According to veteran cowboy Billy McGinty, a “rough rider” with Buffalo Bill's Wild West and Congress of Rough Riders during the late 1890s, Miss McKenny “used to have her own show in which she was billed as the woman rider of the world's highest jumping horses.” While with Buffalo Bill's Wild West, he recalled, she met and subsequently married Lem Hunter, another rough rider. The couple then started their own show, the “Blanche McKenny and Hunter Racing Combination,” and McKenny later became “a good horse trainer” and a noted breeder according to *Oklahoma Rough Rider: Billy McGinty's Own Story*, a book edited by Jim Fulbright and Albert Stehno.

Although Hugh Thomason's name does not appear in the surviving rosters for Buffalo Bill's Wild West, he was undoubtedly

the same Hugh Thomason, a native of Nashville, Tennessee, who attended Michigan Military Academy, graduating as an “Honor Man” in 1895. While there, he was a classmate of Edgar Rice Burroughs, author of the “Tarzan” adventure novels. In a letter to his old chum on November 13, 1929, Thomason summarized his post-graduation career:

When I left the Academy, I joined the Sixth Horse at Fort Myer, Va., and was made a non-com at once. I went up for a commission and failed miserable in geometry. Quit the army and rode a year with Buffalo Bill. Went to Cuba and joined the Army of Maximo Gomez as a captain of

artillery. When the Spanish war was over, I went to Venezuela as a Lieut. Colonel in command of the Foreign Legion. When our president was overthrown (Anrade) by Cipriano Castro, I was captured and came within an ace of facing the firing squad.

After a series of other exploits in the Philippines and South Africa, Thomason returned to the United States in the early 1900s and went back to Michigan Military Academy where he became Acting Commandant and head of the Cavalry Department. He left in 1907 after being appointed as a Chief Petty Officer with the U.S. Navy in 1907 and retired from active duty in 1927. Thomason was married

and had at least one child, a son, Hugh DeWitt Thomason.

Transcriptions of Thomason's correspondence with Burroughs, edited by David Bruce “Tangor” Bozarth, may be found at [www.erblast.com/bfs/thomason.shtml](http://www.erblast.com/bfs/thomason.shtml).

John Rumm is the Ernest J. Goppert Curator of Western American History at the Buffalo Bill Museum here at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center. ■



Trick riding was always a big part of the Wild West. Four-color lithograph, ca. 1907. The Strobridge Litho Co., Cincinnati, OH, and New York, NY. 1.69.2701



## Patrons Post

*It pays to be a patron!*

### Popular ranch tour returns— this time to the Hoodoo

Area Buffalo Bill Historical Center Patrons are sure to recognize the name “Hoodoo Ranch.” Now, membership’s Historic Ranch Tour Series continues with an exclusive tour of the ranch on Saturday, August 28.

The Hoodoo Ranch began in 1881 and has grown to be one of the largest ranching operations in the region. Join fellow members in visiting several of the ranches which are part of the Hoodoo conglomerate, and hear from ranch personnel about this history-rich area in northern Wyoming. Transportation, lunch, and snacks are included in the cost. Space is limited, so reservations are necessary and will be accepted beginning August 2. ■



Hoodoo Ranch Headquarters, June 10, 1953. MS 89 Jack Richard Photograph Collection. PN.89.03.629.01

### Patrons Ball rocks with Doo Wah Riders

With colors and patterns reminiscent of the finest in Native craftsmanship, this year’s September 25 Patrons Ball places the Plains Indian Museum at center stage for the first time in the event’s history. Co-chair Shauna Roberts notes, “The designs are simply exquisite, and we know attendees will be totally captivated.”

Toe-tappers, finger-drummers, and bonafide dancing feet are sure to enjoy the music of the Doo Wah Riders, whose sound they describe as “high energy country with a cajun twist.” They’ve appeared in concert with the likes of country greats Garth Brooks, Alabama, Brooks and Dunn, Tim McGraw, and a host of others.



The event caps off the week-long *Rendezvous Royale: Immerse Yourself in the Arts* in Cody, Wyoming. Reservation packets will be mailed in early July. In the mean time, follow all the activities—and enter comments of your own—with the Patrons Ball blog at <http://bbhcpatronsbball2010.wordpress.com>. ■

For more information about all member events, contact Jan Jones at [membership@bbhc.org](mailto:membership@bbhc.org) or 307.578.4032.



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

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	CENTER HOURS MAY 1 – SEPTEMBER 15: 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. daily SEPTEMBER 16 – OCTOBER 31: 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. daily			JULY		
				Blacksmith demonstrations: Dave Osmundsen, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. each day		
				Backstage with Buffalo Bill's Wild West 2 John Rumm, 12:15 p.m.	3	
						
				Backstage with Buffalo Bill's Wild West John Rumm, 12:15 p.m.	9	
						Play: Quilters, 7:30 p.m. \$
Special Exhibitions						
Buffalo Bill's Wild West Warriors: Photographs by Gertrude Käsebier on view through August 8	Discovery Field Trip: Protecting Our Park \$ Camping in Yellowstone National Park (for students entering grades 7 – 9, registration required)			15	16	17
Splendid Heritage: Perspectives on American Indian Art on view through October 31	13	14		Play: Quilters, 2 p.m. \$	Play: Quilters, 7:30 p.m. \$ <i>Backstage with Buffalo Bill's Wild West</i> John Rumm, 12:15 p.m.	Play: Quilters, 7:30 p.m. \$ National Day of the American Cowboy Celebration CFM Records Office open for Missouri Valley Arms Collectors 24 Association Annual Show
Buffalo Bill Art Show & Sale Preview Exhibition On view August 26 through September 24	20	21		Play: Quilters, 2 p.m. \$	22	23
Daily Educational Programs Monday – Friday, July and August Children's and family activities, 1 – 3 p.m. Chuckwagon demonstrations, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.				Play: Quilters, 2 p.m. \$	Play: Quilters, 7:30 p.m. \$ <i>Backstage with Buffalo Bill's Wild West</i> John Rumm, 12:15 p.m.	Play: Quilters, 7:30 p.m. \$
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
AUGUST						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Presenters: Barbara and Ralph Melfi as Annie Oakley and Buffalo Bill, 3 presentations each day at 11 a.m., 1:30 p.m., and 3 p.m.			Celebrating Raptors: Free Flight, Kin Quitugua of Hawk Quest \$ 4 live raptor presentations each day, 11 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 2 p.m., and 3:30 p.m.		Play: Quilters, 7:30 p.m. \$
	Presenters: Barbara and Ralph Melfi as Annie Oakley and Buffalo Bill, 3 presentations each day at 11 a.m., 1:30 p.m., and 3 p.m.			Buffalo Bill in Europe: symposium August 5 and 6, field trip August 7 Family Fun Day: Animal Olympics 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.		Play: Quilters, 7:30 p.m. \$
	Discovery Field Trip: Ancient Lives and Current Clues \$ Camping in Shoshone National Forest (for students entering grades 7 – 9, registration required)			Buffalo Bill Invitational Shootout, BBHC and Cody Shooting Complex		CFM Records Office open for Big Bend Show



8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	Wind River Dancers Powwow dancing demonstrations Performance times TBD	16		19	Backstage with Buffalo Bill's Wild West John Rumm, 12:15 p.m.	21
22		23		26	Backstage with Buffalo Bill's Wild West John Rumm, 12:15 p.m.	27
29		30		31		
5		6		8		
12		13		15		
						
Rendezvous Royale: A Celebration of Arts in Cody (For ticket information visit <a href="http://www.RendezvousRoyale.org">www.RendezvousRoyale.org</a> or call 888.598.8119)						
Cody High Style workshops \$						
Cody High Style: Designing the West exhibition						
Cody High Style: seminars, demonstrations						
Cody High Style fashion shows \$						
21						
23						
24						
Buffalo Bill Art Show Quick Draw, 9 a.m. \$						
Patrons Ball, 6:30 p.m. \$						
PHOTO CREDITS:						
• Samuel Lone Bear by Gertrude Stanton Käsebieber, 1898. Vincent Mercaldo Collection. P.71.429.1						
• Gallery demonstrator Bob Seabeck, 2006.						
• Discovery Field Trip participant records field notes, 2009.						
• Jingle dress dancing. Plains Indian Museum Powwow, 2009.						
• Cody High Style fashion show, 2009. Photo by Ken Blackburn.						
IT'S A DATE ... pullout calendar						
\$ Denotes additional fee required.						

## Art and culture of Plains Indians: All here!

For the Plains Indian, powwow was always a time to come together and celebrate with family and friends. . . It still is.

The annual Plains Indian Museum Powwow now attracts more than 225 dancers representing 42 tribes from across the United States and is the largest, longest running public program at the Historical Center. The two days of powwow are filled with colorful dancers of all ages, authentic Native American arts and crafts for sale, the Learning Tipi, and concessions—all “celebrating the Spirit of the American West.”

Factor in our summer exhibitions—*Buffalo Bill's Wild West Warriors: Photographs* by Gertrude Käsebier

(through August 8) and *Splendid Heritage: Perspectives on American Indian Art* (now extended to October 31)—and the exhibit *Karl Bodmer Prints: Images of North America*, and visitors find its the perfect time to explore Native American culture and art.

For powwow schedule and more information visit [www.bbhc.org/events/powwow.cfm](http://www.bbhc.org/events/powwow.cfm). ■

## New roles and new people at BBHC

Dr. Kurt Graham, managing editor of the *Papers of William F. Cody*, House Director of the McCracken Research

Library, and Co-Director of the Cody Institute for Western American Studies has moved to Utah to become Director of the Church History Museum in Salt Lake City.

On April 1, Mary Robinson was named library director to replace Graham. She was most recently associate director and head librarian of the library and has been working in a hands-on capacity with the special collections there for nearly a decade.

Northwest College Assistant Professor of History Jeremy Johnston has been named managing editor of the *Buffalo Bill Historical Center's The Papers of William F. Cody*. No stranger to the Center, Johnston has served as associate editor of the project for the last year and had twice been

tapped as a research fellow with the Center's Cody Institute for Western American Studies. For the last fifteen years, he's taught a variety of history classes at the Powell, Wyoming, college. Johnston's first day on the job was May 26. ■

## Lloyd New Institute of Native American Art

For students and teachers interested in Native American art and culture, the Lloyd New Institute of Native American Art offers a unique educational opportunity to explore how the two intersect. The week-long program, July 19 – 23, takes place at the Histori-

cal Center and is co-sponsored by the Plains Indian Museum and the University of Wyoming.

Named for Native art educator Lloyd New, the institute is open to graduate and undergraduate students as well as teachers seeking instruction on Native American arts and culture. Participants can receive college credit through the University of Wyoming's American Indian Studies program by enrolling in summer session course AIST-4990 and paying tuition. Visit <http://uwadmnweb.uwyo.edu/registrar/Summer2010> for more information. The cost without college credit is \$275. Contact Gretchen Henrich at [gretchenh@bbhc.org](mailto:gretchenh@bbhc.org) or 307.578.4061 to register without credit. ■

## Connect with BBHC through social media



With all the talk these days about social media, the Center finds itself smack-dab in the “center” of it—pun intended.

With Facebook, the Center posts photos, programming, “object of the week,” discussion starters, and news. Quick updates, schedule changes, and current programming are on Twitter with video clips at YouTube.

“Flickr is great because visitors and fans can add photos to our ‘group,’” Marguerite House, the Center's media manager, says. “This allows folks to see the Center through the eyes of our visitors.” To find the Center on these social media sites, simply search for “Buffalo Bill Historical Center,” according to House. “As the ads say, ‘Follow us,’” she says. ■



Powwow dancer with bustle

Our heartfelt sympathies go out to the family of Joel Wilkinson—Buffalo Bill Museum Advisory Board member since 1984—who passed away April 2 at age 74. Contributions in Wilkinson's memory can be made to the Historical Center.



# Celebrating the spirit of the American West

*First say to yourself what you would be; and then do what you have to do.*  
—Epictetus, ancient Greek philosopher

In an effort to do just that, the Board of Trustees of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center unanimously adopted a new “Spirit of the American West” credo at its winter meeting in January. The credo—a powerful, formal statement of shared belief—commits the Historical Center, to its mission, “to keep, in the fullest sense of the word, the Spirit of the American West.”

“The credo will guide all that we do and all that we plan as well as how we think about ourselves and how we present ourselves to our external constituents,” Bruce Eldredge, Executive Director, says. “As such, we hope it inspires people to become connected with us in a way they haven’t been able to before.” The points below form the credo of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center:

*We believe* in a spirit, definable and intellectually real, called the “Spirit of the American West;”

*We believe* the Spirit of the American West is central to American Democracy and an iconic image of

freedom worldwide;

*We believe* the Spirit of the American West is, tragically, not “eternal;” it can wither and die;

*We believe* the Spirit of the American West was first forged by nature creating magnificent landscapes and abundant wildlife—a vastness where pioneer forefathers and mothers, and magnificent American Indians joined in a moment of history originally interpreted and mythologized by people such as William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody;

*We believe* the Spirit of the American West is the spirit of optimism itself; it is defined, and replenished, by exploration and invention; expanding environmental awareness; western art and native American culture; the history and craftsmanship of firearms; and an ethos of hardy individualism facing frontiers of all kinds;

*We believe* the Spirit of the American West lives at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center because generations of Americans saved, funded, taught, studied, authored, interpreted, recorded, performed, danced, conserved, painted, sculpted, collected, filmed, exhibited,

and fought for this heritage in Cody;

*We believe* the Spirit of the American West, absent this dedication, can die in one or two generations of corrosive, modern, mass indifference. There is an undeniable loss of classical minimum standards of learning in American history, art, and science, with huge consequences;

*We believe* the Spirit of the American West dies each day in the distracted face of a youth: alone, probably indoors, immersed in a globalized, saturated media environment of “self and cell.” Above all, there must be a high-powered, contemporary determination to keep the Spirit of the American West alive and relevant for these young people;

*We believe* the Spirit of the American West thrives in Cody and the Greater Yellowstone region of Wyoming where we rededicate ourselves—through our collections, our educational programs, our interpretation, and our determination—to keeping this spirit vibrant for visitors, real and virtual, worldwide; and

*We believe* we can succeed in our mission to keep, in the fullest sense of the word, The Spirit of the American West. ■



*Encounter a great  
American icon  
again . . . for the  
very first time.*

*I am about to take the back-trail  
through the Old West—the West that  
I knew and loved. All my life it has  
been a pleasure to show its beauties,  
its marvels and its possibilities to those  
who, under my guidance, saw it for the  
first time . . . And if in following me,  
their interest in this vast land of my  
youth should be awakened, I should feel  
richly repaid.*

These words from William F.  
“Buffalo Bill” Cody’s autobiography  
speak volumes about the Great  
Showman’s lifelong objective.

He was the  
definitive  
westerner—  
celebrating the  
spirit of the  
American West at  
every turn.

Today, that’s our  
objective, too.

Share the adventure;  
find out how you can  
contribute to *Man of  
the West*, *Man of the  
World*, the  
reinstallation  
of the Buffalo  
Bill Museum.  
Call the  
Development  
Office today!

## Ways of giving



Wendy Schneider

By Wendy Schneider,  
Director of Development

The Spirit of the American West is central to the American Democracy and is an iconic image of freedom worldwide. It is the spirit of optimism itself, and no one better exemplifies it than William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody.

This spirit can wither and die without a concerted dedication to keep it alive and relevant for generations to come. To this end, the Buffalo Bill Museum at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center is completely remaking itself. The goal is to enable visitors of all ages and backgrounds to re-encounter an American icon and his embodiment of the Spirit of the American West in a fresh and dynamic installation: William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody—Man of the West, Man of the World.

When the Buffalo Bill Museum reopens in 2012 after a complete makeover, visitors will be reacquainted with this American icon in a wholly different way. Offering authentic objects, state-of-the-art exhibits, engaging interactive displays, and a compelling story, the “new” Buffalo Bill Museum will truly become a museum for the twenty-first century about one of the most important historical figures of the nineteenth century—someone whose legacy continues to shape and define how we think about the West, America, the American Spirit, and ourselves.

The new museum will invite visitors to explore the many facets of a unique individual. It was through the persona of “Buffalo Bill”—and his traveling outdoor show Buffalo Bill’s Wild West—that Cody brought the West to the world and the world to the West. This extraordinary venture will tell this great American story and, in doing so, will help keep the Spirit of the American West alive for generations to come.

We hope you will support us as we begin this important endeavor: keeping the Spirit of the American West fresh and dynamic. We invite you to join us in Cody at the kick off of this two-year fundraising effort in June 2010. More details to follow! ■







# Meet me IN St. Louis!

By Robert V. Goss

*Three years ago, Points West featured the travels of Guy Gertsch, a man who walked the Lewis and Clark route to commemorate its two-hundredth anniversary. Last year, artist Charles Fritz shared his paintings of the Corps of Discovery, created as he, too, followed the trail. In this issue, historian Bob Goss shares the story of two men from Cody, Wyoming, who followed the route—by water. For the rest of the story, complete with all the Lewis and Clark references, contact the editor.*

**R**ivers must have been the guides which conducted the footsteps of the first travelers. They are the constant lure, when they flow by our doors, to distant enterprise and adventure, and, by a natural impulse, the dwellers on their banks will at length accompany their currents to the lowlands of the globe, or explore at their invitation the interior of continents. — Henry David Thoreau

Long ere the shining rails of steel captured the noisy, smoking locomotives that followed them, rivers were—and oft-times still are—the highways and byways of America.

Cutting through dense forests, roaring through deep canyons, and snaking along vast plains, these liquid highways have been avenues of travel since primitive man first conjured up the idea of a craft to float these vast roadways. For thousands of years, people have used these highways for hunting, trade, commerce, travel, adventure, and exploration.

Indeed, one of the primary goals of the 1804 Lewis and Clark Expedition was to find a watercourse that would connect the east and west coasts of North America, binding together the vast country that had just become part of the United States. Traveling through lands foreign to the white man—but well-known to the local population—the expedition failed in its quest to discover a continuous river route to the west coast. It wasn't for lack of trying, though; the route simply wasn't there.

They had not anticipated the great backbone of the West as a final impediment to their goals. Nonetheless, rivers such as the Missouri, Yellowstone, and Platte became the most important avenues of travel from St. Louis, Missouri, to Montana and Wyoming prior to the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869.

Thirty-five years later, two adventurous men from Cody, Wyoming, attempted to re-create the experience of river travel in the manner of Lewis and Clark, the fur trappers, French-Canadian engages, and a host of early

explorers and adventurers. In 1904, the centennial anniversary of Lewis and Clark's epic departure from St. Louis up the Missouri River, Gus Holms, age 31, and his father, John, age 60, set out on a 3,000-mile journey down the Yellowstone and Missouri rivers. Their odyssey in a primitive boat of their own making was the adventure of a lifetime.

Early pioneers in the fledgling 8-year-old town of Cody, the two Holms had dreamed of this journey for several years. Their goals included re-creating Lewis and Clark's voyage down the Yellowstone and Missouri rivers to St. Louis in 1806, and visiting the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair, touted to be the largest world's fair ever and designed to celebrate the hundred-year anniversary of the Louisiana Purchase. Originally scheduled to open during the actual centennial in 1903, delays postponed the premiere until April 30, 1904.

## The romance of adventure

Although not specifically mentioned in news articles of the day, the sheer romance and adventure of the undertaking must have been a strong draw for Gus and John Holms. Writers have waxed poetic about the peace, tranquility, and restorative powers of rivers, along with the adventure that excites the soul.

In Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, for example, Huck mused over the serenity of life on the



water, “We caught fish and talked, and we took a swim now and then to keep off sleepiness. It was kind of solemn, drifting down the big, still river, laying on our backs looking up at the stars, and we didn’t ever feel like talking loud . . .” Anyone who has floated a river on a pleasant summer day can surely appreciate that sentiment.

Gus Holms, who had prospected and mined for gold in the Black Hills of South Dakota and later plied that trade in the Nevada goldfields, was at the time proprietor of Gus Holm’s Tonsorial Parlor (barber shop) in Cody. John Holms, a Cody city councilman, was a carpenter and builder by trade, and no doubt built their craft.

Reluctant to sail from Cody down the Shoshone River and risk the treacherous waters of the Big Horn River downstream, Gus and John Holms traveled ninety miles north to the Yellowstone River and Billings, Montana, where they would construct the vessel and commence their journey—the same stretch that Captain Clark and his men traveled on July 25, 1806, during their return trip to St. Louis.

## How to build a bateau

For their journey, the two built a bateau—a shallow-draft, long, flat-bottomed open boat, with the bow and stern somewhat pointed and sometimes tilted upward. They were reliable and generally easy to build without detailed plans. These boats were used extensively in North America, particularly during the colonial days and western fur trade. In several instances, the Lewis and Clark journals describe some of their boats as “bateaux.”

The Holms’s craft was eighteen feet long with an eight-foot beam, two-foot depth of hold, and slightly squared ends. Tent material was stretched over

a light wood framework to provide protection from the elements. A couple of stout oars afforded extra propulsion to help them get out of tight places, while a sweep in the stern provided steering. A short flagstaff proudly flew the Stars and Stripes.

A *Billings Gazette* newspaper reporter provided an onsite description of the vessel. “The craft they turned out has hardly the lines of symmetry of a cup defender,” he wrote, “but she looks staunch and seaworthy and withal is roomy and commodious and suits her builders and designers, probably of the most importance to them, as they alone are to occupy it, being crew, officers, and passengers.”

## Launch

The intrepid sailors set off on May 16, 1904, from a point described as near “the old wagon bridge east of the city [Billings].” Coinciding with high water season, the men hoped the spring run-off would help speed them along their way. At the time of sendoff, “There was no crash of music, no jostling of crowds, no stylishly dressed young women with pale face to break the traditional bottle of wine,” according to the *Gazette*. Instead, drinking a toast with bottles of beer instead of champagne, a few well-wishers that included Sam Salsbury, Billy Vale, and Theodore Fenske were on hand to see their friends off and bid them well.

“Sam Salsbury gave a whoop and helped father and son shove, and the modest—so modest that she has not even been named—boat . . . bobbed up and down on the turbulent Yellowstone like a bottle emptied of its contents. But for all the simplicity and utter lack of ceremony, the launching of the craft was a success, and the first move had been made in a voyage that had St. Louis Mo. for its terminus.”

## Navigating the Great Plains

Traveling northeast through Montana, the adventurers passed many historic locations along the Yellowstone River, including Fort Union at the convergence of the Yellowstone and Missouri rivers. There, they sailed onto the Missouri River, where they would spend the rest of their journey until it joined the Mississippi River near St. Louis.

They continued on through the mostly treeless, arid plains of North Dakota and passed Fort Mandan where Lewis and Clark had wintered in 1804 – 1805. In Bismarck, they made some design changes to their bateau. Apparently anticipating sections of slow water, the men installed a 1.5 horsepower gas engine hooked up to a small paddlewheel at the stern of the boat. Rugged on a hinged frame, the two-man crew could raise the wheel when they encountered sand bars, snags, or low water.

Newly-outfitted and with technology not available to Lewis and Clark, the men continued south where the river took them through the Great Plains of South Dakota. They passed Pierre and the mouth of the Bad River, and then floated to Sioux City, Iowa. At each bend in the river or ridge in the distance, they pondered the frame of mind of Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery.

## A thousand miles to go

The Holms were now about a thousand miles from their destination and continued to skillfully maneuver past logjams and “sawyers,” that is, submerged trees that could rip their boat apart. Near Council Bluffs, Iowa, the men intersected the Mormon Trail where it crossed the Missouri and followed the Platte River on its journey to the “Promised Land” in Utah. They



traveled south to St. Joseph, Missouri, where the famous, but short-lived Pony Express route originated. A little farther south was Independence, Missouri, the “Queen City of the Trails” and the “jumping off” point for the many celebrated historic trails that opened up the West.

Then, the Missouri River abruptly turned east for the final stretch and eventual meeting with the mighty Mississippi north of St. Louis. With little or no fanfare, John and Gus Holms arrived in St. Louis on August 4, 1904, after eighty days and three thousand miles of river travel. Despite the potential dangers and hardships, they arrived safely with no serious mishaps and in good health. They wired a dispatch to their local newspaper to let the folks back home know they had arrived safe and sound.

## St. Louis

It must have been quite a shock for two small-town men just off an extended river voyage to be suddenly thrust among fair crowds that averaged a hundred thousand a day. Nonetheless, the sights were awesome. The Ferris wheel, which debuted in the 1893 Columbia Exposition, reappeared in St. Louis where it could carry more than two thousand people at once. It permitted its passengers a grand view of the vast fairgrounds with visitors wandering through the fairyland of gleaming white palaces surrounded by artistic landscaping.

Most of the states and many countries of the world erected pavilions to proudly show off the agricultural, mineral, technological, and cultural wealth of their homelands. For lighter entertainment, there was the Pike, filled with all manner of amusements, where patrons could ride the exhilarating “Scenic Railway,” predecessor to roller coasters; be awed

by a re-creation of the devastating 1900 “Flood of Galveston;” or howl with pleasure in the “Temple of Mirth.” The fair provided entertainment and education for all ages and interests.

## Back to Cody

Apparently ready to return home and resume life as contractor and city councilman, John Holms hopped aboard the train and arrived back in Cody the week of August 25, 1904. He deemed the World’s Fair a “marvelous exhibition” and received congratulations from his fellow townsfolk on his successful river voyage.

Gus Holms stayed in St. Louis to take in more of the sights and sounds of the city and the fair. He returned to Cody on September 17 and claimed the river trip was, “extremely pleasant, the only drawback being that it ended too soon.” Regarding the fair, Gus exclaimed that it “greatly exceeded my expectation . . . and affords one great pleasure and instruction.”

John Holms passed away a mere four years later after a short illness,

but Gus developed a life-long passion for transportation, whether by river, horse-drawn coach, or auto. He assisted his brother Aron “Tex” Holms with his Yellowstone Park camping and stagecoach operation and in 1910, Gus established the first auto livery and garage in Cody. He later became a member of the first highway commission in Wyoming and the Wyoming Good Roads movement.

Gus participated in a remarkable five-thousand-mile auto adventure with A.L. Westgard in 1920 traversing the planned, but still primitive, Park-to-Park Highway auto route that would connect the national parks in Wyoming, Montana, Washington, Oregon, California, Arizona, Utah, New Mexico, and Colorado. Gus Holms died in June 1956. ■

*Robert V. “Geyser Bob” Goss is a historian of the Greater Yellowstone region and has written numerous articles and books about the area. In April, he headed to the south rim of the Grand Canyon for more “work, play, and exploration.”*



At every bend in the river, John and Gus Holms no doubt envisioned the Corps of Discovery in a romanticized light—much the same way that artist Thomas Mickell Burnham (1818 – 1866) characterized the group. *The Lewis and Clark Expedition*, ca. 1850. Oil on canvas, 36.125 x 48.5 inches. Museum Purchase. 21.78

# *Sights* *Seeing and hearing* *Sounds*

## THE GREATER YELLOWSTONE SIGHTS AND SOUNDS ARCHIVE

By Charles R. Preston, PhD

**I**magine a well-documented photograph, film clip, or even an audio recording of a dinosaur, saber-toothed cat, or ancient human. What if we could see the successive alternating subtropical, volcanic, and glacial landscapes that have shaped the American West and our vision of it? How about a video of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark exploring the Missouri River country or John Colter making his way through the Yellowstone/Cody region? What would it be like to hear a recorded interview of Theodore Roosevelt, John Muir, and Gifford Pinchot discussing preservation and conservation on public lands in the American West?

We have “ghosts” of these experiences through fossils, journals, and written transcripts, but these fall

far short of truly robust accounts. In the future, however, we can attain a more dynamic portrait of late nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first century wildlife, landscapes, and human perceptions and attitudes relating to the natural resources of the Greater Yellowstone region thanks in part to the Greater Yellowstone Sights and Sounds Archive.

### *Seeing and hearing Yellowstone*

In 1998, the Buffalo Bill Historical Center offered me the opportunity of a lifetime: to lead the design and development of a brand new natural history museum—the Draper Museum of Natural History. Early in discussions with Center staff, trustees, and Draper Museum advisory board members,

we decided against duplicating the enormous series of natural history specimens found in other major museums. Instead, we would develop a small collection of specimens to achieve our reference, exhibit, and education needs, and support specific research projects. Most of our collecting efforts, however, would be spent acquiring and documenting audiovisual materials that would help us achieve our institutional purpose: to explore, document, and interpret the Greater Yellowstone region.

It seemed to us that an audiovisual collection of materials related to Yellowstone natural history, digitized and rigorously documented, would provide enormous versatility in serving scholarly and public audiences through a variety of venues. I captured some of our early discussions in two articles,



The author (left) and Draper Museum/Northwest College intern Ronnie Hegemann record breeding birds on Carter Mountain near Cody in 2004.



# is believing

*Exploring a New Frontier: The Role of Natural History Museums in the 21st Century, and A Natural Addition: Rationale and Status of a Natural History Museum for the Buffalo Bill Historical Center, in the summer 1999 and fall 1999 issues, respectively, of Points West (viewable online at [www.bbhc.org](http://www.bbhc.org)). Yes, more than ten years ago, the Center's Greater Yellowstone Sights and Sounds Archive concept was already taking shape.*

## *Greater Yellowstone Sights and Sounds Archive is born*

Today, thanks to contributions and the work of many people, as well as generous financial support from the R.K. Mellon Family Foundation and other sources, the Greater Yellowstone Sights and Sounds Archive is a reality. Although still in its infancy, the archive includes photographs and video clips of wildlife and landscapes of the Greater Yellowstone region, along with interviews with prominent scientists, resource managers, landowners, outfitters, and other people representing varied perspectives on the region's natural heritage. These materials really hit the core of our purpose to integrate science and humanities at the Center as some of the most compelling footage records the tone and comments of people attending the many public meetings held to gather information about grizzly bear and gray wolf management in the Greater Yellowstone region during a

critically important historic period.

Fittingly, our first major acquisition was a collection of more than eighty digital video tapes donated by Penny Preston, who spent well over five hundred volunteer hours duplicating these tapes and preparing them for final cataloging and processing. In 2009, we began documenting our research on golden eagles and changes in sagebrush-steppe environments with still photography. Beginning this year, we will use new, high-definition video recording equipment purchased with research grant funds from the Bureau of Land Management and the Wildlife Heritage Foundation of Wyoming to chronicle this long-term study in more detail and incorporate these historic recordings into the archive.

We are also drafting a plan to establish strategically placed recording stations throughout the Greater Yellowstone region to systematically monitor environmental change with photographs and video of plant communities, and audio recordings of breeding bird communities. Birds are excellent indicators of environmental change and can be monitored by

recording early morning vocalizations during spring breeding season. These recordings will serve future generations as an audit of environmental change through time in our region of the American West.

## *How it's done*

Supported by competitive grant funding beginning in 2008, Greater Yellowstone Sights and Sounds Program Manager Richard Chapman has been archiving, organizing, and cataloging materials following international data standards. Chapman brings enormous passion, professionalism, new perspectives and ideas, and a keen eye for detail to

Immature bald eagle.



this project, and has become a critical factor in its success. His background as a lifelong educator, along with interests in photography, videography, people, and wildlife, have prepared him well for his current position. Chapman has even helped us develop an ongoing relationship with a potential corporate partner whose expertise and interests dovetail with the project, and he has infused our laboratory with the energy and technological savvy of high school volunteers.

The Greater Yellowstone Sights and Sounds Archive will complement other biodiversity information datasets in our own institution as well as others and constitutes an important resource available for scientists, conservationists, educators, and the general public. The Greater Yellowstone region is one of the most important and beloved natural heritage sites in the world. As such, the region continues to be a wellspring of exciting new scientific discoveries and controversies related to the conservation and management of wildlands that are surrounded by often-conflicting human economic and cultural interests.

This region provides a hint of what the natural West once held and thus embodies the enduring Spirit of the American West for people around the globe. The Greater Yellowstone Sights and Sounds Archive will help our generation—and future generations—document and monitor environmental change in this important region. It will provide a rich educational

resource while serving as an ongoing audit of the region while it monitors environmental change through time. So cutting edge is the project that when we presented the concept of the archive at a panel on non-broadcast media in museums sponsored by the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival in 2007, one panelist declared that this was “. . . one of the most innovative initiatives to come out of museums in many years.”

## *Down the road*

We still have a long way to go to realize the full potential of the Greater Yellowstone Sights and Sounds Archive. During Phase I of the project, we have secured external funding to acquire baseline staff and equipment and have begun capturing and cataloging still and moving images. Some of these images have already been used in broadcast news reports, publications, exhibit components, and lecture presentations.

The Draper Museum of Natural History has assumed the lead in developing the archive due to our focus and expertise on Greater Yellowstone natural history. However, the archive is a pan-institutional product that draws on expertise and materials throughout the Center. For example, the McCracken Research Library maintains collections such as the wonderful Gabby Barrus Collection of wildlife photography, which will gain additional visibility linked with similar materials

through the online presence of the archive.

During Phase II (2010 – 2011), and pending continued grant funding, we will work closely with the McCracken Research Library, the Center's Registration and Information Technology departments, and external partners to complete and publish data and media standards for the archive and create an online searchable database of archive materials. We are also planning to launch an online gallery of images, sound recordings, and general information related to topics of audience interest, such as grizzly bears, gray wolves, thermal features, stream flow and water issues, wildfire, and more.

In Phase III, to be completed in 2012, we will publish the protocol, guidelines, and administrative infrastructure for providing access to archive materials and launch a fully-tested and proven online access portal through the Center's Web site. We will also begin actively soliciting donations of well-documented still and moving images from professionals and the public to expand the archive. Through the Greater Yellowstone Sights and Sounds Archive, the Buffalo Bill Historical Center is sure to become one of the premier resources for documenting the natural history of the Greater Yellowstone region through still and moving images, and audio recordings.

The spectacularly popular Discovery Channel broadcast series *Planet Earth* and *Life* both testify to the



Red fox at Pahaska Tepee, fifty miles west of Cody, 2009.



Sanitation/salvage logging on Carter Mountain, 2004 – 2005.



Yellowstone grizzly bear.



profound impact that nature's images and sounds exert on the minds and emotions of today's public. In the same way, the images and sounds in the Greater Yellowstone Sights and Sounds Archive—and featured in our exhibits and programs—will help us attract, engage, inform, and hopefully inspire our audiences with a renewed passion for the magnificent landscapes, wildlife, and Spirit of the American West. ■

*A zoologist and wildlife ecologist by training, Dr. Charles R. Preston is Senior Curator for the Draper Museum of Natural History at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center. Prior to his move to Cody, he was Chairman of the Department of Zoology at the Denver Museum of Natural History and before that, Associate Professor of Biological Sciences at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. He has more than*

*thirty years professional experience in museum, government, and university environments, and holds or has held adjunct faculty appointments at the University of Colorado (Boulder and Denver campuses), the University of Denver, and the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville.*

All photos are from the Buffalo Bill Historical Center's Greater Yellowstone Sights and Sounds Archives.

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## *Planting seeds*

The genesis for the Greater Yellowstone Sights and Sounds Archive grew from a casual dinner conversation fifteen years ago among members of my zoology curatorial staff and our spouses at the Denver Museum of Natural History (now Denver Museum of Nature and Science). We discussed the importance of traditional natural history specimen collections for preserving the record of life on earth and as an audit of environmental change. Our consensus was that specimen collections across the world continue to serve an invaluable function in research and education, but have some major shortcomings, as well.

Although we can derive much information from a museum specimen, especially with new DNA extraction technology, these specimens do not provide much information about behavior or the role the organism plays in its environment. And, although a properly-documented specimen tells us that the species existed at one point in time in a particular place, it provides little perspective on broad-scale environmental change or human relationships with the species and its environment. Our dinner group also acknowledged the fact that ever-growing specimen collections require ever-growing space to accommodate

them—a highly valued and expensive commodity in most modern museums.

Penny Preston, my wife and career television news anchor/media professional, suggested that modern museums should be collecting and documenting moving images of wildlife and natural history in the same way traditional museums have always collected and documented specimens. We knew that a few organizations, notably the Macaulay Library at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology in Ithaca, New York, were actively collecting and cataloging audiovisual materials related to birds and other natural history subjects, but we had not fully considered the implications

or potential of building such a collection. It took the perspective of a museum outsider to really open our minds to the possibilities.

We began to build an archive of film clips and photographs that documented the field research our curators and research associates conducted at the infamous Rocky Mountain Arsenal, a World War II-era weapons manufacturing facility near Denver that is now a national wildlife refuge. The project eventually produced a broadcast documentary and several popular exhibits-related programs from the archive footage—and the seeds of a great idea, the Greater Yellowstone Sights and Sounds Archive. ■



KULR-TV News reporter and Historical Center volunteer Penny Preston documents a Draper Museum field expedition.

# Treasures from our West

## SPIRIT HOUSE—HEART MOUNTAIN 1942, PETER JACOBS

Colorado artist Peter Jacobs (b. 1939) collaborated with William Hosokawa, a Japanese-American journalist and author, to create *Spirit House—Heart Mountain 1942*. Hosokawa (1915 – 2007) was detained at the Heart Mountain Relocation Center near Powell, Wyoming, during World War II, an experience that stayed with him for the rest of his life. More than sixty years later, he worked with Jacobs to create a powerful artwork based on that place and event.

Jacobs' work depicts a wooden camp building balanced on a tall base. The base, wrapped with barbed wire, symbolizes confinement and hardship. A tar paper silhouette of Heart Mountain covers the sides of the structure, along with English and Japanese graffiti with messages of courage and pleas for help. Branches on the roof signify nature slowly reclaiming and purifying the structure as time passes. White prayer flags on the branches bestow prayers and good wishes for goodness and justice.

Jacobs brings attention to the story of 10,767 people who stayed at Heart Mountain Relocation Center and the 120,000 Japanese-Americans interned throughout the United States. The artist encourages viewers to remember this event in American history so that it may never happen again. ■



Whitney Gallery of Western Art. Peter Jacobs (b. 1939). *Spirit House—Heart Mountain 1942*, 2006. Mixed media, 38 x 14.5 x 18.75 inches. Gift of the artist. 6.06

## WOLVERINE

Perhaps no other North American mammal is shrouded in more mystery than the wolverine (*Gulo gulo*). A member of the weasel family, this secretive predator lives in some of the most harsh and inaccessible alpine and arctic tundra environments in North America and northern Eurasia. It requires large expanses of relatively undisturbed, cold-weather, conifer forest and tundra. Once found in nearly all Rocky Mountain states and as far east as New England, numbers and distribution have declined since the late 1800s due to human settlement and activity.

Wolverines have few natural predators and tend to aggressively defend themselves against much larger predators, such as grizzly bears and mountain lions. Wolves and golden eagles are among the few animals to successfully prey on wolverines, which in turn prey on a

wide variety of birds and mammals up to the size of deer and even elk.

This specimen is installed in the Alpine Environment of the Draper Museum of Natural History Alpine-to-Plains Trail gallery. The dramatic

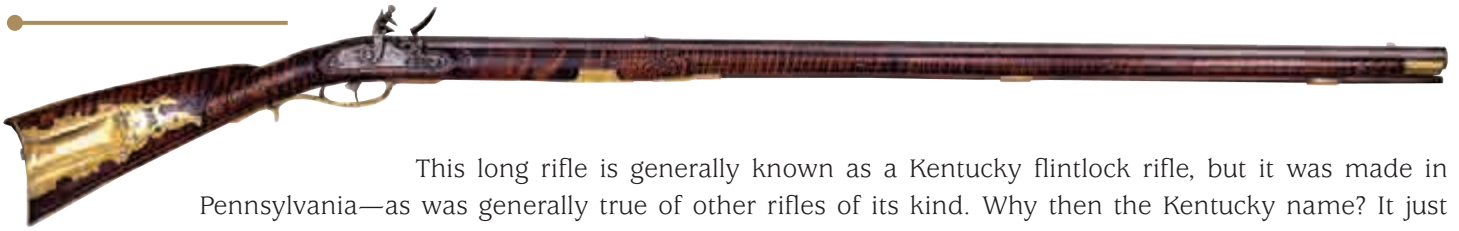
exhibit illustrates a wolverine defending a recent kill (yellow-bellied marmot) from a grizzly bear approaching from above and a Clark's nutcracker looking on from a safe distance. ■



Adult wolverine. Draper Museum of Natural History. NH.305.142



## "KENTUCKY" FLINTLOCK RIFLE



This long rifle is generally known as a Kentucky flintlock rifle, but it was made in Pennsylvania—as was generally true of other rifles of its kind. Why then the Kentucky name? It just happened to be ideally suited for use in the dense forests of Kentucky, and its virtues were extolled in that state—both in use and in song—earlier than elsewhere. One might say with at least a fair degree of accuracy that these guns were adopted and brought to maturity in Kentucky.

The Kentucky rifle, with its smaller caliber, rifled barrel, and slender stock, proved to be a great improvement over the musket in range and accuracy. With it, hunters and military marksmen could hit their targets at greater distances than ever before. In the American Revolution, many British soldiers fell because of the mistaken assumption that they were out of range of the revolutionaries' guns.

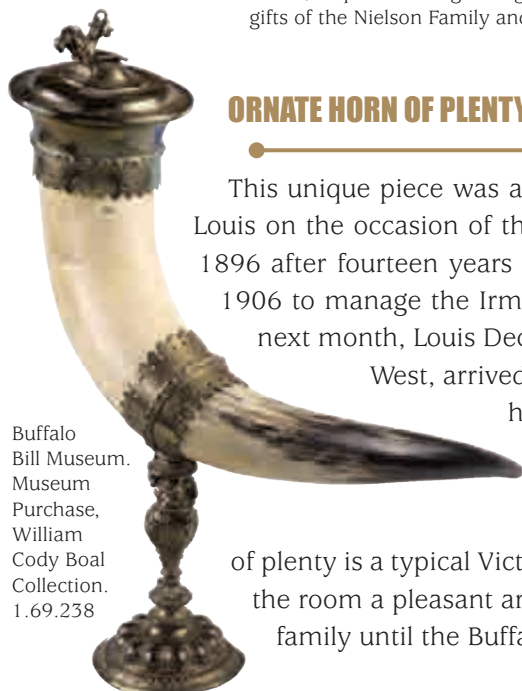
This rifle, made by the famous Nicholas Beyer of Lebanon, Pennsylvania, with its gleaming brass patch box, tiger stripe maple wood, and carved religious symbols, is from the so-called "Golden Age" of the Kentucky rifle. ■

Cody Firearms Museum. Gift of Olin Corporation, Winchester Arms Collection. 1988.8.876

## CHEYENNE DOLL

Made around 1870, this extraordinary Tsistsistas (Cheyenne) doll stands twenty-seven inches high and wears the dress and ornaments worn by Cheyenne women and girls of the same time period, as mothers and grandmothers typically patterned the clothing of a girl's doll after the current fashion trends within a tribe. The diverse materials used—tanned hide, muslin, glass beads, metal cones, cowrie shells, buffalo hair, commercial leather, German silver, porcupine quills, pigment, cotton cloth, and sinew—were those used in real clothing of the time and give the doll its intricate detail. ■

Plains Indian Museum. The Paul Dyck Plains Indian Buffalo Culture Collection, acquired through the generosity of the Dyck family and additional gifts of the Nielson Family and the Estate of Margaret S. Coe. NA.507.133



## ORNATE HORN OF PLENTY

This unique piece was a gift from Mr. and Mrs. William F. Cody to his sister May and her husband Louis on the occasion of their marriage in 1907. May's first husband, Edward Clark Bradford, died in 1896 after fourteen years of marriage. At her brother's suggestion, May moved to Cody in February 1906 to manage the Irma Hotel for him, along with some of his other business interests. The very next month, Louis Decker, a trusted associate of Buffalo Bill's who had worked for him in the Wild West, arrived in Cody to do the same thing! By the end of the year, they were in love and happily co-managing the Colonel's three hotels: the Irma, Pahaska Tepee, and Wapiti Inn.

The horn is a steer horn which is attached to an elaborate brass stand decorated with two lion heads; the lid has a winged lion on top. This horn of plenty is a typical Victorian decorative arts-style horn that often contained fragrant sachets to give the room a pleasant aroma—a sort of Victorian air-freshener. Fortunately, it remained in the Cody family until the Buffalo Bill Museum purchased it in 1958. ■

Buffalo Bill Museum.  
Museum Purchase,  
William Cody Boal  
Collection.  
1.69.238

## Buffalo Bill on Stage

By Sandra K. Sagala  
Review by Lynn Houze

Sandra Sagala's book about William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody and his stage career is a much needed addition to the literature available concerning this aspect of Cody's life. While there have been many biographies written about him, there are only a few that deal with his stage career. What started as a small article discussing the visits of the Buffalo Bill Combination (the traveling acting troupe in which Buffalo Bill starred) to Sagala's region of western Pennsylvania has expanded into this definitive work that covers the fourteen-plus years of the Buffalo Bill Combination's existence.

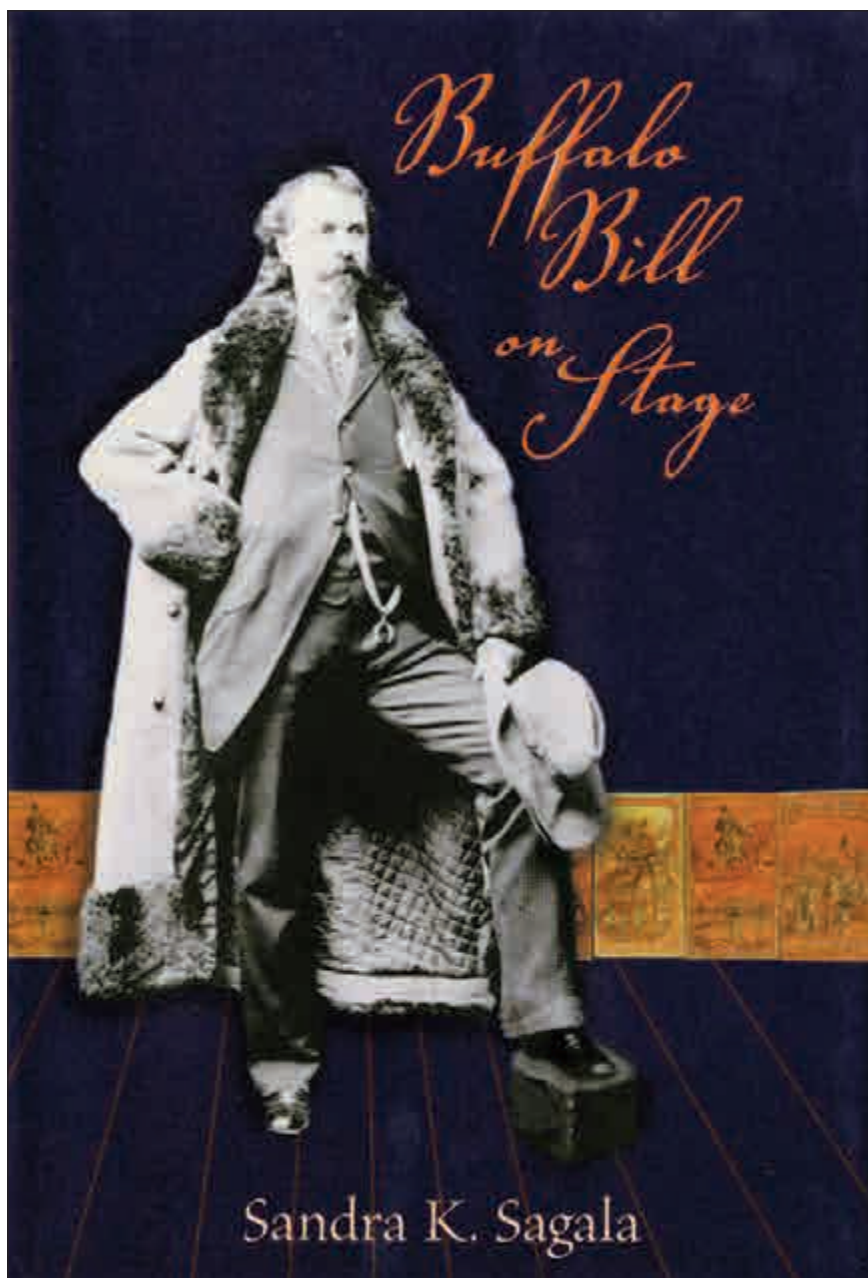
Buffalo Bill Cody began his acting career in Chicago in December 1872 after much pressure and arm-twisting by Ned Buntline, whose real name was Edward Zane Carroll Judson. Buntline was the author of the first play in which Buffalo Bill acted. Titled *Scouts of the Prairie*, it was hastily written and even more hastily rehearsed by the actors. Buffalo Bill and Texas Jack Omohundro played themselves, fortunately, for their memorization skills left a bit to be desired. They improvised their lines based on their personal experiences in the West and managed to hide—somewhat—their shortcomings. Despite this uneven start, the play and Buffalo Bill were big hits, and soon the Buffalo Bill Combination was on the road, traveling throughout the East and Midwest performing western melodramas before large and appreciative audiences.

*Buffalo Bill on Stage* is a well-researched history of Cody's acting

career and his transformation from frontiersman to actor to showman. His theatrical career overlapped with the beginning of Buffalo Bill's Wild West which, in turn, led to Buffalo Bill living the Shakespearian quote from *As You Like It* (1600): "All the world's a stage" as he took the Wild West to England and Europe three different times. In appendices, Sagala not only provides a route list of cities and appearance dates by the Combination, but also the

plays and cast lists, which plays were performed in which seasons, and a synopsis of the few plays that have survived from that time. Additionally, this book gives us a glimpse into the early days of the theater, and the country's fascination with the West.

Sandra K. Sagala. *Buffalo Bill on Stage*. Illustrated, bibliography, index. Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 2009. 307 pp. ISBN: 978-0-8263-4427-4. \$29.95 hardcover. ■







Hot sheep in the Powder River badlands near Broadus, Montana, 1884. L.A. Huffman Collection. P.100.3055

*There was an old saying those days which still persists—when natives wanted to compliment a faithful man in any endeavor they would say of him . . . “There is a man who can get along with hot sheep.” Hot sheep won’t move but each ducked his head under his neighbor and the wise herder would not dog them under those conditions. ~ L.A. Huffman*

This Montana herd appears to be staying put under the hot sun, blending in as part of the arid landscape. The photographer, L.A. Huffman, knew a thing or two about the “faithful man” sticking to an endeavor. He arrived in Montana Territory in 1879 hoping for an appointment as post photographer at Fort Keogh. He got the job and, unpaid though it was, the position provided him a log cabin studio. He later opened a studio in nearby Miles City, and, with part of his time devoted to public office through the years—school board, county commission, Montana house of representatives—Huffman kept constant to his love of photography, documenting the West through landscapes, animals, ranching, and people at work. ■

■ *One picture is worth a thousand words.* ■

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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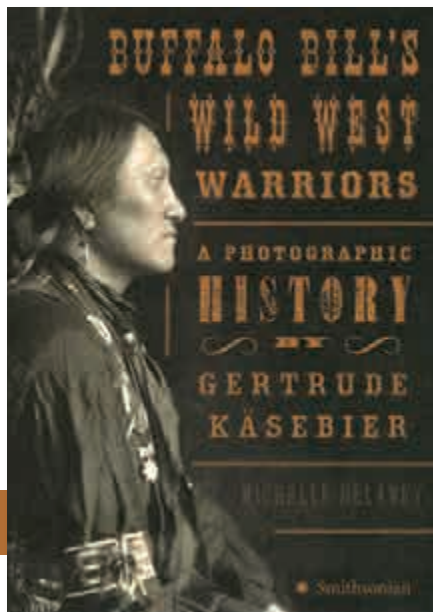
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Photo: Cindy Bennett

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## Buffalo Bill's Wild West Warriors

*A Photographic History by Gertrude Käsebier*

*By Michelle Delaney, curator of the Photographic History  
Collection at the National Museum of American History*

Renowned photographer Gertrude Käsebier's haunting collection of photographs of American Indian performers from Buffalo Bill's Wild West with historical background, drawings, and Wild West show memorabilia—a companion book to the Historical Center's Käsebier exhibition.

Hardcover: \$34.95

(Price is retail and will reflect applicable membership discount at the time of purchase.)

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ISBN: 978-0-06-112977-3. 176 pages. Smithsonian National Museum of American History, Washington, DC, 2007