

# POINTS WEST

BUFFALO BILL HISTORICAL CENTER ■ CODY, WYOMING ■ SPRING 2009



**Countdown to  
Whitney opening**

**More from Buffalo Bill papers**

**Trailing a grizzly  
named Wabb**



By Bruce Eldredge  
Executive Director

Spring is just around the corner, and we at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center hope the end to the nation's economic recession is also just around the corner. Your museum has made many changes over the past few months, only a small portion of which is in response to the tough economic times. Most of the changes—cancelling some programs, changing emphasis to help our staff focus more on our visitors and members, reviewing all purchases, etc.—had nothing to do with the economy and everything to do with great management and operational practices. We are a leaner operation, and that is a good thing as we compete for scarce dollars and support from our members and friends.

We were buoyed by a \$100,000 gift from BP America to help our general operations. A similar check for \$100,000 came from Fayez Sarofim, also to help our general operations. These two generous contributions will help us during these tough times and are a testament to the generosity of our friends. We salute these two firms and the other 450 donors to our annual fund who helped make 2008 a little brighter.

These two gifts and all the support from our annual fund contributors and members are important “bellwether contributions” as they signal strong support for what we do as an institution. As we build our lineup for the upcoming tourist season, we have dynamic programs and activities for all who come to visit.

We hope that you will join us in June for the remarkable reinstallation of the Whitney Gallery of Western Art in honor of its 50th Anniversary. Stop in to see Thomas Moran's incredible painting *Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone* on loan from the Smithsonian American Art Museum in honor of the Whitney celebration. Charles Fritz's important exhibition of a hundred paintings that chronicle the Lewis and Clark expedition will also be on display as well as the birthday card artwork sent by living artists in honor of the Whitney gallery.

These are exciting times; you need to come back and visit again (and again). We hope to see you soon! ■

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#### Senior Editor

Mr. Lee Haines

#### Managing Editor

Ms. Marguerite House

#### Copy Editor

Ms. Nancy McClure

#### Designer

Ms. Jan Woods-Krier

#### Contributing Staff Photographers

Ms. Chris Gimmeson, photography manager;  
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*Points West* is published quarterly as a benefit of membership of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center (BBHC). For membership information, contact Jan Jones, Director of Membership, at [membership@bbhc.org](mailto:membership@bbhc.org) or by writing to the address above.

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

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



#### About the cover:

Thomas Moran's spectacular  
*Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone*.



# Contents

The Buffalo Bill Historical Center and its Whitney Gallery of Western Art are gearing up for the reopening of the renovated gallery in honor of its fiftieth birthday. The trustees, advisory board members, and staff are anxious to share it with visitors starting on June 21, 2009, when it opens to the public in honor of its fiftieth birthday. One of the star attractions this summer is certain to be Thomas Moran's *The Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone*, on loan from the Smithsonian American Art Museum, a masterpiece more than fourteen feet long and eight feet high. Read through this issue of *Points West* to find out more about what's in store for the Whitney's 50th Anniversary. Thomas Moran (1837 – 1926). *The Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone*, 1893 – 1901. Oil on canvas, 96.5 x 168.375 inches. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of George D. Pratt. 1928.7.1



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Visit us online . . .

Stay up-to-date with the changes in the Whitney Gallery of Western Art by following its blog at [www.bbhc.org/wgwa](http://www.bbhc.org/wgwa) and clicking on the "Reinstallation Blog" link.

Magazine of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center • Cody, Wyoming



Smithsonian Institution  
Affiliations Program

# Celebrating the first 50 years of the

By Mindy A. Besaw  
John S. Bugas Curator, Whitney Gallery of Western Art



The Scout looking at WGWA



*The Whitney  
Gallery of  
Western Art*

*was one of  
the very first  
museums to*

*feature art of the  
American West.*

Fifty years ago, in the winter of 1959, the small town of Cody, Wyoming, buzzed with excitement as it anticipated the opening of the brand new Whitney Gallery of Western Art. From a distance, and with great curiosity, residents watched the construction of the building on the edge of town near the monumental sculpture *Buffalo Bill — The Scout*. One March afternoon, they witnessed an eighteen-wheel semi truck back up to the building's entrance, and workers unload large crates directly into the gallery. What would the museum be like when it opened? Would it have an impact on Cody? Would it have national and international impact as well?

The Whitney Gallery of Western Art was one of the very first museums to feature art of the American West, and its opening in April 1959 did indeed garner national and international attention. Ever since its inception, the Whitney gallery has led the art world with outstanding collections, cutting-edge scholarship and exhibitions, and topnotch programs. Now, as we look forward to the Whitney Gallery of Western Art's 50th Anniversary celebration this summer, it is a good time to reflect on and celebrate our first fifty years.



Whitneys and Mary Jester Allen

The Whitney gallery opened to the public with much fanfare and excitement on April 25, 1959. Three thousand fascinated, excited people poured through the doors of the Whitney gallery to see for themselves just what had been created—not bad for a town of less than 5,000 residents. Reporters flocked to Cody from the east coast, the west coast, and regions in between. Movie stars, political figures, and artists peppered the crowds, and everyone raved about the success of the opening. The

building was constructed from all the best materials including terrazzo flooring, and redwood paneling on the walls, not to mention the finest western American art anyone had ever seen. However, the story of “the Whitney” began decades earlier.

## Remarkable patrons . . .

Long before the Whitney opened, the Buffalo Bill Memorial Association commissioned a New York artist, Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, to create a monument to Buffalo Bill. Mrs. Whitney turned out to be the perfect choice: Not only did she create a monumental masterpiece, she also gave generously. In 1924, she donated *Buffalo Bill — The Scout*,

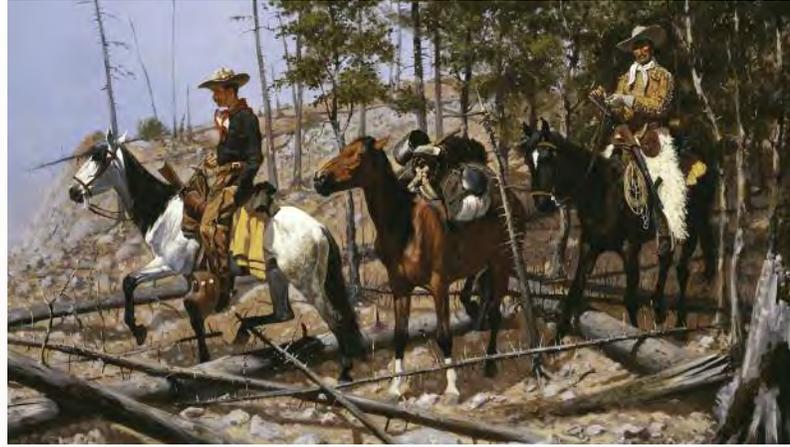
# Whitney Gallery of Western Art

and forty acres of adjacent land, to the memorial association. The town overwhelmingly expressed their appreciation and enthusiasm — its size tripled when an estimated 5,000–6,000 people attended the dedication of the *Scout* on July 4, 1924. Mrs. Whitney's striking monument was only the beginning of the Whitney legacy in Cody.

For thirty years, the *Scout* remained solitary at the outskirts of town. Then, in 1954, the memorial association's dreams for a new building moved closer to reality. Five years after his first visit to Cody, Gertrude's son Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney donated \$250,000 to the memorial association in his mother's memory. Planning for the new building then began in earnest.

The Whitney Gallery of Western Art would be constructed across the street from the existing Buffalo Bill Museum on the land Mrs. Whitney, its namesake, had donated. Since the trustees of the memorial association knew they wanted to enhance the site of *Buffalo Bill — The Scout*, the plans were drawn with large picture windows facing the memorial. Once the proposal was approved in 1957, construction would begin right away, and before it was finished, Mr. Whitney donated an additional \$250,000 to complete the building.

Yet, Mr. Whitney's generous gift was not the only impetus for a brand new building to house western American art.



Remington

In 1957, the Honorable Robert Coe, acting for the Coe Foundation, purchased the Frederic Remington studio collection of paintings, sketches, and artifacts, and donated it to the Buffalo Bill Memorial Association. There was only one stipulation: A new building had to be constructed to showcase the collection.

The Coe Foundation purchase of the Remington studio collection was not without notice. In November 1957, the *New York Times* announced that, "An enormous collection of oil sketches and relics that came out of the last days of the Old West is going to Cody, Wyo., home of the last of the great Western scouts, Buffalo Bill." They were right — the collection is massive, both in quantity (110 oil sketches and nearly 400 studio objects) and in importance since Remington was one of the greatest artists to depict the American West.

As the Whitney gallery construction neared completion, and some artwork was secured to place inside, the board of trustees recognized that they were still lacking one thing — a new leader for the gallery. To match the high quality art and ambitious goals of the Whitney, they looked for someone with knowledge of and a reputation in western American art. This was not an easy task. In the 1950s, western American art was still a growing field with very few scholars and specialists, and even fewer enthusiasts and champions of the art, especially in the East.

Dr. Harold McCracken had that good reputation, deep interest and knowledge of the subject, and connections



Coe family

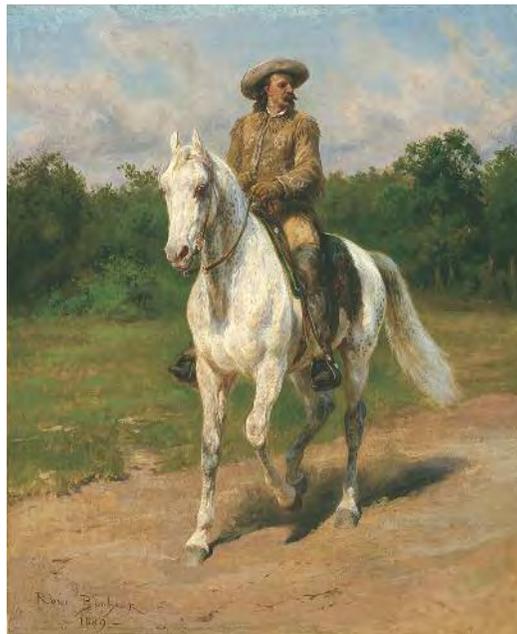
with galleries and collectors that the trustees were seeking. McCracken was an outdoorsman, naturalist, explorer, writer, and, most importantly, a recognized authority on artists of the American West. McCracken had written the definitive biography of Frederic Remington and had published many other books on western American art at a time when no one else was writing about the subject. McCracken led the interest in art of the West on a national scale and was the strongest candidate for founding director of the Whitney gallery.

On January 19, 1959, McCracken's first day on the job, he faced quite the challenge: an empty gallery and an opening date only four months away. In his autobiography, McCracken described the gallery: "The building was as bare as a railroad tunnel, and its 240-foot long gallery looked as big as Grand Central Station early on a Sunday morning." Nevertheless, with the assistance of William Davidson from Knoedler Galleries in New York, McCracken assembled a grand opening exhibition worthy of the new museum.

### The grand opening . . .

On April 25, 1959, Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney proudly dedicated the new museum in his mother's name. He declared that the museum "will help swing the tide to a greater appreciation of America's cultural achievement by presenting western art at its best." National newspapers echoed Whitney's enthusiasm. A glowing review in the *Los Angeles Times* boasted, "The most important exhibition of western art ever to be

*The most important  
exhibition of western art  
ever to be assembled  
in one place . . .*



captions



Cody Theatre

assembled in one place opened here this afternoon . . ." The *Times* predicted the Whitney would achieve international importance, not only as the unique archive of American history, but also as a fine art museum. Further, they encouraged readers to visit, saying, "Anyone planning to travel to Yellowstone Park this summer should not miss a visit to this handsomely housed collection."

The opening exhibition, *The Land of Buffalo Bill*, included a who's who of western American art: George Catlin, Alfred Jacob Miller, Albert Bierstadt, John Mix Stanley, Solon Borglum, Charles M. Russell, and Frederic Remington, to name a few. Most of the artwork was on loan, but McCracken worked hard over the next several years to acquire many of the pieces for the Whitney gallery's permanent collection.

The opening festivities included more than just a preview of the new building and the opening exhibition, reportedly valued at over \$3 million. The town of Cody rallied together and hosted a grand celebration to impress an estimated 1,000 out-of-town visitors. A reception and dinner at the Cody Auditorium sponsored by the Cody Club followed the dedication and formal opening of the gallery. After dinner, guests could attend a movie premier of *The Young Land* at the Cody Theater, starring young Patrick Wayne, son of John Wayne. Finally, the day concluded with a community get-together celebration and dance.

### Major collections . . .

With the successful opening of the Whitney gallery and the international recognition it garnered, 1959 was a great milestone in our history, and the momentum continued.

McCracken successfully expanded the collection during the early years of the Whitney gallery. More and more first-rate art came to the museum either on loan or for the permanent collection. McCracken accepted many gifts of art and purchased many others for the gallery, thanks in large part to a pair of primary donors to the Whitney gallery at the time—Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney and the Coe Foundation.

The early years were also a time for building relationships. Some of the lenders to the opening exhibition became friends and supporters of the Whitney gallery for decades to follow. For example, William E. Weiss first learned of the Whitney when he loaned his newly acquired collection of Charles M. Russell's paintings and bronze sculptures to the opening—and the Weiss family continues to lend artwork to the gallery today.

The gallery also received some very generous gifts. Pearl Newell, owner of the Irma Hotel, died in 1964 and bequeathed the Irma's collection to the Buffalo Bill Memorial Association. Many of the objects from the Irma's collection were from Buffalo Bill's own art collection, such as A.D.M. Cooper's *Relics of the Past*. In 1965, Harry Jackson's large paintings, *The Stampede* and *The Range Burial* were completed and installed in the gallery, another generous donation of the Coe Foundation. These are only a few examples of the incredible patrons and collections that came to Cody in the beginning years.

## Scholarship, exhibitions, and new installations . . .

If the early history of the gallery was notable for important



Above: Cooper, Second-01-4.64-WFC collection

Below: Koerner studio....

*. . . studio collections  
now form a strong base  
for the Whitney's  
collection and a  
unique experience  
for its visitors.*

(Previously, the collection had been shown in display cases.) In 1986, Mr. and Mrs. Forrest Fenn donated the studio cabin of Joseph Henry Sharp to the historical center, which was then relocated from Montana to Cody.

collections, the next two decades were marked by exhibitions and scholarship that presented cutting-edge ideas about the West and its art. Peter Hassrick came on board as the new director in 1976 and wanted the Buffalo Bill Historical Center to be at the vanguard of changing philosophical concepts and evolving ideas about the West. Exhibitions involved the best scholars in the field and were accompanied by high quality publications.

The active exhibition and loan schedule established in the 1980s kept the historical center and the Whitney's collection in the public eye. Exhibitions such as *Rocky Mountains: A Vision for Artists in the Nineteenth Century* (1983), *Frederic Remington: The Masterworks* (1988), and *Discovered Lands, Invented Pasts: Transforming Visions of the American West* (1992) were all successful traveling exhibitions. These catalogues continue to be popular reference books for American art history.

Over the past thirty years, there have also been many changes and additions to the gallery installation. Starting with the Remington objects, studio collections now form a strong base for the Whitney's collection and a unique experience for its visitors. In 1978, the recreation of W.H.D. Koerner's studio was dedicated thanks to Ruth Koerner Oliver and W.H.D. Koerner III, the artist's children.

In 1981, inspired by the Koerner studio recreation, Laurance S. Rockefeller donated the funds necessary to install the reconstruction of Frederic Remington's studio.



Harold McCracken



Peter H. Hassrick



Sarah E. Boehme



Mindy A. Besaw

Phimister Proctor “Sandy” Church donated the latest studio collection in 2006: that of his grandfather, sculptor Alexander Phimister Proctor. The Proctor studio will be the newest studio installation in the Whitney gallery when it reopens this summer.

The Whitney gallery was closed in 1986 for a renovation to update lighting, wall, and floor treatments. Dr. Sarah Boehme, the first John S. Bugas Curator of the Whitney Gallery of Western Art, came to Cody in time to oversee the reinstallation and reopening of the gallery the next year. In the 1990s, as the contemporary western art collection grew, the H. Peter and Jeannette Kriendler Gallery of Contemporary Western Art was dedicated on the mezzanine level where the collection continues to be on view, thanks to Peter Kriendler and William D. Weiss.

### 50th Anniversary

No matter the changes and improvements in the Whitney gallery, we have always remained true to our original building. In fact, the gallery formed in 1959 would become the core structure of today’s Buffalo Bill Historical Center. Once this outstanding gallery was built, the remaining museums of the center grew up around it, each rising to the high standard set by the Whitney.

With great anticipation and excitement, we’re anxious for the grand reopening of the Whitney Gallery of Western Art this summer as we proudly reflect and celebrate the past fifty years. Our history and identity are marked by generous donors, a world-class art collection, significant scholarship and exhibitions, and new ideas. In 1959, the *Los Angeles Times* encouraged travelers to stop and see the Whitney gallery as they headed to Yellowstone Park. Now, fifty years later, I think you should plan a trip to the Whitney Gallery of Western Art this summer — and stop to visit Yellowstone National Park if your schedule permits. ■

*In January 2007, Mindy Besaw began her tenure as the John S. Bugas Curator of the Whitney Gallery of Western Art. With a background in contemporary art as well as art of the West, Besaw’s special interest is to connect contemporary western art with its historical counterpart. Before her arrival at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center, she served as Curatorial Associate at the Institute of Western American Art in the Denver Art Museum. While in Colorado, she was also an adjunct instructor in art history at the University of Colorado – Denver. She earned her bachelor of fine arts degree at the University of Illinois, Champaign–Urbana, and her master’s degree in art history at the University of Denver. After overseeing the reinstallation of the Whitney gallery, Besaw plans to pursue her doctorate degree.*

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For further reading: Richard A. Bartlett, *From Cody to the World: The First Seventy-Five Years of the Buffalo Bill Memorial Association*. Cody, Wyo.: The Buffalo Bill Historical Center, 1992.

# You're invited!



## See the West *in a* Whole New Way!

### Whitney Gallery of Western Art's 50th Anniversary Celebration

**Members' Preview Reception**  
**Saturday, June 20, 2009, 7 – 9 p.m.**

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**Public Grand Opening Celebration**  
**Sunday, June 21, 2009**  
**8 a.m. – 6 p.m.**

**Be there for special activities throughout the day!**



Rosa Bonheur (1822–1899). *Col. William F. Cody (detail)*, 1889. Given in Memory of William R. Coe and Mai Rogers Coe. 8.66



W.H.D. Koerner (1878–1938). *Madonna of the Prairie (detail)*, 25.77



Tom Palmore, (b. 1945). *Where Elegance Meets Fear (detail)*, 1996. Gift of Edward R. Bazinet Foundation. 22.96



James Bama (b. 1926). *A Contemporary Sioux Indian (detail)*, 1978. William E. Weiss Contemporary Art Fund Purchase. 19.78



# Caring for your treasures

By Beverly Perkins

## ***Conservation: a careful preservation and protection of something.***

Conserving collections in a museum includes three basic activities: analysis, treatment, and preservation. Caring for your treasures at home involves the same activities: knowing your collection and its state of health, hiring a conservator if necessary, and creating a safe environment for your paintings, the crazy quilt, the family Bible, and great grandfather's Civil War letters.

### ***Evaluating that treasure***

1. Examine each item with magnification to see cracks, flaking paint, and lifting quillwork. "Cheater" eyeglasses with the strongest magnification are perfect for hands-free analysis.
2. Study your objects in good light, and move your head around to see from different angles. Watch for abnormalities in the surface; cracks, bumps, tears, or dirt. Keep written and photographic records of condition, just like museums do. Such records are extremely helpful when the question arises, "Was that dent there before we got the new puppy?"
3. Think about the materials that make up the object. Is the painting of Uncle Bob you inherited really an oil painting on canvas? It may have been passed on to you as, "the family painting of Uncle Bob," yet it is really a hand-colored photograph on silk.

This is important to know because it dictates the object's preferred environment. Paintings are more durable than photographs, for instance, and canvas is able to withstand more light and pollution than silk.

### ***The next step***

Let's say you find a tear in the painting, a stain on the quilt, or mold on the photograph. What should you do? The best course of action is to contact a conservator,\* most of whom are happy to talk to you about your object and its problems. They will often ask you to photograph the object and its damage, and e-mail the photos with a brief description. This should be sufficient information for the conservator to recommend treatment and estimate costs.

Conservators are bound by a code of ethics from the American Institute of Conservators, which dictates that all treatment information must be shared with the owner,



Buffalo Bill Historical Center Conservator Beverly Perkins works on a painted hide from the Plains Indian Museum collection.

including treatment costs. Both the treatment and cost proposals must be approved by the owner before treatment begins. Should the conservator make a discovery during treatment that would cause her to alter the treatment and/or increase its cost, she must disclose the information to the owner for approval.

When conservators noticed that the same objects were repeatedly returning to the conservation lab for treatment, they realized that it was extremely important to pay attention to the object's environment. Factors such as light, humidity, pollutants, and pests can cause recurring damage if they are not taken under control.

### ***Seeing the light***

Light damages most materials, even those we consider extremely strong. Some metal patinas are affected by light, and some colorants in stone may fade due to light exposure. Most of us have witnessed first hand the affect light can have on materials such as paper, dyes, photographs, and textiles such as silk. Damage can include fading, darkening, and degradation of the fibers in the paper or textile.

High light levels, such as direct sunlight, are harmful as well as long periods of exposure. Decreasing either the intensity of the light or the length of the exposure will reduce damage. Use an ultraviolet filtering plexiglas or glass between the object and the light to moderate light levels. When an object is not on view, it should be stored with minimal light.

### ***It must be something in the air***

Fluctuations in relative humidity and temperature can also be very damaging. Most objects in our collections are made of more than one type of material. A painting, for

# as we care for ours



example, can consist of a wooden stretcher, canvas, gesso (plaster of Paris paste), paint, and varnish, all of which respond to changes in humidity at different rates and in different ways. When humidity increases, wood expands, canvas shrinks, and gesso remains dimensionally stable. The distinct movement of each layer also causes stress among the various materials including lifting paint, torn canvas, and cracked wood.

In the winter, then, keep collections away from fireplaces, turn down the heat, and avoid drafts. Do not keep treasures in spaces like damp basements or bathrooms, and store collections out of the reach of insects and rodents.

Leather, hide, and wood all tend to dry out in low humidity environments. “Feeding” the treasure with oils, dressings, and waxes is not advisable since these coatings “become one with the object.” As the coating ages, darkens, and becomes sticky, it is no longer easy to remove it from the surface of the object. Unfortunately, the only way to ensure that the treasure does not become stiff and brittle is to keep it in an environment with a stable relative humidity around 50 percent.

High humidity, still air, and dirt combine to form an ideal environment for mold growth. Eliminate dust from objects by brushing it away with a new, synthetic-bristle hardware store paintbrush. Then, with the nozzle close to but not touching the surface, vacuum to remove the loosened dust. In addition, move the air in a room by using a fan or simply propping the door open.

Pollutants in the air affect materials such as metals, photographs, and textiles. Outdoor pollutants such as sea air, car exhaust, sulfur fumes, and smoke are a few that will damage treasures. Indoor pollutants may come from the ozone emitted by copy machines, sulfur in wool carpets, acid vapors given off by oak furniture, and the plasticizers in dry cleaning bags. Even natural rubber products like rubber bands can give off sulfur that will cause metals to tarnish.

## Conservation 911

It is always worthwhile to think about protecting your treasures from the effects of a disaster. Such an event could be as simple as an overflowing tub, or as horrendous as a house fire. Most disasters involve water damage—even fires. A few simple steps can be taken that will help protect your treasures from a flood or from the water from a fireman’s hose.

1. Keep treasures up off the floor. In storage, large treasures

such as furniture, trunks, and clocks should be placed up on pallets or two-by-fours. Smaller treasures are best stored in boxes inside cabinets.

2. Drape stored furniture, boxes, and other treasures with polyethylene sheeting, the clear plastic used to protect furniture during house painting. It can protect from water leaks and even soot from a house fire. Having extra polyethylene sheeting in case of a leak can be extremely useful.

3. If a disaster affects your treasures, do not despair! Most treasures can be conserved even after extreme damage. Do not throw out any pieces or parts that belong to an object. After the object has dried thoroughly, place each part in a zipped plastic bag and contact a conservator. Breakage, water damage, mold, and almost any other damage are all conditions that can be addressed by these professionals.

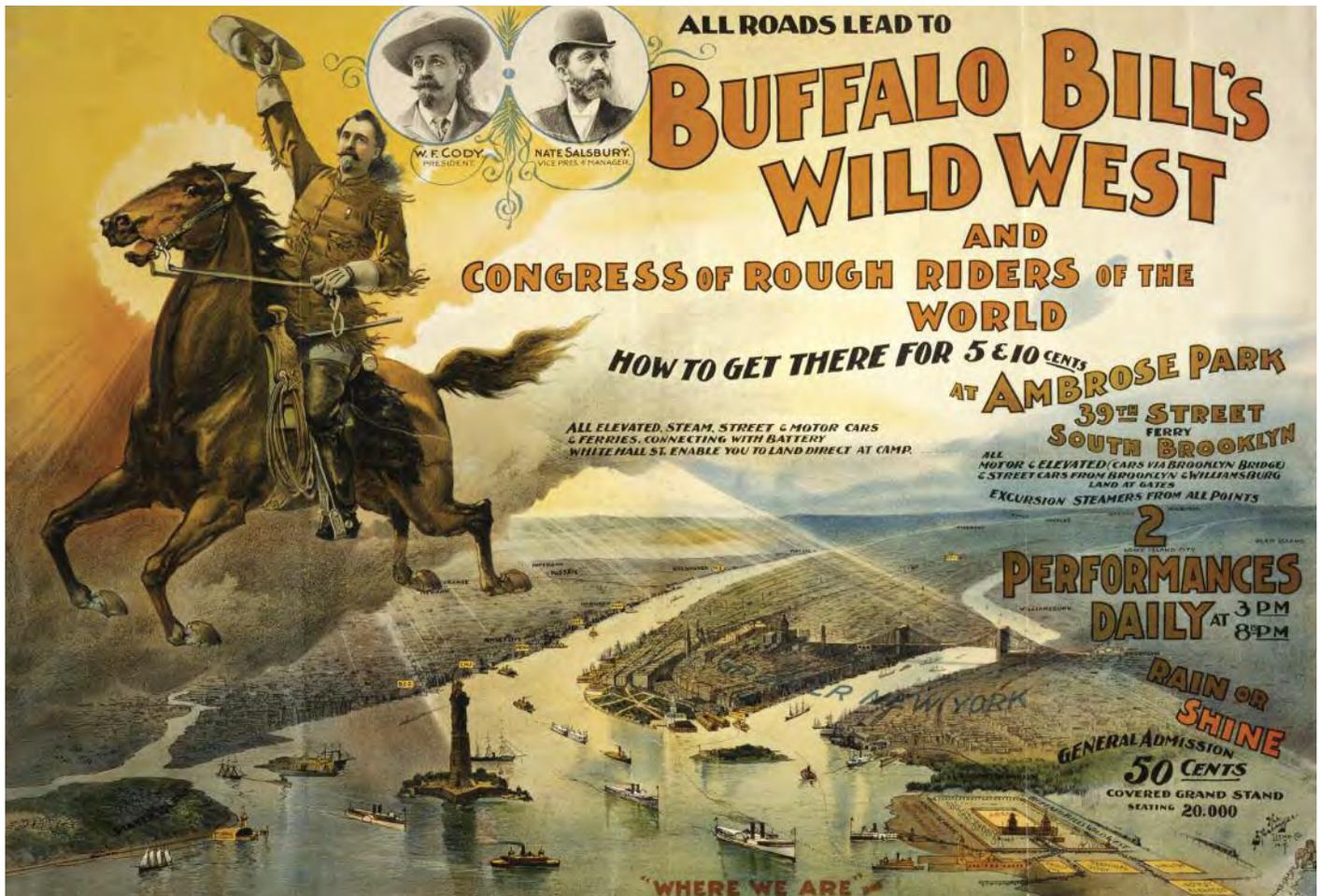
Because you have a great deal invested in your treasures in terms of cost, history, and sentimental value, it is wise to adopt a conservation plan early on, and seek the advice of a conservator when necessary. American photography critic Nancy Wynne Newhall (May 9, 1908–July 7, 1974) once said, “Conservation is humanity caring for the future.” When we do, our treasures will last for generations to come. ■

*Beverly Perkins is the conservator at the historical center. Since 2001, she’s served as the Western Field Service Officer for the Balboa Art Conservation Center in San Diego, California. She has both a bachelor’s and a master’s degree in art history along with a master’s degree in art conservation. For over fifteen years, she’s consulted on dozens of collections and has expertise in a variety of materials.*

*With advanced training in disaster mitigation and response for cultural collections, Perkins coordinated volunteer teams sent to aid the cultural collections threatened by hurricanes in the Gulf Coast in 2005. She’s also been an adjunct professor of art conservation and has written extensively about situations facing facilities with priceless collections.*

\*A list of conservators is available from the American Institute for Conservation (AIC) at [www.aic.stanford.edu](http://www.aic.stanford.edu) by clicking on the “Public Info” tab. Brochures pertaining to the care of collections are also available for download.

# WALL STREET MEETS



Is this the very poster that greeted the “Wall Street man” as he followed his doctor’s advice? Wild West poster, ca. 1895. The Springer Litho Co. NY. Four-color lithograph, 24.25 x 41.5 inches. 1.69.20

*With bankrupt railroads, runs on gold and silver, bank failures, and unemployment rates in the teens, the Panic of 1893 set off a depression in the 1890s that some would argue is quite similar to the current economic condition of America today.*

*Even the most learned of men and women are hard-pressed to find a medicine to heal the economy’s ills. Near the turn of the twentieth century, however, a doctor in New York had just the cure for a businessman who shared the same worries as investors today. Dr. John Rumm, curator of the Buffalo Bill Museum, recently discovered this story from the Brooklyn Daily Eagle, September 10, 1894, with an unusual “elixir” for Wall Street woes.*

‘WILD WEST,’  
INDEED!  
BETTER TO  
SAY ‘WILD WORLD!’

“You need a complete change of scene,” said a fashionable doctor to a tired, worn Wall Street man. “A change of scene!” cried the stock operator. “Why, doctor, I couldn’t leave my business to get any sort of a change. Give me some prescription that I can follow.”

The doctor thought a few minutes and then, taking a prescription blank, wrote upon it “Go to Buffalo Bill’s Wild West show,” and without another word, he arose and left the office.

The broker gazed at the little slip and a faint smile overspread his pale face, but the idea struck him. That night, he boarded a boat at Whitehall Street and started for the Wild West grounds at Ambrose Park.

# THE WILD WEST



As the boat passed Governor's Island, the tired man braced up a bit, under the influence of the fresh breeze which blew from the sea, and looked about him. Instead of the tall buildings which had hitherto been around him, he saw the lofty masts of ships, lighted boats with laughing parties all around him, and, far off to the southeast, the bright lights which marked the present home of the Wild West show.

He already felt better, and before he had ceased to contemplate the (to him) strange scene, the boat with a bump pulled up at the Ambrose Park dock. Then the change of scene began in earnest, for as he entered the great arch surrounded by three stuffed buffaloes, a sight met his gaze which all of the wealth acquired by years of toil could not purchase for him in these days.

To the right of the entrance stood the pyramid-like tent of Buffalo Bill and Nate Salsbury, the owners of the show, and a pleasing background was formed for this by the tent villages of the cowboys, Mexicans, Russians, Gauchos, and Arabians. "Jove," muttered the broker, "what have I struck, here north, south, east and west altogether, and no sign of trouble!"

He walked on a little further and was astonished to see an Indian woman stirring up something which simmered in a black kettle, which hung suspended from a black tripod over a pine wood fire. The business man looked around at the encampment. Indians in full war paint moved to and fro and the onlooker forgot that there was such a place as Wall Street. The idea that this was near the end of the nineteenth century never occurred to him.

A bugle sounded in the night air and the broker found himself in the midst of a party of United States soldiers dressed in blue and gold and rushing forward to saddle their horses. "Who says our army isn't all right?" he asked of a man walking beside him. The man looked around and signaled that he spoke no English. The business man

looked up, saw the German flag waving, and knew that he was among the Ubians, the emperor's pride.

He walked on and in a moment was talking to a jolly Irishman who wore the uniform of the Queen's lancers. Leaving him he strolled further onward. "Comment vous partez vous?" said a voice near him. "Gee whiz, a French camp," declared the broker, and he rushed onward until he came to a vine-covered log cabin surrounded by a beautiful garden of flowers, with pebbled path, and surrounded by a log stockade. Over the door was a sign bearing this inscription: "John Burke's Pine Ridge Punch." In the doorway stood John M. Burke, the ever genial manager of the show.

The broker admired him and then passed on to the tent of the little markswoman, who broke flying glass balls as easily as a drunkard breaks the commandments. Then,

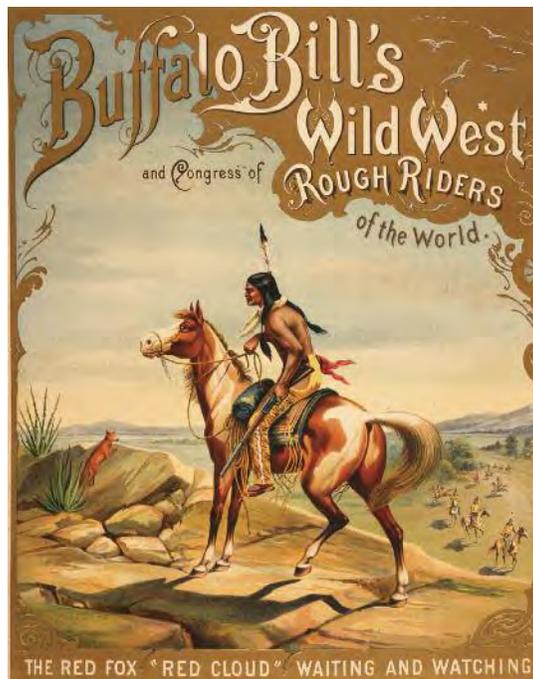
having seen all he could stand, the tired man rushed into the amphitheater and secured a front seat to witness what was to come.

A moment after he was seated, the tired man seemed to feel a spice-laden breeze from the pampas of South America. A group of South American Gauchos swept across the panorama and showed what they did on their native heath. Hardly had this delightful sensation passed through the frame of the tired man before a party of Arabs were, before his eyes, tumbling and tearing about. "That's good!" said the tired man. "I believe I could do it myself if I lived here."

Russian Cossacks seemed to bring with them a wind from the Caucasus, and the business

man pulled his coat collar up, even though it was July. Imagination is everything.

Presently a tribe of Indians and a gang of cowboys rushed in and did such tricks with horses as mortals never witnessed elsewhere. They were followed by soldiers from all quarters of the globe, each company more daring than its predecessor. "Humph!" said the man. "Wild West, indeed! Better to say 'Wild World!'"



*The Red Fox "Red Cloud" Waiting and Watching, ca. 1888. A. Hoen & Co., Baltimore. Original colored lithograph poster, 24.125 x 19.25 inches. Gift of the Coe Foundation. 1.69.443*

And so he continued to look at the lightning scenic changes and marveled until he sank in a maze of wonderment.

“Going home, sir?” asked a voice near him.

“Why, where am I?” asked the man.

“Why, Brooklyn, of course,” replied the voice.

“Humph, thought I was traveling around the world,” said the broker. And the tired business man went home.

Next morning, at his office, he sat at his desk and wrote the following:

Dear doctor—  
Enjoyed my change of scene and am well.  
Enclosed find check for services.

Yours, etc.  
TIRED MAN ■



The “little markswoman,” Annie Oakley, “who broke flying glass balls as easily as a drunkard breaks the commandments.” Wild West poster, ca. 1890. A. Hoen & Co., Baltimore. Four-color lithograph poster, 28.5 x 19 inches. Gift of the Coe Foundation. 1.69.73



As the Wild West parade reaches Broadway and Union Square in New York City, was “Tired Man” one of the bystanders? Black and white photograph, 1884. Vincent Mercaldo Collection. P.71.1307

# BBHC Bits & Bytes

## Patrons Post

**S**harpen your pencils and grab your calendars to jot down these members-only events. You'll agree: It does pay to be a patron of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center. Contact Membership Director Jan Jones at [membership@bbhc.org](mailto:membership@bbhc.org) or 307.578.4032. Look for "Patrons Post" in every issue of *Points West*.

### Buffalo Girls Luncheon

May 12, Tuesday, noon – 1:30 p.m.

#### John Bunker Sands Photography Gallery

Call today to register for the spring Buffalo Girls Luncheon with special guest Steve Fuller, also known as Yellowstone National Park's "winterkeeper." He's lived in the heart of Yellowstone since 1973, and along with his two grown daughters, shares stories of this remarkable experience. Fuller is also an internationally acclaimed outdoor photographer and presents some of his amazing photos for a glimpse into wintry Yellowstone.

The cost for this women-members-only luncheon is \$18 per person. Reservations are required as seating is limited. Registration is also available online at [www.bbhc.org](http://www.bbhc.org).

### Members Night Out

May 12, Tuesday, 7 – 8:30 p.m.

#### Coe Auditorium

Steve Fuller returns at 7 p.m. with an interactive photography presentation that concentrates on the aesthetics, the "philosophy," and techniques of photographing the great outdoors. His images and articles have been featured in *National Geographic* magazine, *Audubon*, and *Outdoor Photographer*. All patrons are invited to this members-only lecture; there is no fee, but patrons should be prepared to show their membership cards at the door.

### Corporate Days

June 6 – 7, Saturday and Sunday,  
8 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Employees and families of our corporate members are invited to an entire weekend of free admission to the historical center. Numerous gallery presentations held on both days will highlight your museum visit. Contact Jan Jones at 307.578.4032 or [membership@bbhc.org](mailto:membership@bbhc.org).

### Membership Trail Ride/Hike

June 13, Saturday, 9:30 a.m. — novice,  
Noon-BBQ for all participants  
1:30 p.m. — expert ride and hike

#### Crossed Sabres Ranch, Northfork Highway, Cody

It's time for greenhorns and experts alike to don their hats and boots for the members-only trail ride and hike into the Shoshone National Forest, just outside Yellowstone

National Park. Novices hit the trail at 9:30 a.m. for a two-hour ride; experienced riders—who are welcome to bring their own horses—head out at 1:30 p.m. Crossed Sabres owner Ray McCoy has plenty of wranglers on tap for small groups of riders to prevent the "forty-person pack string," as he puts it. At noon, those coming and those going meet at the ranch for authentic cowboy entertainment and barbecue lunch with all the fixin's.

Those who'd rather take to the trail on foot can sign up for lunch and the two-hour nature hike that follows with Emily Hansel, historical center natural history educator, who calls the nature hike "moderately strenuous." All prices include entertainment, lunch, guide, and applicable horse rental fees. The costs are \$55 with horse rental, \$20 without horse rental or for the nature hike. Participants must be at least twelve years old. Reservations are required as space is limited.

Crossed Sabres Ranch is located in the stunning Shoshone National Forest, just eight miles from the East Gate of Yellowstone National Park. The ranch is offering a special room rate of \$70 (double occupancy) on June 12 or June 13 for members attending this event. Call 307.587.3750 for reservations.

### Members' Preview: Whitney Gallery of Western Art Grand Opening

June 20, Saturday, 7 – 9 p.m.

#### In the gallery

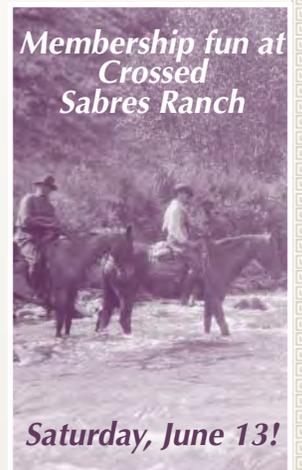
Be one of the first to "See the West in a whole new way!" Don't miss the unveiling of the "new Whitney"—details on page 9.

### Saturday, June 27

5:00 – 8:00 p.m.

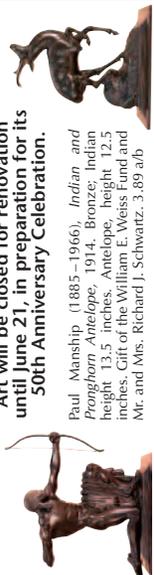
#### Lecture and members reception

*An Artist with the Corps of Discovery: One Hundred Paintings Illustrating the Journals of Lewis and Clark*, featuring the artwork of Charles Fritz.



# CALENDAR of Events

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>The Whitney Gallery of Western Art will be closed for renovation until June 21, in preparation for its 50th Anniversary Celebration.</p>  <p>Paul Maanship (1885–1966). <i>Indian and Proughorn Antelope</i>, 1914. Bronze; Indian height, 3.5 inches; Antelope height, 12.5 inches. Gift of the William E. Weiss Fund and Mr. and Mrs. Richard J. Schwartz. 3.89 alb.</p>	<p><b>CENTER HOURS</b>            APRIL 1–30:            10 a.m.–5 p.m. daily            MAY 1–SEPT. 15:            8 a.m.–6 p.m. daily</p>	<p>Reservations now being accepted for the Buffalo Gals Luncheon and the Membership Trail Ride/Hike</p> <p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>APRIL</b></p>	<p>DMNH Lunchtime Expedition Speaker to be announced 12:15 p.m. (Free)</p> <p><b>2</b></p>	<p>CFM Records Office open for Wanenmacher's Tulsa Arms Show</p> <p>DMNH Field Expedition: Spring Fling/Observing Sage Grouse, 5 a.m.–noon. (Registration required/fee)</p> <p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>3</b></p> 	<p>CFM Records Office open for Colorado Gun Collectors Annual Gun Show</p>
<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>6</b></p> 	<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b>8</b></p> <p>Deadline for submissions for the Yellowstone Art Contest</p>	<p><b>9</b></p> <p>Nature and You: A Global Perspective. DMNH/Nature Conservancy showing of <i>Planet Earth</i> film, "Mountains," 7 p.m. (Free but reservations required)</p> <p><b>16</b></p>	<p><b>11</b></p> <p>Spring Raptors at the DMNH (Registration required/fee)</p> <p><b>18</b></p>	<p><b>25</b></p> <p>Spring Open House, 8 a.m.–6 p.m. (Free)</p>
<p><b>12</b></p>	<p><b>14</b></p>	<p><b>15</b></p>	<p><b>22</b></p> <p>Greater Yellowstone Museum Adventure for school groups grades 3–5. (Reservations required/fee)</p>	<p><b>23</b></p>	<p><b>24</b></p>	<p><b>2</b></p> <p>Young Explorers: Natural History Day for school groups grades K–2 (Reservations required/fee)</p> <p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>MAY</b></p>
<p><b>19</b></p>	<p><b>21</b></p>	<p><b>28</b></p>	<p><b>29</b></p>	<p><b>30</b></p> <p>DMNH Lunchtime Expedition Speaker to be announced 12:15 p.m. (Free)</p>	<p><b>24</b></p>	<p><b>2</b></p>
<p><b>26</b></p>	<p><b>27</b></p>	<p><b>5</b></p> <p>Buffalo Gals Luncheon Steve Fuller, <i>Experiences and Photography of Yellowstone</i> noon–1:30 p.m. (Reservations required/fee)</p> <p>Members Night Out Steve Fuller's Yellowstone</p>	<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b>8</b></p> <p><i>Behind the Scenes of How a Museum is Reinvigorated</i> Dr. John Rumm, 1:30–3 p.m.</p>	<p><b>9</b></p>
<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b>8</b></p>	<p><b>9</b></p>

10	CFM Records Office open for Colorado Gun Collectors Annual Gun Show	11	12	13	14	15	16
17		18	19	20		23	DMNH Field Expedition: Marsh Magic/Observing Waterfowl 6 a.m.–noon (Registration required/fee)
24		25	26	27	DMNH Lunchtime Expedition Speaker to be announced 12:15 p.m. (Free)	30	Charles Fritz Exhibition opens An Artist with the Corps of Discovery: One Hundred Paintings Illustrating the Journals of Lewis and Clark
31	Corporate Member Days 8 a.m.–6 p.m.	1	2	3	4	5	Corporate Member Days 8 a.m.–6 p.m.
7	Winchester Club Antique Arms Show, CFM Records Office Open	8	9	10		12	Winchester Club of America Annual Antique Arms Show, Riley Arena. CFM Records Office open 5:30 p.m. (WCA Members only)
14		15	16	17		19	Membership Trail Ride/Hike Crossed Sabres Ranch (Reservations required/fee)
21	Winchester Arms Show CFM Records Office Open Plains Indian Museum Powwow Robbie Powwow Garden (fee) Whitney Gallery of Western Art reopens to the public	15	22	24		26	Annual Winchester Arms Show, Riley Arena CFM Records Office open Winchester Arms Collectors Association Annual Meeting 5:30 p.m. (WACA Members only)
28		29	30			26	Whitney Gallery of Western Art 50th Anniversary Celebration, Members' Preview Reception, 7–9 p.m.
						27	Members/VIP Reception & Lecture, 5–8 p.m. Charles Fritz Exhibition: An Artist with the Corps of Discovery: One Hundred Paintings Illustrating the Journals of Lewis and Clark

**Photo Credits:**

- John Beauchamp Jr., (1906–1957). *Old Faithful* (detail), ca. 1930. Serigraph on paper, 6.25 x 3.875 inches. 3.95.2
- Osprey, 1963. NP's photo by William M. Woodbridge.
- Charles Fritz (b. 1955). *The Captains Lewis and Clark—Trusted Leaders, Loyal Friends* (detail). Oil on canvas, 44 x 50 inches. Collection of Timothy Peterson.
- Cody Firearms Museum entrance.
- Dance bustle, 2008 Plains Indian Museum Powwow.

-  Free Public Event
-  Education Department Workshop/Program
-  Members-Only Event
-  Cody Firearms Museum Affiliated Event
-  Plains Indian Museum Event
-  Whitney Gallery of Western Art Event
-  Draper Museum of Natural History Event

**IT'S A DATE . . . pullout calendar**



Wendy Schneider

## Wendy Schneider takes reins as Director of Development

Wendy Schneider of Spokane, Washington, has joined the staff of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center as Director of Development. Before moving to Cody, she served as Foundations Relations Director at

Eastern Washington University in Spokane. She started in her new position on January 26.

“We’re delighted to welcome Wendy as part of our team here at the historical center,” Executive Director Bruce Eldredge said. “This is a critical position for us, especially in these challenging economic times. I’m confident that Wendy’s enthusiasm, experience, and skills will lead us in accomplishing our fundraising goals.”

Schneider brings a diverse background to the position, including extensive experience raising funds through major gifts as well as entrepreneurial and business experience. She owned and operated a business for twelve years that contracted with community, educational, and cultural organizations to create and manage diverse education programs.

“The Buffalo Bill Historical Center is a national treasure, and I’m excited about the opportunity to help promote the institution,” Schneider said. “I’m looking forward to becoming part of such an outstanding team.”

In addition to managing a portfolio of major donors and coordinating fundraising efforts with other historical center staff, Schneider will lead the day-to-day operations of the development department, including the annual fund, membership, special events, and database management. She will also serve as Acting Chief Development Officer until that position is filled. As a whole, the development office is critical to the center’s success, as the staff is responsible for generating nearly 30 percent of the institution’s annual operating revenue.

Schneider can be reached by e-mailing [wendys@bbhc.org](mailto:wendys@bbhc.org) or by calling 307.578.4013.

## Save America’s Treasures grant awarded to historical center

The Buffalo Bill Historical Center has been awarded a Save America’s Treasures grant for the preservation of the

nationally renowned Paul Dyck Plains Indian Buffalo Culture Collection. The \$350,000 grant provides the funds necessary to continue processing the collection, making it accessible to researchers, tribal members, and scholars, as well as to improve storage conditions for its proper care and preservation.

The Dyck collection was acquired in 2007 through the generosity of the Dyck family and additional gifts of the Nielson family and the estate of Margaret S. Coe.

In awarding the grant, the National Park Service, which administers Save America’s Treasures in partnership with several federal cultural agencies, recognized the breadth of the collection in time period, object type, and representation of Plains tribes. The comprehensive assemblage of pre-preservation era objects dates from the late 1700s to the 1890s and includes hide clothing, beaded and quilled cradles, buffalo hide tipis, painted buffalo robes, shields, bear claw necklaces, eagle feather bonnets, peace medals, moccasins, and leggings.

The grant allows the historical center to move forward with processing the collection, begun last year with a small preview exhibit of eleven objects on display in the Plains Indian Museum. It also funds a research associate,

a position to which Anne Marie Shriver has been appointed. Shriver, most recently web content developer at the center, has degrees in history and anthropology from the University of Wyoming and is a former researcher for the Plains Indian Museum.

The Dyck collection grant is one of forty awarded at the end of 2008 by the Save America’s Treasures program. The project was selected from over 220 applications vying for the competitive grant funds, which together total \$10.52 million awarded in 2008.

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## Docents training for Whitney service

When the Whitney Gallery of Western Art reopens this June, newly-trained volunteer docents — the term comes from the Latin word *docere*, meaning *to teach* — will be all set to offer tours and presentations in the renovated gallery.

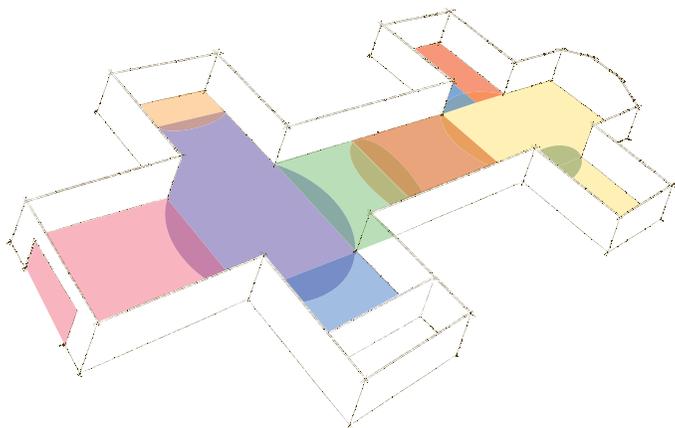


One of the “treasures” of the Paul Dyck Plains Indian Buffalo Culture Collection is this set of Northern Plains Lakota (Sioux) cuffs with elk motif, ca. 1890, acquired through the generosity of the Dyck family and additional gifts of the Nielson Family and the Estate of Margaret S. Coe. NA.203.1414

Training is now underway for those who wish to join the program. The only requirements are interest and enthusiasm; the training will prepare both novices and experienced docents for an enjoyable experience with visitors.

Emily Hansel, historical center educator and docent coordinator, says the training is “like a mini course in art history.” Docents familiarize themselves with the gallery’s history, artists represented in the gallery, and the center’s extensive artwork collection.

Dates for the upcoming sessions are April 7, May 5, and June 2. To sign up or find out more, contact Hansel at [emilyh@bbhc.org](mailto:emilyh@bbhc.org) or 307.578.4110.



The colored areas represent the all new gallery presentations in the renovated Whitney Gallery of Western Art.

## Texas Tech professor now Buffalo Bill sleuth

Dr. Gretchen Adams, Associate Professor of History at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas, is the new editor of the Buffalo Bill Papers Project at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center. Adams replaces Dr. John Rumm, the original editor, who was named curator of the Buffalo Bill Museum in June 2008.

In early 2007, the Wyoming State Legislature appropriated funds to launch the “Papers of William F. Cody,” a historical documentary editing project to locate, edit, and publish documentation on the life and times of William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody. Through a series of donors, the historical center was able to raise the requisite match.

“Buffalo Bill was one of the first figures of popular culture who wasn’t a statesman,” Adams says. “Plus, he seemed to correspond with everyone he met. That means there are literally tens of thousands of documents out there — no one knows for sure.”

Material to be collected about Buffalo Bill consists of correspondence, published and unpublished writings, scrapbooks and news articles, Wild West show programs and promotional matter, posters, photographs and artwork, multimedia resources, and artifacts. (The story on pages 12 – 14 is a good example.) Adams’s specialty is nineteenth-century political and cultural history, particularly the use of the American past in political rhetoric. She has a bachelor’s and a master’s from the University of Oregon and a doctorate in U.S. History from the University of New Hampshire. She most recently completed work as an Associate Editor on the *Salem Witchcraft Papers*, which is the first complete scholarly edition of all the surviving records of the 1692 Salem witchcraft trials. The project has more than 900 documents and took eight years to complete.

“Like all of us, Buffalo Bill was a human being with faults,” Adams concludes, “but in tight moments, he always comes out looking like someone I’d want to know.”

## Buffalo hunting — gallery-style

Go on a buffalo hunt! Win prizes with the first ever “Hidden in the Galleries” art hunt on the Buffalo Bill Historical Center Web site, [www.bbhc.org](http://www.bbhc.org). Download and print the hunt, bring it to the center, and see if you can find the bison hidden in each of the galleries. Return your hunt to the admissions desk for a prize, enter the grand-prize drawing, and watch for more hunts to come! ■



Join our “Buffalo Hunt” and be on the lookout for bison images throughout the Whitney Gallery of Western art. Is this one of them? Albert Bierstadt (1830 – 1902). *Buffalo Head*, ca. 1879. Oil on paper mounted on board, 13.25 x 15.25 inches. Gift of Carman H. Messmore. 1.62

## Death Gulch, Wahb Springs

By Dr. Burt Bradley

**D**eath here burns, without fire or flame. But, hell, the air, like Dante's Inferno, hangs heavy with brimstone, clogged with ancient sulfur. It clings to the cindered rocks and calcified trunks, choking the very ground itself into these last gasps of dying dirt.

Here the bears died, and Wahb — bullet ridden and bullet proofed, old hoary, silver white grizzly, caricature of the wild who followed the creek, trolling for its meager fish, pawing its clear, soft water.

A smell, old familiar in some ways, in others not — of death, decay, a carcass decomposing, pure nourishment for carrion, for bear. But something else, something not quite right: a complete absence of predators.

Wahb sensed it, too: none of those two-leggeds with their fire and noise, their puny traps — not one could hold or catch the last great bear. He followed the scent, though tainted, that promised a feeding — a rancid bouquet laced with yellow air, that burned the throat, and cauterized the lungs.

Here, flows the spring of pure death: pristine, uncorrupted, complete: no flies, no maggots, no eternal return. Here the earth takes and doesn't give back, leaving the bears piled one on top of the other — as signposts, as warnings: no trespassing. And old Wahb too, mortal at last in body, blood, and bone, but whose name still roars louder than the silence of death. ■



View of Death Gulch from the Cache River in Yellowstone National Park.



Wahb Springs boils up from beneath the Cache River.

# On the trail of a bear named Wahb

## Two professors on a bear hunt

By Jeremy Johnston

In the summer of 2008, fellow Northwest College professor Burt Bradley and I set off on a cool, summer morning to trail the famed renegade grizzly bear, Wahb. Ernest Thompson-Seton detailed the exciting life of the fictional Wahb in his book *The Biography of a Grizzly*, which he wrote in 1899 shortly after visiting A.A. Anderson's Palette Ranch near Meeteetse, Wyoming. This account first appeared as three installments in the pages of *Century Magazine*, and in 1900, the three articles appeared together in print as a small book.

Seton's story follows the exploits of Wahb from his birth in the upper Greybull River Valley of Wyoming to his death in Yellowstone National Park. Although Seton's tale of Wahb is characterized as fiction, Seton based many of Wahb's experiences on true grizzly bear stories. The setting of *The Biography of a Grizzly* was also based on real geographical features that Seton visited during his trip to Yellowstone in 1897 and to the Palette Ranch in 1898.

Many of those locations remain relatively unchanged since Seton first visited them over one hundred years ago. We hoped to learn more about Seton and his imaginary bear by visiting these spots. Our goal was to grasp a sense of place in relation to Wahb's story and instill in us a better understanding of the history and legacy of grizzly bears in the Yellowstone ecosystem.

### Hitting the trail

Ironically, to begin our travels, Burt and I focused on the place where Wahb ended his life. After years of hardship and struggle, Wahb could no longer endure the pain caused by his advanced age and his past wounds. After more than twenty years of fighting other animals, weather, and humans, Wahb concluded that his pain no longer allowed him to defend his territory. He traveled from his home range, centered in the Greybull River Valley, and walked to Death Gulch in the

“ After more than twenty years of fighting other animals, weather, and humans, Wahb concluded that his pain no longer allowed him to defend his territory. ”



A Yellowstone National Park grizzly bear. National Park Service photo. Jim Peaco, 2005.

Lamar Valley in Yellowstone National Park. The park provided Wahb a peaceful refuge, a place where he was safe from his most dangerous foe, man.

Seton wrote, "In the limits of this great Wonderland . . . no violence was to be offered to any bird or beast, no ax was to be carried into its primitive forests, and the streams were to flow on forever unpolluted by mill or mine . . . this was the West before the white man came." Wahb and other species of wildlife discovered that Yellowstone provided a sanctuary. "They soon learned the boundaries of this unfenced Park," Seton explained. "They show a different nature within its sacred limits. They no longer shun the face of man; they neither fear nor attack him; and they are even more tolerant of one another in this land of refuge."

Despite Seton's description of the park as a place where man and beast observed a neutral stance, Burt and I cautiously watched for any sign of Wahb's living counterparts as we hiked up the trail along Cache Creek (a tributary of the Lamar River) towards Death Gulch..

## A grizzly end

This region, which provided Wahb refuge from the depredations of man, also promised him the ultimate comfort of an everlasting peace and complete freedom from pain and suffering. Seton closed the story with Wahb's death from poisonous fumes released from the geothermal area known as Death Gulch.

At the time Seton wrote his account of Wahb, scientists still puzzled over this strange and macabre feature. Animals that strayed too far up this gulch seemed to be poisoned by the pungent fumes from the geothermal fissures in the gulch. As more and more animals were asphyxiated, grizzly bears, looking for an easy meal, also entered the gulch and succumbed to the poisoned air.

Seton described Wahb's entry into the deadly gulch: "A Vulture that had descended to feed on one of the victims was slowly going to sleep on the untouched carcass. Wahb swung his great grizzled muzzle and his long white beard in the wind. The odor that he once had hated was attractive now. There was a strange biting quality in the air. His body craved it. For it seemed to numb his pain and it promised sleep. . ." The great bear continued walking into the gulch and "The deadly vapors entered in, filled his huge

chest and tingled in his vast, heroic limbs as he calmly lay down on the rocky, herbless floor and a gently went to sleep, as he did that day in his Mother's arms by the Graybull [sic] long ago.

Walter H. Weed, a member of the 1888 United States Geological Survey expedition of the Yellowstone region led by Arnold Hague, claimed he discovered this unusual feature that caused Wahb's death. In *Science*, Weed noted the site was easily reached by following an "old elk trail" up Cache Creek. When exploring the region, he wrote, ". . . the gaseous emanations are very striking and abundant." Today the "old elk trail" is well-marked and well-traveled, but the pungent odor from the geothermal region remains.

As we worked our way up Cache Creek, just short of Death Gulch, we encountered a hot spring boiling up in the middle of the creek. This is now known as Wahb Springs, honoring Seton's fictional bear. Weed also noticed this spring and wrote, ". . . the great amount of gas given off at this place is easily appreciated, but equally copious emanations may occur from the deposits and old vents near by . . ."

## What is that stench?

Burt and I both agreed with Weed's observation. The strong, bitter, sulfurous smell permeated the air that, until that moment, had been of the fresh, mountain variety. At times, the odor was so strong, it nearly took our breath away. On the other hand, we doubted the accuracy of our sense of smell as we wondered if the strong odor was a product of our heightened imaginations, excited by finding the place where the great grizzly bear Wahb ended his life.

Continuing up Cache Creek, we found the deep-scarred ravine of Death Gulch. When Weed discovered the gulch in 1888, he and his companions found six dead bears, an elk carcass, and scores of smaller game animals littering the rocky floor. One of the bear carcasses, a large silvertip grizzly, "was carefully examined for bullet holes or other marks of injury," wrote Weed, "but [the grizzly] showed no traces of violence, the only indication being

a few drops of blood under the nose."

After examining the carcasses and exploring the upper reaches of the gulch, Weed theorized, "It was apparent that these animals, as well as the squirrels and insects, had not met their death by violence, but had been asphyxiated by the irrespirable gas given off in the gulch."



Ernest Thompson Seton, (1860-1946).  
Library of Congress. ggbain, 02076

Later visitors to Death Gulch also noted the presence of dead bears. In 1897, T.A. Jagger visited the site, accompanied by Dr. Francis P. King, and documented his trip in an article for Appelton's *Popular Science Monthly*. Jagger and King climbed "through this trough, a frightfully weird and dismal place, utterly without life, and occupied by only a tiny streamlet and an appalling odor." As the men worked their way up the gulch, they noticed "some brown furry masses lying scattered about the floor of the ravine . . . Approaching cautiously, it became evident that we had before us a large group of huge recumbent bears."

Jagger and King counted eight bear carcasses, seven of which were grizzly bears. Fearful, Jagger tossed a rock onto one of the carcasses to ensure the bear was dead. "Striking him on the flank," wrote Jagger, "the distended skin resounded like a drumhead, and the only response was a belch of poisonous gas that almost overwhelmed us." Continuing their investigation of the other bears, "One huge grizzly," noted Jagger, "was so recent a victim that his tracks were still visible in the white, earthy slopes, leading down to the spot where he had met his death."

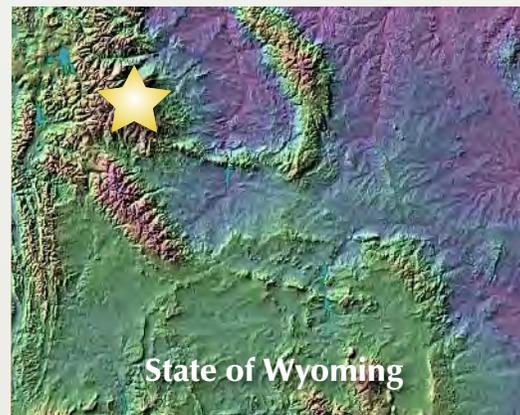
Like Weed, Jagger concluded that "there can be no question that death was occasioned by the gas . . . attested by the peculiar oppression on the lungs that was felt during the entire period that we were in the gulch . . . I suffered from a slight headache in consequences for several hours." More disturbing to Jagger and King was the fact that a small stream of water entering Cache Creek "trickles directly through the worm-eaten carcass of the cinnamon bear—a thought by no



Northwest College professors Jeremy Johnston, left, and Burt Bradley.



Burt Bradley and the remains of an unfortunate Yellowstone elk, a victim of winter kill or old age.



Wahb's territory covered the northwest part of Wyoming. He ranged as far as Cache Creek, south of Yellowstone's Lamar Valley to the Greybull River Valley southwest of Cody, Wyoming. The professors discovered Wahb's domain wasn't always easily accessible.

means comforting when we realized that the water supply for our camp was drawn from the creek only a short distance down the valley."

Clearly, these two accounts of Death Gulch alone would inspire Seton's ending of *The Biography of a Grizzly*. Possibly Seton visited the site in 1897 when he stayed at Yancey's Hotel, located a few miles to the west of Death Gulch. Seton obviously modeled Wahb's death after the victims of Death Gulch and accurately described the noxious odor permeating the air surrounding this unusual geothermal area.

Burt and I stood on the other side of Cache Creek, scanning Death Gulch from its lower reaches to the top, noting the same strong odor described by Weed and Jagger. We did not notice any bear carcasses in the gulch, or for that matter any bear tracks, but the smell that Weed and Jagger described was present and at times overwhelming. The combination of petrified trees, dead trees, and the unusual extinct and active geothermal formations enthralled us. Despite the lure of exploring the gulch, we both decided that we did not want to get our feet wet by crossing the creek to enter Death Gulch; nor did we want to tempt our fates by tracing the last few tracks of Wahb's final trail. Instead, we sat down and ate our lunch while contemplating the sublime scenery of Cache Creek and the mysteries of Death Gulch—safely on the other side of the creek.

As we hiked back to the trailhead and began our trek home, we discovered the antlers and bones of a very large bull elk, not far from

Death Gulch. Ironically, it appeared that winter and advanced age had exacted this toll. The mysterious gulch was not the culprit this time.



Rose Creek enters the Greybull River from the left, and the current Four Bear Creek, enters from the right.

## On the trail again

After following Wahb through Yellowstone Park, Burt and I agreed we would continue trailing him, this time to his home terrain on the upper Greybull River. We set out early in the morning to resume tracking Wahb's trail. We started where Colonel Pickett wounded Wahb and killed his mother and three siblings in revenge for the mauling of his prized bull by Wahb's mother. Not only did this event physically wound Wahb in his hind leg, it marked the beginning of Wahb's war against mankind to appease his desire for revenge.

Our route took us through Cody where we sniffed the sulfurous smell of DeMaris Hot Springs — on the western edge of town — mixed with smoke from the wildfires burning along the North Fork of the Shoshone River last summer. We remembered another scene from *The Biography of a Grizzly* where Seton described Wahb using a hot spring to ease his pain. Some later believed that site to be DeMaris Hot Springs:

There are plenty of these sulphur-springs in the Rockies, but this chanced to be the only one on Wahb's range. [Seton described Wahb climbing into the springs and pondering the mystery of the warm water.] [Wahb] did not say to himself, "I am troubled with that unpleasant disease called

rheumatism, and sulphur-bath treatment is the thing to cure it." But what he did know was, "I have dreadful pains; I feel better when I am in this stinking pool." So thenceforth he came back whenever the pains began again, and each time he was cured.

Seton certainly learned about the existence of DeMaris Hot Springs when he visited this region in 1898, why some conclude this site to be the setting for Wahb's warm water treatments. However, Seton later noted he discovered the hot pool that inspired this scene in the Wind River Valley of Wyoming; thus, Wahb's pool may be Washakie Hot Springs.

Another possibility is Thermopolis Hot Springs, which Seton may have also heard about during his visit. Although we may never know which specific hot springs inspired Seton, clearly he had many choices. Today, all of these springs continue to provide comfort, not to bears, but to many humans seeking alternative cures for various ailments. Burt and I wondered how Wahb would look today sliding down the waterslides at Thermopolis, Wyoming!

## Fusing fact and fiction

Leaving Cody, we soon traveled southwest to Meeteetse, Wyoming, where we followed the Greybull River, traveling back in time as each spot told the tale of Wahb. Seton de-

scribed one of Wahb's revengeful acts that occurred along the banks of the river. When two settlers named Jack and Miller built a claim shanty in Wahb's domain, he naturally decided to investigate. When the great bear arrived, Miller was away, but Wahb found Jack near the stream fetching water. Jack raised his rifle and shot at Wahb hoping to kill the bear, or at the very least, drive the large bear away.

Pained by the shot but still very much alive, Wahb quickly fell upon the trapper. After defending his territory, Wahb retreated to the more isolated regions of his haunt. Meanwhile, the mortally wounded trapper crawled back to his cabin and penned the following message, "It was Wahb done it. I seen him by the spring and wounded him. I tried to git on the shanty, but he ketched me. My God, how I suffer! [signed] JACK." When the other trapper tracked Wahb down to avenge his partner's death, Wahb killed him, too. In the end, Miller's and Jack's cabin slowly rotted into the ground.

Seton wrote this story to show the strength and ferocity of the grizzly bear. This scene of Wahb's life was clearly based on past bear encounters and specific settlers of the region. The name of the trappers in Seton's account, Jack and Miller, more than likely came from two creeks in the Yellowstone region. Jack Creek, located in the upper Greybull Valley, is named after an early trapper, Jack Wiggins. Seton may have selected the name Miller from Adam "Horn" Miller, who also has a creek in Yellowstone National Park named after him.

Seton met Horn Miller's partner, "Old Pike" Moore at Yancey's Hotel in Yellowstone. Writing for *Recreation*, Seton noted that Moore and Miller "came into Montana to make their fortunes. They have made them, or have been with one jump of making them, many times since then; and they are still pegging away, hopefully, together." In 1913, Miller died and was buried in the Cooke City, Montana, cemetery.

The assault on Jack in Seton's account is eerily similar to a historical incident that occurred in the Greybull River Valley. In 1892, a grizzly bear attacked Phillip H. Vetter. Tacetta B. Walker later wrote in her book *Stories of Early Days in Wyoming* that the bear which attacked Vetter lost two toes from stepping on a steel trap, similar to the fictional Wahb who lost one toe to a trap. Vetter survived long enough after the attack to crawl back into his cabin, patch up his mangled arm, and then write a note describing his plight, "All would have been well had I not gone down the river after supper . . . should go to [Otto] Franc's but too weak . . . It's getting dark . . . I'm smothering . . . I'm dying."

According to A.A. Anderson, who also described the incident in his autobiography, Vetter wrote "My God, how I suffer!" Vetter was buried in the Greybull Valley. Later, Vetter's body and tombstone were relocated to Old Trail Town on the west edge of Cody.

## Where the hate began

Meanwhile, Burt and I finally reached our destination: the mouth of Rose Creek, where Wahb's hatred of man began. According to Seton's account, Colonel Pickett, a Civil War veteran and early rancher, killed not only Wahb's mother but also three siblings. Pickett managed to wound the young cub, Wahb, an injury that would instill a lifelong hatred for man for years to come. Seton wrote that the site from that day on was known as Four Bear, to honor Pickett's hunting success.

Once again, Seton based this fictional tale on a factual incident. Colonel Pickett did indeed kill four bears on the evening of September 13, 1883: three adult grizzlies and one grizzly cub. One bear escaped Pickett's rifle—not a cub, but a full-grown grizzly. A group of surveyors who were camped near the kill site renamed Rose Creek "Four Bear Creek." (Later, though, Rose Creek, which flows south into the Greybull River, regained its original name, and the name Four Bear Creek was applied to another creek in the same proximity but which flows north into the Greybull River.)



Phillip H. Vetter's last words included, "All would have been well had I not gone down to the river after supper." It was there he met his fate when he surprised his own "Wahb."

Numerous bears had been attracted to the area after a dog spooked a number of cattle belonging to Otto Franc, a cattleman who established the Pitchfork Ranch. The herd stampeded into a deep ravine that cradled Rose Creek, and some fifty cattle died crossing the creek in their mad haste to escape the dog. Their rotting carcasses became a natural attractant to the bears in the area and thus drew the bear hunter, Colonel Pickett.

Burt and I found it ironic that the headquarters of the Pitchfork Ranch now stand on the site where those fifty dead cows attracted Pickett's prey. We discovered another irony when we explored present-day Four Bear Creek: along its banks is the Four Bear oilfield. Here we read a sign warning us of noxious gases in the area. It seemed strange that after visiting Death Gulch where Wahb asphyxiated himself, we found posted warnings of noxious gas fumes alongside a creek named for the very event that Seton claimed made Wahb a man-killer. Sometimes history and literature have an unusual way of impressing themselves on the landscape.

## The Palette Ranch: Wahb's birthplace

Leaving the Four Bear oilfield, Burt and I continued back in time as we traveled down the gravel road along the Greybull River. We approached the Palette Ranch near Piney Creek, the area where, according to Seton's book, Wahb was born. This is also true in a more literal sense because it was here at the Palette Ranch that Seton first dreamed up his story about Wahb.

After traveling from Jackson Hole, Wyoming, through the Thoroughfare region southeast of Yellowstone, Seton and his wife met A.A. Anderson, the founder of the Palette Ranch, in 1898. Seton's wife, Grace, recalled the scenic setting of the Palette Ranch in her book, *A Woman Tenderfoot*. Of the ranch, she penned, "there is no spot in the world more beautiful or more health giving." The ranch "is tucked away by itself in the heart of the Rockies, 150 miles from the railroad, 40 miles from the stage route, and surrounded on the three sides by a wilderness of mountains." Mrs. Seton also described the luxurious trappings of the main ranch house and wrote "the message of good cheer that steamed in rosy light from its windows seemed like an opiate dream."

Inside the ranch house, the Setons discovered "a large living room, hung with tapestries and hunting trophies where a perfectly appointed table was set opposite a huge stone fireplace, blazing with logs." Anderson served his guests "a delicious course dinner with rare wines, and

served by a French chef." After dinner, the Setons retired to a room that "was a wealth of colour [sic] in Japanese effect, soft glowing lanterns, polished floors, fur rugs, silk furnished beds and a crystal mantelpiece (brought from Japan) which reflected the fire-light in a hundred tints." Even the bathroom impressed Grace for "it was a room that would be charming anywhere, but in that region a veritable fairy's chamber." Grace concluded that "Truly it is a canny Host who can thus blend harmoniously the human luxuries of the East and the natural glories of the West."

Sitting around the warm fire of the luxurious Palette Ranch house, Anderson later recalled, "I told Mr. Seton about an unusually large grizzly bear that had been frequenting the country about my ranch for many years and had been most destructive to my cattle." Anderson reasoned these depredations resulted from only one bear because he "knew this by the track, which measured thirteen inches in width . . . I knew this was an unusually large bear not only by the size of his track but by the depth it would sink down into the soft earth."

After hearing about Anderson's problem bear, and also drawing upon his experiences in Yellowstone in 1897 — the great number of bears feeding off the trash piles surrounding the Fountain Hotel and a possible visit to Death Gulch—Seton weaved together his narrative about the great grizzly bear Wahb. What better place to set the birth of Wahb than the upper reaches of Piney Creek that flows next to the Palette Ranch?



The "Grizzly Bear Area" sign in the Upper Greybull River Valley was an ironic twist for the two professors trailing a bear named Wahb.



The main building at the Palette Ranch where Wahn was metaphorically “born.” Today, the ranch is privately owned and inaccessible to the general public. Photo by Larry Todd.

## The death of Wahn

Ironically, not only is the Palette Ranch the site of the fictional and literary birth of Wahn, it is also the supposed site of the “real” Wahn’s death. Anderson later said that even though in Seton’s story Wahn killed himself in Death Gulch, “This is poetic license, as Wab [sic] met a different end.” In 1915, after years of chasing the elusive Wahn, Anderson finally encountered the great bear pursuing a female bear. Anderson wrote, “This love affair was the cause of his destruction.”

After killing Wahn’s mate, Anderson saw the great bear “crossing a small opening among the trees at a fast walk.” As Anderson told the story, “I took aim and fired . . . I found [Wahn] dead only a few yards from the spot where I had shot at him . . . his skin now decorates my studio.” Not to be outdone by Colonel Pickett, Anderson also claimed that on “the morning of the same day, I had been successful in killing two other grizzlies; a total of four grizzlies in one day.”

## Time to ponder

Burt and I pulled off the road, and just below us, the Greybull River flowed rapidly toward the east. On the other side of the river, the sunlight highlighted the rooftops of the conglomeration of buildings of the Palette Ranch. A line of pine trees indicated the course of Piney Creek, meandering

up to the gray soil of the treeless alpine region. There the creek bed revealed its presence with bright snow pack lining its channel.

Here Wahn entered the region that would be his domain, according to Seton. In the ranch house below, the literary Wahn was born as Anderson and Seton exchanged stories by the fire blazing in the large stone fireplace. It was also near here that Anderson supposedly killed the real Wahn. Burt and I took it all in, viewing a landscape that remained relatively unchanged for more than a hundred years — a landscape that continues to inspire creativity and generate wonder as it did for Seton.

As we drove home, we noticed a sign: Grizzly Bear Area — Special Rules Apply. Despite all the environmental and human threats, the grizzly has endured through the passage of time, and this region continues to be Wahn’s domain. ■

*All images courtesy Jeremy Johnston unless noted otherwise.*

*Jeremy Johnston is Assistant Professor of History and Dr. Burt Bradley is Associate Professor of English at Northwest College in Powell, Wyoming.*

# Treasures from our West

## BUFFALO BILL MUSEUM: Shaving mug

This shaving mug belonged to William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody and is personalized with both his names. “Col. W.F. Cody” is lettered in gold Old English script around the upper edge of the mug. Centered along the bottom edge in relatively plain capital letters is his famous nickname “Buffalo Bill” which appears to have been added at a later date.

In the center of the mug is the symbol for the 32nd degree Scottish Rite Masons of which Cody was a member. It includes the Latin words “SPES MEA IN DED EST” which mean “My hope is in God.” The manufacturer’s information on the bottom of the mug reads: “KOKEN BARBER’S SUPPLY CO./ST. LOUIS,/U.S.A.”

The mug was donated by Effie Shaw, early Cody resident and mother of former Chairman of the Board of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Margaret Shaw “Peg” Coe. At the time of the gift, the mug was said to have been used at Judge Walter Owens’ barber shop, located in the basement of the Shoshone Bank building on Sheridan Avenue, the main street of Cody, Wyoming. There is a photograph of the interior of the barber shop in *A.G. Lucier’s Pictorial Souvenir of Cody, Wyoming* showing all the mugs lined up in a cabinet. Unfortunately, the photo cannot be adequately enhanced to



Gift of Effie Shaw. 1.69.144

determine whether or not

Buffalo Bill’s is among them. Perhaps, at a later date, another photo will surface and provide us with the answer.

## CODY FIREARMS MUSEUM: Winchester calendar

In 1887, Union Metallic Cartridge Company of Bridgeport, Connecticut, introduced an advertising calendar to market its line of ammunition. Not to be outdone by its down-state rival, Winchester Repeating Arms Company in New Haven, Connecticut, also introduced its first calendar the same year. It was only a matter of time until other firearms manufacturers followed suit.

With catchphrases like “Wherever there’s a hunter, there’s a Winchester,” “I wish I had Dad’s Winchester,” and “Results Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow,” manufacturers adopted such marketing strategies as collector posters and annual calendars. Through the years, they engaged popular artists to create appealing images—A.B. Frost, Frederic Remington, N.C. Wyeth, W.R. Leigh, Lynn Bogue Hunt, Philip Goodwin, and Norman Rockwell. They featured a wide range of firearms users including boys, hunters, ranchers, soldiers, and women. In this 1909 Winchester poster, an “outdoorsy” female has all the right equipment for a stay in the back country—including her trusty Winchester.

After all, what woman could resist the slogan “Makes an outing outfit complete.”

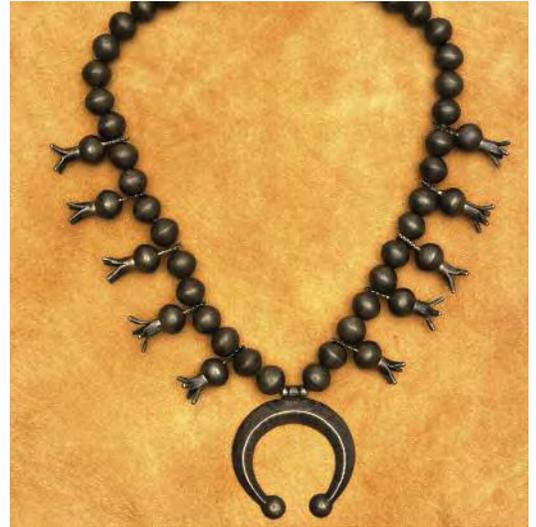


Gift of Olin Corporation, Winchester Arms Collection. 1988.8.2923

## PLAINS INDIAN MUSEUM: Silver squash blossom necklace

Native tribes in the American Southwest have created exquisite jewelry for ages. Using mined turquoise, and silver they acquired mostly through trade, craftsmen incorporated their own designs and traditions into the making of their jewelry. Some designs dated thousands of years ago were found etched on the walls of caves; others were creations based on the patterns of nature around them.

The piece shown here is a squash blossom necklace, ca. 1920s – 1930s, what many call the quintessential southwestern jewelry. Silver bead necklaces are often enriched with beads with petal-like additions called “squash blossoms,” that is, “beads that turn out”. Apparently, the origin of the term is a subject of debate and may have been a mistranslation between English, Spanish, or other Southwest tribal language. Even today, handsomely designed, authentic Native squash blossom necklaces continue to have popular appeal.



Gift of Betty Lou Sheerin. NA.203.1355



Gift of Forrest and Peggy Fenn. DRA.101

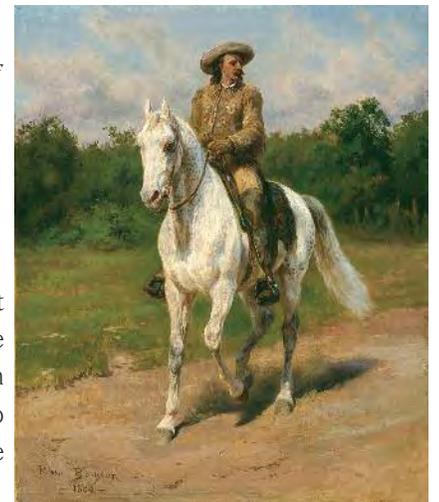
## DRAPER MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY: Gold nuggets and gold dust

In the late nineteenth century, America experienced an economic crisis not unlike today’s financial woes. After the Panic of 1893 and the Panic of 1896 — the height of a series of financial recessions and bank failures in the 1890s — widespread unemployment left hundreds of people without jobs. Many, who felt they had nothing to lose, headed north to try their luck in the gold fields of the Yukon Territory in Canada.

The Klondike Gold Rush (also called the Yukon Gold Rush or Alaska Gold Rush) began when gold was discovered along the

Klondike River near Dawson City, Yukon Territory, Canada, in late summer 1896. Soon word spread to area mining camps about the find, and news reached the United States in July 1897. As eager prospectors “rushed” to the Klondike, it’s estimated that the population there may have reached 40,000, causing some to fear a famine.

Pictured here is 1.425 ounces of Klondike gold nuggets and gold dust in its original moose-hide poke. In total, about 12.5 million ounces of gold have been taken from the Klondike area in the century since its discovery, according to *History of Mining in Yukon*. Clearly, as happens throughout history, the geologic forces of time on the land provide sustenance for those living on its surface.

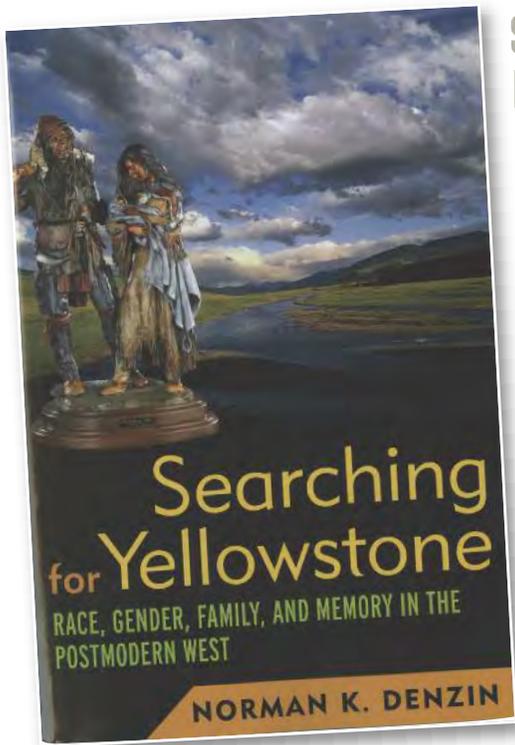


Rosa Bonheur (1822 – 1899). *Col. William F. Cody*, 1889. Oil on canvas, 18.5 x 15.25 inches. Given in Memory of William R. Coe and Mai Rogers Coe. 8.66

## WHITNEY GALLERY OF WESTERN ART: Rosa Bonheur’s *William F. Cody*

Europeans were completely enamored of William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody’s Wild West show. When it traveled to Paris in 1889, French painter Rosa Bonheur visited the grounds of the show to sketch the exotic American animals and the Indian warriors with their families. Cody, in turn, accepted the invitation of Rosa Bonheur to visit her chateau in Fontainebleau where she painted this portrait. For Rosa Bonheur the great showman embodied the freedom and independence of the United States.

Bonheur’s painting was part of the opening exhibition of the Whitney Gallery of Western Art in April 1959. Read more about the history of “the Whitney” on pages 4 – 9.



### Searching for Yellowstone: Race, Gender, Family, and Memory in the Postmodern West

By Norman K. Denzin

Review by Dr. H.L. “Bud” Goodall Jr.

240 pages, 30 illustrations. Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press, Inc. July 2008. ISBN 978-1-59874-320-3. Paperback, \$29.95

*“Yellowstone. Sacagawea. Lewis & Clark. Transcontinental railroad. Indians as college mascots. All are iconic figures, symbols of the West in the Anglo-American imagination. Well-known cultural critic Norman Denzin interrogates each of these icons for their cultural meaning in this finely woven work.”*

I read this book in one thoroughly engrossed sitting and immediately began planning a family trip to Yellowstone, with stops at other historically reconstructed sites of the postmodern West in and around the nation’s first national park: Cheyenne, Mount Rushmore, Custer State Park, Fort Laramie, Deadwood, Red Lodge, Jackson Hole, and then back home again to Arizona. We took that trip — 3250 miles — somewhat ironically, but somehow perfectly suited to Denzin’s postmodern themes in a blue Toyota Prius rather than a rickety Conestoga wagon or on sturdy horseback.

We went there, after all, not to find the authentic American West, or even an authentic Past, but instead to see what had been made out of it. We went there, as Denzin phrases this “tiny slice of the postmodern West, [where] cowboys, Native Americans, park rangers, and cultural tourists collide.” We went there in search of a new connection to our common cultural narratives, to the new performances that reclaim forbidden territories of hidden historical scripts. We also went there to enjoy the spectacular scenery where our mythic, rough, tough, genocidal frontier once was, and where, in its place we now find the overlay of cultural capital invested in well-tended monuments, theme parks, casinos, lodges, and dude ranches made to exist alongside real herds of buffalo, and, at least in Yellowstone proper, fields and mountain meadows where real deer and antelope do, in fact, play.

The juxtaposition then and now does to the spirit, and to memory, what Denzin’s chapters intend it to do. They confound, disturb, cause to question — if not to interrogate — the serious play and pleasures of experience in the park against what we have come to learn that wasn’t in the movies we watched as children. Nor is it laced into the games of “cowboys and Indians” we enacted in schoolyard . . .

It is a tribute to Denzin’s fine performative text that he captures in his memories, his performance scripts, his recovered historical records and art, and in his analyses of the visual and visceral representations of the West, the curious admixture of what I elsewhere call “the plural present.” For there is in the discourses creating the new Old West, a re-visioning of the past made more inclusive by these counter-narratives, more democratic in their depictions of “what happened,” and more accountable for it. In Denzin’s words, this new collective and personal search for Yellowstone “speaks to the soul of a nation, and to the kind of nation we want America to be.” ■

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*Norm Denzin is Distinguished Professor of Communications at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Bud Goodall is the Director and Professor of Communication at the Hugh Downs School of Human Communication, Arizona State University. His essays, commentaries, reviews, and critiques are found at [www.hlgoodall.com](http://www.hlgoodall.com).*



A difficult road to Yellowstone!

Sometimes, it's been downright difficult to get to Yellowstone National Park. On or about July 23, 1955, these two carloads of tourists used a temporary bypass of the flood at Clocktower Creek, about twenty-eight miles west of Cody. A Wyoming "gully-washer" destroyed the highway and bridge crossing the creek, and the Wyoming Department of Transportation worked all through the night to lay large steel culverts into the creek bottom after the flood waters subsided. After that, workers covered the culverts with dirt to build the temporary bypass these vehicles are using. MS 89 Jack Richard Photography Collection. PN.89.11.1847.20 ■

See thousands of historic photos on the Buffalo Bill Historical Center Web site at [www.bbhc.org/hmrl/collection.cfm](http://www.bbhc.org/hmrl/collection.cfm)

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