

POINTSWEST

SPRING 2015

A black and white photograph of a snowy landscape. In the foreground on the left, there is a bare, dark tree with many thin, tangled branches. The ground is covered in a thick layer of snow, with some small, dark patches of vegetation visible. In the background, a flat, snow-covered field extends to a distant, low horizon line under a pale sky.

The art of John Mix Stanley

| Wyoming Grasslands

photos by Michael Berman and William Sutton

| Buffalo Bill on a bullfrog?

| Summer with golden eagles

**BUFFALO BILL
CENTER
OF THE WEST**

to the point

BY BRUCE ELDREDGE | *Executive Director*



“Tulsa. Tacoma. Longmont. Omaha. Palm Springs. Salt Lake City. Kansas City. New York City. Oklahoma City. Richmond. Great Falls. Cody...and more.”

— BRUCE ELDREDGE

Yes, our New Year at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West finds our collections traveling far and wide—starting right here in Cody this spring with two phenomenal exhibitions.

In the first, the somewhat obscure nineteenth-century artist John Mix Stanley won't remain obscure any longer when we open *Painted Journeys: The Art of John Mix Stanley*. The summer exhibition highlights the work of this adventurer-artist, the bulk of which was destroyed in three separate fires. Another Stanley exhibition with a 42-scene moving panorama just vanished! Now, we've gathered some sixty of his known works in an extraordinary exhibition that opens June 6, 2015. Then, *Painted Journeys* makes its way to the Gilcrease Museum in Tulsa, Oklahoma, followed by the Tacoma Art Museum in Tacoma, Washington. Read more on pages 4–9.

Opening June 4 in the John Bunker Sands Photography Gallery is *Wyoming Grasslands: Photographs by Michael Berman and William Sutton*, a partnership between the Center and the Wyoming Chapter of the Nature Conservancy. In 2012, Berman and Sutton began to photograph Wyoming's grasslands to call attention to the dangers facing this landscape. View a sample of these images on pages 18–23.

Our popular *Go West! Art of the American Frontier from the Buffalo Bill Center of the West*, which had a most successful run at the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, Georgia, in 2012–2013, travels to the Joslyn Art Museum in Omaha, Nebraska, for a November 7, 2015, opening. After that, it's on to the Palm Springs Art Museum in Palm Springs, California, for a November 2016 opening.

Finally, planning is underway for the eagerly-awaited exhibition *Coming home! Legacies of the Paul Dyck Plains Indian Collection*. Since its arrival in 2007, our staff has cataloged, cleaned, and conserved hundreds of objects in the collection—not to mention undertaken countless hours of research. The Dyck exhibition is tentatively scheduled to open at the Arizona Historical Society, Tucson, in November 2016, and then debut here at the Center after that.

As 2015 begins, and wonderful exhibitions abound, there's no better time to visit the collections of the Buffalo Bill Center of the West—here in Cody, or at a location near you! ■

About the cover:



Check out *Wyoming Grasslands: Photos by Michael Berman and William Sutton* starting on page 18. Two trees in Johnson County, Wyoming, March 6, 2014. L1023968. Michael Berman photo.

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Points West is published three times a year for patrons and friends of the Buffalo Bill Center of the West. For more information, contact the editor at the address above.

The Buffalo Bill Center of the West is a private, non-profit, educational institution dedicated to preserving and interpreting the natural and cultural history of the American West. Founded in 1917, its collections include: Buffalo Bill and the West he lived and loved, historic photographs and documents, firearms, natural science of the Greater Yellowstone region, Plains Indians, and masterworks of western art.

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

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From the Gilcrease Museum to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and from the Smithsonian American Art Museum to Yale University, the Buffalo Bill Center of the West has assembled some sixty works from thirty-six lenders for the upcoming exhibition, *Painted Journeys: The Art of John Mix Stanley*. Rare works from Stanley make their way to the Center from Texas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Michigan, and Washington State—to name a few—for the exhibition's June 6, 2015, opening. Beginning on page four, discover why this extraordinary artist has remained virtually unknown for more than a century.

John Mix Stanley (1814 – 1872). Nez Perces, ca. 1857–1860. Tinted lithograph on paper. Gift of Gloria S. Duffy and Family. 8.96



HIGHLIGHTS



A leap, but not a stretch | The lithograph, *La Rana nel Wild West...* does indeed depict Buffalo Bill riding, of all things, a bucking bullfrog...



Wyoming Grasslands | “They demand strength and persistence and loyalty. They turn away the insincere.”

VISIT US ONLINE | Stay in touch with all that’s happening at the Center of the West. Keep an eye on our website; follow us in social media; and sign up today at centerofthewest.org/e-news-signup to receive our e-newsletter *Western Wire*.

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Points West is the magazine of the Buffalo Bill Center of the West, Cody, Wyoming.

Painted Journeys:

The Art of John Mix Stanley



Self-Portrait, c. 1860. Oil on canvas. Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma. (0126.1139) L.394.2015.6

Revealing an unknown artist

BY MINDY N. BESAW

John Mix Stanley (1814 – 1872) was a major figure in nineteenth-century American Art, yet his life and art remain unexplored. He was an ardent adventurer who traveled to the West more than any other artist of his time. He was a painter of American Indians and was sensitive to their changing circumstances during a tumultuous time in our country's history.

Throughout his travels and in his depictions of American Indians and western scenes, Stanley remained dedicated to fine art, not just documentation. Stanley's imagery played an important role in creating

the legacy of the American West and in shaping our American identity. Yet, even for enthusiasts of American art and the West, Stanley is relatively unknown. The upcoming exhibition, *Painted Journeys: The Art of John Mix Stanley*, reveals this little-known artist and highlights how Stanley is relevant and important today.

Indian Gallery

Stanley shared the western art limelight during the mid-nineteenth century with George Catlin (1796 – 1872), Alfred Jacob Miller (1810 – 1874), and William T. Ranney (1813 – 1857)—all of whom have enjoyed



George Catlin (1796 – 1872). *The Last Race, Mandan (Eeh-K'na-K'nah-Pic)*, ca. 1855 – 1870. Oil on paperboard. Gift of Paul Melon. Center of the West 28.86

important exhibitions and scholarship in recent years. Like Catlin, who first journeyed up the Missouri River in the 1830s to paint the Plains Indians and their way of life, Stanley explored the West in search of American Indian and frontier themes on an expansive scale.

From his travels in the 1840s and 1850s, Stanley assembled a vast collection of Indian portraits and scenes of daily life, which became the heart of his famous Indian Gallery of more than one-hundred-fifty paintings. Stanley lobbied the United States government to purchase his Indian Gallery on several occasions, but each time he was disappointed. Then, almost all of the

collection was tragically destroyed in an 1865 fire at the Smithsonian, where it had been on exhibit.

Despite this great loss, we can still learn much about Stanley's unique approach to American Indian subjects from his existing portraits and paintings of Indian life. During his travels, Stanley witnessed the pressures on American Indian peoples to adapt or perish in the wake of the 1830 Indian Removal Act. The legislation forced the migration of southeastern tribes to west of the Mississippi, and thereby, increased incursions from trappers and settlers into the West. As obstacles in western settlement, many stereotyped American Indians as war-

like savages. Stanley generally avoided these negative stereotypes and regarded American Indians as worthy subjects for fine art.

Stanley's scenes of Indian life often feature family groups and quiet moments. In *Group of Piegan Indians*, men dressed in their finest apparel rest on an outcropping to smoke. Stanley presents the act of leisure smoking as a special activity that afforded men a universal bond, relatable to Stanley's audiences across cultural boundaries. These intimate and approachable scenes celebrate renewal and regeneration. Yet at the same time, Stanley also lamented the doomed race with his powerful painting, *The Last of Their Race*. In this allegorical painting



The Last of Their Race, 1857. Oil on canvas. Center of the West museum purchase. 5.75



Group of Piegan Indians, 1867. Oil on canvas. Western History and Genealogy Department, Denver Public Library, on loan to Denver Art Museum in Denver, Colorado. (C-34-15) L.388.2015.1

representing different tribes, the family of many generations stands at the westernmost part of the continent. The waves of the Pacific Ocean lap at their feet, and the sun sets in the distance.

Capturing the character of America

Indeed, Stanley does stand out as a painter of American Indians. However, this exhibition also includes his western genre paintings, history paintings, landscapes, scenes from exploration, and portraits—all to demonstrate the breadth and quality of his career. As a vital narrative painter, Stanley's works and artistic vision contributed to shaping the American identity.

The American character was a prominent theme for Stanley, just as it was for his contemporary, William Ranney. While Ranney focused more on trappers and pioneers in his



Oregon City on the Willamette River, ca. 1850 – 1852. Oil on canvas. Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas (1979.17) L.381.2015.2

western pictures, Stanley painted images from multiple perspectives. He wrestled with contradictions in the American character—as a champion of Manifest Destiny and the pioneer ethos on one hand, and a defender of Native American culture and tradition on the other. Stanley reconciled these disparate images of the West as natural paradise or theater of progress by painting visions of Native America alongside one of an expanding European-American component. He was able to bridge both worlds and resolved the tension by idealizing—but not privileging—its divergent elements.

Stanley's Indian Gallery was a major statement of the artist's support for American Indians, but he also painted burgeoning towns in the West. For example, Stanley painted *Oregon City on the Willamette River* following two trips to the area in the late 1840s to sketch local Indians and scenery. This painting, completed a decade later, is a complex metaphor for the changes on the frontier. An Indian couple is

present in the foreground of the painting, cast in the shadow and looking somewhat dejected—they are not part of the scene of progress reflected in the burgeoning community behind them. The sunny town speaks to the alternate vision, reflecting Euro-American aspirations of development and expansion. Oregon City was the terminus of the Oregon Trail and the dream destination for many pioneers in the mid-nineteenth century.

Exploring and sketching and painting

Stanley's ambitious exhibition program, and his formidable exposure through vital government reports on western exploration, gave him a broad platform for expression afforded few other artists of his day. Stanley's images of the Southwest reached another



After John Mix Stanley, *Hell Gate-Entrance to Cadotte's Pass from the West*. From *Reports of Explorations and Surveys to Ascertain the Most Practicable and Economic Route for a Railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean, Volume 12*, ca. 1857 – 1860. Colored lithograph. Center of the West 12.87.3

audience when published in Major William H. Emory's *Notes of a Military Reconnaissance* from the journey through the territory with General Stephen W. Kearny in 1846.

Following his work on the Isaac I. Stevens 1853 expedition searching for a northern route of the transcontinental railroad, massive reports from the railroad surveys further disseminated Stanley's images. Publishers based these final prints on Stanley's field sketches, and then watercolors, completed a couple years after the expedition while Stanley was living in Washington, DC. In its broad reach, his imagery played an important role in creating the legacy and perception of the American West.

The Stevens expedition provided ample inspiration for Stanley's artwork throughout the 1850s. *Scouts along the Teton River*, for example, pictures a group of the Stevens exploring party on a rocky outcropping against the Teton River Valley in northern Montana. The men, posed in a sturdy pyramid, are bathed in golden light and appear as masters over the surrounding landscape. A small, related painting, *Untitled, Teton Valley Scene*, shows the same composition as the larger painting, but is curiously reversed, with the tents to the right of the foreground rocks. This painting shows Stanley's possible working process, as the figures are less resolved and Stanley's under-drawing more evident.

Stanley also used his journeys and his art to convey images of the West to a popular audience with a huge moving panorama he titled *Scenes and Incidents of Stanley's Western Wilds*. The panorama recounted his western adventures in forty giant images, which was for nineteenth-century audiences,

John Mix Stanley, a timeline

January 17, 1814: Born, Canandaigua, New York.

1828 – 1832: Apprenticed as a wagon maker, and works as a house and sign painter.

1834: Turns to portrait painting for a career, and for the next several years, travels through the Old Northwest (Michigan, Wisconsin, and Illinois), and New York City, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Troy, New York, as an itinerant painter.

1842: Travels to Fort Gibson, Oklahoma, to paint American Indian portraits.

1843: Attends three Indian peace councils in the Republic of Texas and the Oklahoma Territory.

1846: First exhibition, *Stanley's American Indians*, opens in Cincinnati, Ohio.

1846: Travels by caravan on the Santa Fe Trail from Westport Landing, Missouri, to Santa Fe, New Mexico. There he becomes a topographical draughtsman on a military expedition to occupy the northern provinces of Mexico with Stephen Watts Kearny and surveyor William H. Emory. (Kit Carson served as a guide for much of the expedition.)

1847: Travels through the Northwest and arrives in Oregon City to paint American Indians who lived in the region; continues farther north into present-day Washington State where he narrowly misses the Cayuse massacre at Waiilatpu Mission.

1848: Travels to Honolulu, Hawaii, to paint portraits of the King and Queen of Hawaii.

1850 – 1852: Exhibits his North American Indian Portrait Gallery throughout New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts, depositing the gallery of paintings at the Smithsonian Institution in 1852.

1853: Isaac I. Stevens, survey leader, hires Stanley as an artist on a project to determine the northern route for the Pacific Railway from Saint Paul, Minnesota, to Puget Sound, Washington.

1854: Marries Alice Caroline English, a young schoolteacher with whom he has five children. Stays in Washington, DC, for the next nine years while he actively exhibits his artwork and is involved with the Washington Art Association.

1863: Moves to Buffalo, New York, and later to Detroit, Michigan.

1865: Stanley's Indian Gallery is destroyed in a fire at the Smithsonian Institution; only seven paintings survive.

1868: Travels to Germany to get estimates on chromolithography; transforms seven paintings into chromolithograph prints over the next three years.

April 10, 1872: Stanley suffers a heart attack after an illness of several months, and dies at age 58. His wife survived him, until her death in 1891. ■



Untitled, Teton Valley Scene, 1855. Oil on paper. Center of the West museum purchase from William E. Weiss Memorial Fund and Lakeside Foundation. 1.14

INSET: *Scouts in the Tetons, ca. 1855.* Oil on canvas. Gift of the Thomas Gilcrease Foundation, 1955. Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma. (0126.1143) L.394.2015.1

akin to present-day movie theaters. Viewers delighted in the massive painted images while the narrator described the scene. Then, the panorama turned and a new image and corresponding adventure appeared. Although the panorama no longer survives, Stanley painted many smaller easel-sized pictures of the same scenes.

Obscure no longer

Throughout his career, Stanley constantly refined his painting style and skill. At a time in America when there was very little formal artistic instruction, Stanley sought out teachers. Moreover, when he aimed to make a living as an artist, he started as an itinerant

painter, traveling through the Midwest and Northeast painting portraits of wealthy individuals. One of his early portraits, *The Williamson Family*, pictures the Manhattan merchant James Abeel Williamson with his wife and toddler son. Stanley's depiction of the interior, furnishings, and figures is successful for the way in which the painting reveals the warmth and intimacy of the family, and the "sitters" prosperity.

Throughout the next thirty years, Stanley's painting style, anatomy, and composition greatly matured, especially during the period of the 1850s in Washington, DC, where he was involved with the Washington Art Association. Compare, for example, the figures of *The Williamson Family* (page 10)

to the relaxed and varied poses in *Group of Piegan Indians*. At times in his career, he also offered painting instruction, contributing to arts instruction in America. Stanley constantly balanced his goals of conveying information—whether as an expeditionary artist or painting the likeness of his sitters in the Indian Gallery—while at the same time using sophisticated compositions and formal elements to emphasize artistic aspects of his work.

Stanley was remarkable in many ways—for the great distances he traveled (even before the transcontinental railroad was complete); for his determination in the midst of personal tragedy and loss of his Indian Gallery paintings; in his use of art



as entertainment through the monumental panoramas; and for the sheer number of images that appeared in government expedition reports.

Stanley's is a story of American history and art in the mid-nineteenth century, but it is also an artistic journey illustrating remarkable ingenuity. By investigating Stanley's art and central insights in light of a complex time in American history, we can not only better understand that moment in time, but come to understand how Stanley has had a major part in how we perceive the American West. Stanley's western landscapes and paintings of American Indian life afforded an eastern audience a view into an unfamiliar part of their own country. The height of Stanley's art and life also pre-dates many of the artists we now associate with the West. Thomas Moran, for example, had not yet completed his monumental painting of *Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone* when Stanley died in 1872, and Yellowstone had only been designated a national park for a month.

Painted Journeys: The Art of John Mix Stanley is a major contribution to the study of nineteenth-century American Art in its revival of Stanley's art and career. The exhibition examines Stanley's unique approach to Native American scenes and explores the shaping of nineteenth-century American identity through visual images of the West. ■

Mindy N. Besaw is the former Margaret and Dick Scarlett Curator of Western American Art – Whitney Western Art Museum at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West. She recently accepted an appointment as Curator for the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Arkansas, a position she began November 19, 2014. She is co-curator of Painted Journeys along with the Center's Director Emeritus and Senior Scholar, Peter Hassrick.

On display this summer, don't miss it

This summer, the Buffalo Bill Center of the West is excited to present *Painted Journeys: The Art of John Mix Stanley*. The Center's Peter H. Hassrick, Director Emeritus and Senior Scholar, and Mindy N. Besaw, previously Margaret and Dick Scarlett Curator of Western American Art, have co-curated the exhibition. It brings together, for

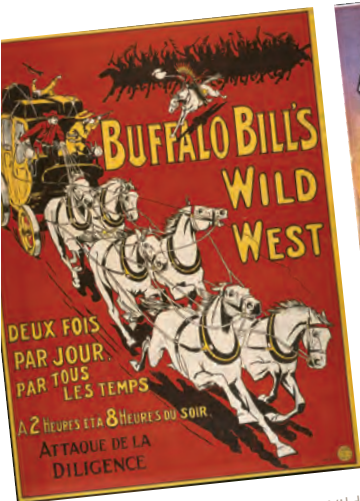
the first time, nearly sixty works representing every aspect of Stanley's remarkable artistic career.

The accompanying exhibition catalogue is the first in-depth examination about Stanley and includes five new essays and a selection of images of more than two hundred paintings, watercolors, and drawings with

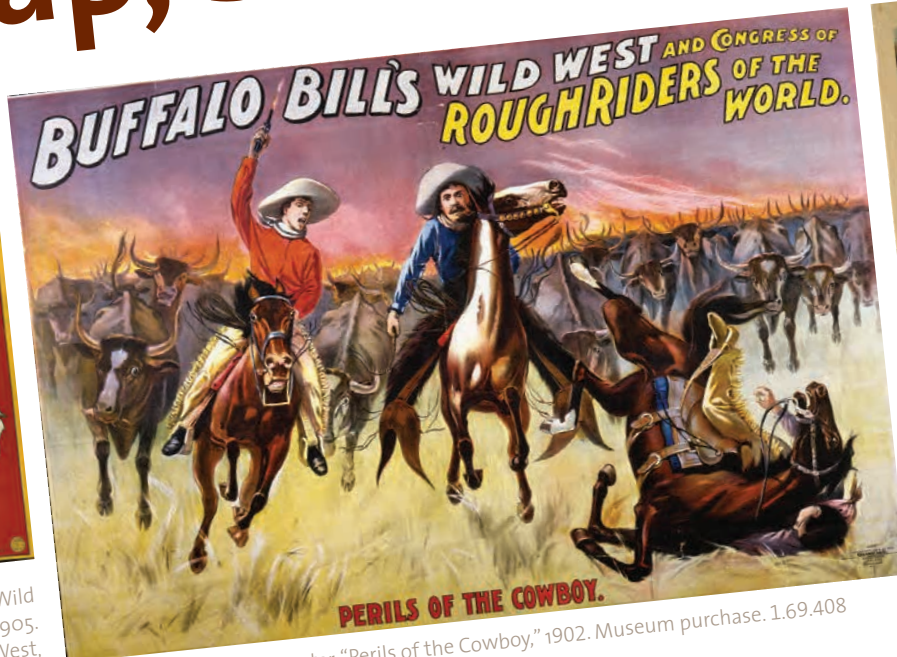
individual catalogue entries to illustrate the majority of Stanley's artwork that still exists today. *Painted Journeys* opens June 6, 2015, at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West where it remains on view through August 29, 2015. The exhibition then travels to the Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma, and the Tacoma Art Museum in Tacoma, Washington. ■

Buffalo Bill and La Rana nel Wild West part 1 one

A leap, but not a stretch



Lithograph, Buffalo Bill's Wild West with Deadwood Stage, 1905. French: "Buffalo Bill's Wild West, two times per day, every day at 2 o'clock and 8 o'clock in the evening. Attack of the Stagecoach." Buffalo Bill Museum Purchase, Mary Jester Allen Fund. 1.69.6022



Buffalo Bill's Wild West poster, "Perils of the Cowboy," 1902. Museum purchase. 1.69.408



Original colored lithograph poster, French, 1889. Col. W. F. Cody, Je Viens, "I am coming." Original Buffalo Bill Museum Collection. 1.69.442

BY MARY ROBINSON and ROBERT W. RYDELL

Close your eyes and imagine a typical poster or illustration of Buffalo Bill's Wild West. What comes to mind? Is it Buffalo Bill's silhouette on a charging bison with the announcement, "Je Viens"? Or is it perhaps a colorful poster that advertises the Congress of Rough Riders and the reenactments of battles between cowboys and Indians set against landscapes of magnificent prairies and mountains?

Our bet is that as you conjure up these images, you are unlikely to have in your memory bank the image that stopped us in our tracks—a lithograph that hangs in the Buffalo Bill Museum. It was originally produced on the occasion of Buffalo Bill's one-night appearance in Bologna, Italy, on April 8, 1906, for an Italian magazine called *La Rana* (The Bullfrog). The lithograph, *La Rana nel Wild West* (The Bullfrog in the Wild West) does indeed depict Buffalo Bill riding, of all things, a bucking bullfrog...

La Rana nel Wild West. Lithograph poster, 1906. Gift of Mr. Oliver M. Wallop. 1.69.464 ("Esce in Bologna tutti i Venerdì" means "Comes Out Every Friday." The abbreviation "Stab. Tip. Lit. A Noe. Bologna" refers to Stabilimento Tipo-Litografico-Bologna -A Noe-Bologna.)

STAB. TIP. LIT. A. NOE. BOLOGNA



LA RANA NEL WILD WEST
Giornale Uморistico Politico
Esce in Bologna tutti i Venerdì Cent. 10

BUFFALO BILL AND LA RANA NEL WILD WEST

Yes, a bucking bullfrog! Look carefully at the illustration. It is, to say the least, curious. Leave aside the Italian words around the borders for a moment and look at the color of Buffalo Bill's boots! Are they really lapis lazuli? And look at those playful brush strokes that produce a decorative palette of oblong shapes. Is this really Buffalo Bill (and a frog) done up in the art nouveau style? And is that kicking bullfrog really larger than Cody himself?

What's more: Why was this image created? Who was the artist? And, how on earth did this lithograph find its way to the Buffalo Bill Museum?

These are serious questions, and never mind any impulse you might have to make jokes about Hopalong Cassidy, at least until we get to the end of our story. Leave the jokes to us or, better yet, to *La Rana*—the *Giornale Uморistico Politico*, or *Journal of Political Humor*—that commissioned the artist, Mario Cetto, to produce this lithograph to advertise its special issue dedicated to the Wild West's appearance in Bologna, Italy.

All kidding aside, we still have many unresolved questions about this image and how best to understand it. We hope you will have some suggestions for us as we continue our quest to learn about it. At this stage, we thought we would share with you how our curiosity about this illustration led us on a fascinating journey that has taken us full circle, from the Buffalo Bill Museum and the McCracken Research Library to Buffalo Bill's one-night-stand in Bologna (and into the maelstrom of Italian politics)—and then home again.

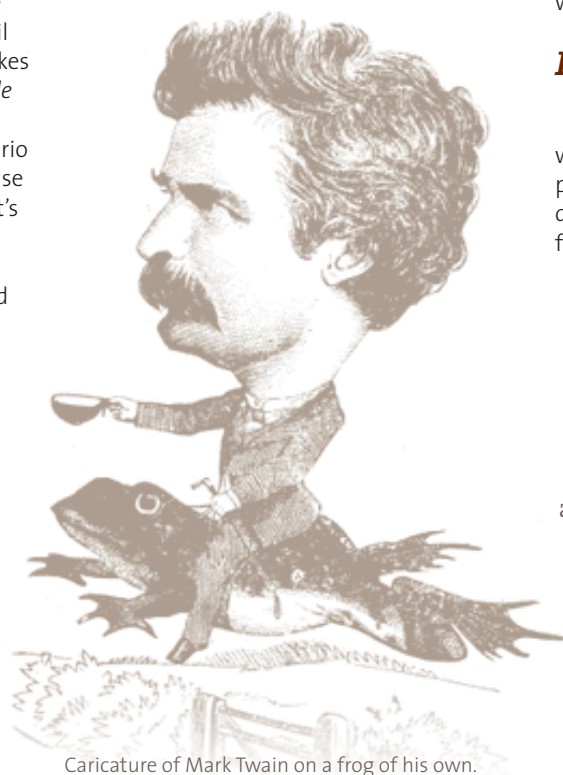
From Italy, our investigation led us, surprisingly, to England and Highclere Castle (yes, you know it from the PBS series as *Downton Abbey*), and from there back to the Buffalo Bill Center of the West where we have made a small but important change on a label. More significantly, we developed some new insights into the complex ways audiences received the Wild West in Europe.

La Rana Nel Wild West

The lithograph, *La Rana Nel Wild West*, is as irresistible and delightful as any Buffalo Bill's Wild West poster in the museum. It seldom fails to draw smiles from our visitors, in spite of the puzzling, not to say bizarre, juxtaposition of Buffalo Bill and a green

frog. Here we have a caricaturist taking liberties that a commercial lithographer would scarcely attempt. At the same time, we recognize a visual gag, however much it mystifies and leaves us on the outside of an in-joke. We chuckle at the image, but we want to know more!!

The original owner of the poster, as we shall see, believed it was an advertisement for the Wild West. A closer look reveals it to be a creature of a different color. Buffalo Bill soars into the air on the back of a frog the size of a bucking bronco. The frog springs forward, yellow eye bulging and green toes outspread. The athletic showman grips the reins in one



Caricature of Mark Twain on a frog of his own. Image courtesy the Mark Twain House & Museum, Hartford, CTSLC cartoons #18

hand while he doffs his hat stylishly with the other. Though Buffalo Bill is unidentified on the poster, people across Italy would have easily recognized his thigh-high boots, buckskin jacket, grey curls, and goatee. The Wild West had famously toured the country in 1890 and was back in 1906 for a farewell run. Between March and May of that year, the show would appear in thirty-four Italian cities and towns.

The image of an American riding a frog had immediate, comical resonance to Italians, who recalled a familiar caricature

of Mark Twain astride an amphibious steed. The popular humorist had toured Europe in recent decades and was widely known for his famous story of the *Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County* (1865). This association of man and frog, then, recalled Twain's signature irreverence and signaled what was in store for readers of *La Rana*. The poster artist who signed the piece, Mario Cetto, is largely lost to history, but he created an image that a Bolognese would have appreciated at a gleeful glance. The frog in the Wild West is coming! The issue of *La Rana* devoted to the Wild West should not be missed! In this case, Twain's "innocent abroad" may well have been Buffalo Bill himself riding into the waters of European politics.

La Rana

Our first task in interpreting the poster was to understand the genre of the publication to which it refers. The Museo della Satira in Forte dei Marmi provided the following reply to our inquiry:

La Rana was established as a weekly publication in 1865 after the abolition of papal censorship and was one of many anticlerical and satirical magazines of the day. Edited by Leonida Gionetti and Augusto Grossi, the magazine consisted of four pages containing stories, riddles, charades, and little poems.

After 1876, it featured a large, central lithographic page in bold color. One could find the most striking of these lithographs displayed on the walls of living rooms and cafés in Bologna.

La Rana thrived during a period of political transformation and often caricatured politicians carrying out clumsy and destructive reforms. Significantly, "the frog," carries with it another meaning in the Bolognese vernacular. For this information, we are indebted to Dr. Cristian Della Coletta at the University of Virginia, who informed us that "la rana" connotes being "broke, poor, or bankrupt." Daniela Schiavina, a librarian at the Museo della Città di Bologna, added her observation that, across much of Italy,

AZIONE

... lire 1,50

... lire 2

...vono in
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...reso un
...olosi.



Giornale Umoristico con caricature e disegni a colori.

DIREZIONE

Via Ga

Il Giornale esce in

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PUBBLICA

STRENNA DEL
con illustrazioni
QUINTERNO di
tutti variati -

Ricerca di B
Chiedere sagg

Dirigere Va
al glo

La nostra prima ⁽¹⁾ intervista
con Buffalo Bill

Non appena ho saputo che Buffalo Bill si era...
di Caprara, sono
ressioni politiche

Geremiadi e resipiscenze

Dies irae! che baruffa!
La matassa più s'arruffa,
chi lo pesca il bandolo?

La Rana banner, March 30 – 31, 1906

the color green is associated with lacking money.

This color-coded frog, in short, was a voice for the underclass in Italy. Addressing serious economic issues, and with political sympathies for the victims of heavy-handed and incompetent leadership, La Rana spoke for the dispossessed who had not shared in the benefits of the modern industrial state. *La Rana* croaked loudly for a more liberal and stable government during the tumultuous decades leading up to World War I.

According to *The Oxford History of Italy*, Italy had been, until the mid-nineteenth century, an “untidy mosaic of dynastic principalities.” Unification was the goal of the decades before 1900, a movement known as “Risorgimento” that tried to achieve a modern state.

In spite of this effort, many areas of the country were impoverished and backward compared to the rest of Europe. The Austro-Hungarian Empire controlled territories in the north, areas characterized by a social and political culture very different from southern Italy and Sicily. Victor Emmanuel III held sway over a weak, constitutional monarchy in 1906. The vulnerabilities of the state would prove disastrous in World War I and lead to the rise of fascism in the decades that followed. Buffalo Bill’s Wild West arrived in Bologna in a political culture rife with social and economic tensions.



An ad for the Bologna firm of A. Noe, *La Rana* magazine.

Hunting the frog: Off to Denver and Italy

To locate the issue of *La Rana* which the poster advertises proved a quest as amusing and filled with surprises as the poster itself. Online searching, including heroic efforts by Mary Guthmiller, interlibrary loan specialist at Montana State University, turned up only scattered issues of the publication in American libraries. Fortunately, former Buffalo Bill Museum Curator Dr. Paul Fees had found the poster fascinating and had gone frog hunting himself. He discovered the April 6, 1906, issue of *La Rana* at the Denver Public Library in the archive related

to William F. Cody. We examined Dr. Fees’s notes in a collection file in our museum registrar’s office; with these interesting clues in hand, we traveled to the Denver library and photographed the issue.

Denver’s copy of *La Rana* remains in fair condition. The pages are larger than a typical American magazine and resemble a newspaper with all the creases and tears we would expect from a 108-year-old publication. The colorful lithographs are wonderfully preserved and appear to be of a piece with the art nouveau style of the poster. An internal page devoted to advertisements helped us translate the reference on the poster: The Bologna firm of A. Noe (perhaps Arca di Noe, literally “Noah’s Ark”) specialized in printing and chromolithography.

Beyond the language barrier, it was evident that the magazine’s riddling style of commentary would prove difficult to interpret without close translation and study of Italian politics in 1906. Fortunately, scholars associated with the *Papers of William F. Cody* assisted us in this effort. Graduate student Alessandra Magrin traveled in Italy for her studies, seeking publications related to Buffalo Bill’s Wild West tours. She located bound volumes of *La Rana* in the Biblioteca dell’ Archiginnasio in Bologna and forwarded digital images of a superior quality to those we had produced in Denver. Then, we placed these

BUFFALO BILL AND LA RANA NEL WILD WEST

text images before several Italian-speaking contacts. *Papers* Associate Editor Dr. Julia Stetler translated two longer pieces with significant Buffalo Bill-related content. The first was a mock interview with the showman, which had appeared in the March 30–31 issue, and the other was a poem titled “The Arrival of Buffalo Bill.”

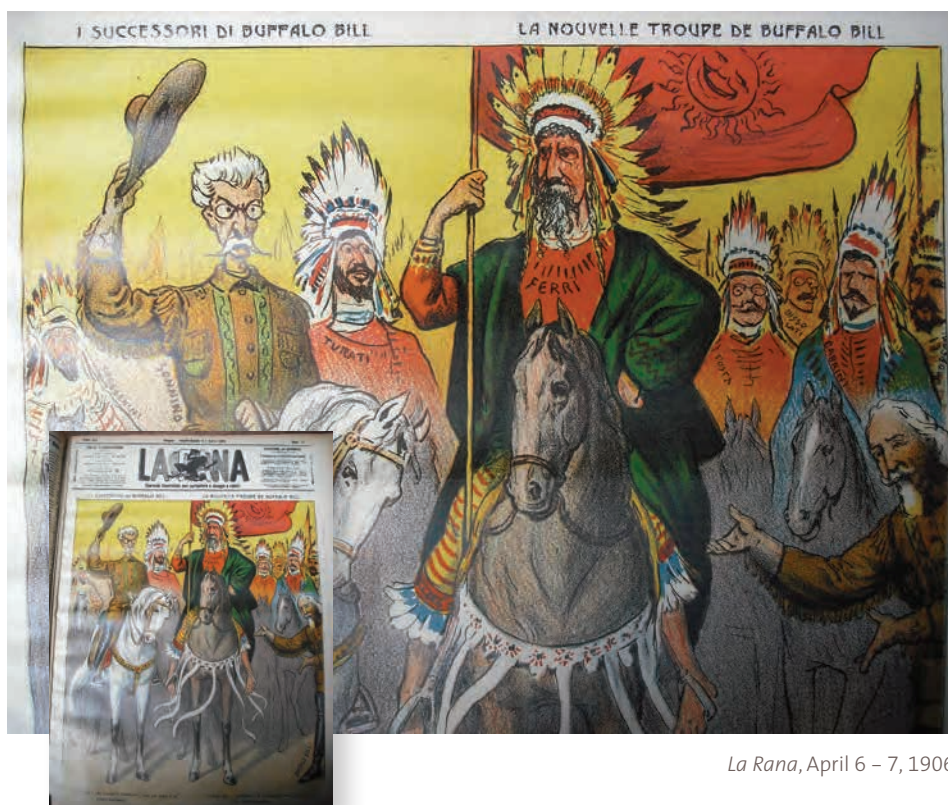
These translations, together with the lithographs, shine light into the murky political waters in which *La Rana* once swam. Cody and his Wild West show Indians provide the metaphor for an uneasy power relationship between the conservative leadership and the socialists, who had been an organized party in Italy for several decades. In the cover cartoon, Buffalo Bill is at the far right, gesturing toward a group of mounted Indians wearing headdresses—the chief of whom the artist identifies as Ferri, a prominent member of the revolutionary wing of the socialist party. To the left, dressed as Buffalo Bill and sitting stiffly on his white horse, appears the conservative Prime Minister, Sidney Sonnino. The caption reads “The New Troupe of Buffalo Bill,” and Cody himself declares, “Sirs, I have the honor to present those who will succeed me.” In other words, this group of performers is the next “circus” expected in town.

Enrico Ferri holds a red flag, and it is no coincidence that the “redskins” identified as Turati, Costa, and others, are socialists. In fact, Filippo Turati had founded the party, and the placement of Ferri at the front may call attention to internal party divisions. Turati was a moderate reformer who showed himself willing to work toward social change within the government. Ferri the revolutionary, however, is lampooned as a barefooted clown in short, striped pajama-like pants, with feathers sticking out below. This is a party rife with factions and, in the eyes of *La Rana*, deserving ridicule.

The so-called “interview” with Buffalo Bill mentioned previously in relation to the March 30–31 edition, further reinforces this message.



William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody in Italy, April 8, 1906. Gift of Mrs. Earl Newton. P.6.139



La Rana, April 6–7, 1906

A correspondent quizzes Cody about politics, and Bill’s zany replies become a commentary on domestic and international issues:

When asked about the current Italian government, Buffalo Bill replies “That of Italy is a spectacle without comparison.”

“What,” the interviewer presses Cody, “do you think about the direction things have taken?”

“My dear,” Buffalo Bill observes, “the direction is worth little without...any reins.”

As for the recent industrial strikes, Cody claims they were the result of “strange brains,” and that agitators would ultimately be left with “red skins”—a racist pun on the Indians intended to convey “blushing.”

Then, when asked again about the state of Italian politics, Cody offers this assessment aimed at the socialists: “Certain political parties play...the Indian.”

“Anyway,” Cody declares at the end of the interview, “it all comes down to knowing or not knowing how...to lead.”

Not surprisingly, the magazine then invites its readers to enjoy other stories about the Wild West and promises to offer up a “lavish, spiritual, ‘bill’iant’ banquet” in the April 1906 issue of *La Rana*...

Likewise, we invite you to find out more about La Rana’s penchant for Buffalo Bill’s Wild West in the conclusion of “A leap, but not a stretch,” in the summer issue of Points West.

Mary Robinson is Housel Director of the Center’s McCracken Research Library. Robert Rydell is Michael P. Malone Professor of History at Montana State University in Bozeman, Montana.

A Mexican vaquero from
Buffalo Bill's Wild West,
ca. 1901. MS6 William F. Cody
Collection. P69.44



Viva Vaquero

Cody Studies researcher examines Mexican cowboys in Buffalo Bill's Wild West

BY PABLO A. RANGEL

As the story of a single poster demonstrates on the previous pages, there is no shortage of interesting topics where Buffalo Bill's Wild West show is concerned. Here, we meet Pablo Rangel, a "non-traditional" student who returned to college after a career in the construction industry. While at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, he began working with the Papers of William F. Cody with particular interest in the Wild West's vaqueros and where the research would take him.



I am a Nebraska native and have called Lincoln my home for twenty years. After I completed my MA in History at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL), I headed to the University of Chicago in September 2013. I am pursuing my PhD in History where I intend to continue to explore issues concerning ethnicity and class in the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These broad concepts fueled my interest in William F. Cody as well as Mexicans and Mexican-descent people in Buffalo Bill's Wild West.

During the 2011 – 2012 academic year, I worked as a graduate research assistant for Dr. Douglas Seefeldt at UNL, exploring the Mexican vaqueros' presence in Buffalo Bill's Wild West. We analyzed visual and written evidence in popular

print media such as show programs, advertisement posters, and souvenir postcards. My intent was to first document the men who participated as vaqueros, and second, to evaluate changes in the ways these men were represented over time.

Ultimately, deeper questions emerged concerning representations of race and class in popular print media in the United States from the early 1880s through the 1920s. Connections between Cody's show, and his many imitators and competitors, are evident throughout the archival materials. For this reason, my research also considers the Mexican presence in other shows such as the Miller Bros. Real Wild West and Pawnee Bill's Historic Wild West and Great Far East. From this material I developed a digital project titled, *¡Viva Vaquero! Rediscovering Mexicans in Traveling Wild West Exhibitions, 1883 – 1929*.

In this project, I argue that representations of Mexicans in popular print media become increasingly racialized during the early decades of the twentieth century. Historical events such as the Spanish-American War, the Mexican Revolution, and legislative attempts to grant statehood to New Mexico had direct impact on the images and attitudes about Mexicans in the United States. Wild West exhibitions reflected the nationalist and often racist imagery by implementing Social Darwinism, which pervaded intellectual and popular ideologies at that time. I contend that the show programs, posters, and postcards reveal these attitudes.

Nevertheless, deep analysis of Cody as a man and manager demonstrate that his appreciation of the Mexican vaqueros' skill and culture influenced his choice to showcase them from the 1880s through the 1910s. Rather than simply representing Mexicans as racialized others, Cody provided a place for many vaqueros to display their talent on the international stage at a time when many vaqueros faced obsolescence in the American ranching economy.

Contributing to the *Papers of William F. Cody* introduced me to a western history genre that I otherwise would not have explored. This work allowed me to develop my research skills, to collaborate with other scholars on a large and constantly emerging project, and to make a significant contribution to a widely recognized historiography. Moreover, I expanded on my research themes in my Master's thesis, *Racialized Nationality: Mexicans, Vaqueros, and U.S. Imperialism in the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era*.

My work on the *Papers of William F. Cody* has been an essential aspect of my work at the graduate level. I have very much enjoyed my time working on this project, and I hope that I am able to contribute further as I evolve as a scholar.

The Papers of William F. Cody seeks to amass materials that provide an unequalled opportunity to see, through the eyes of Buffalo Bill, the expansion and growth of the American West. Read more about the Papers of William F. Cody at codyarchive.org. ■



Mexican Hidalgo, ca. 1888. Woodblock engraved poster for Buffalo Bill's Wild West. Mary Jester Allen Acquisition Fund Purchase. 1.69.6135



DRAPER
NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM



WYOMING GRASSLANDS

Photographs by Michael Berman and William Sutton

BY FRANK GOODYEAR JR.



Wyoming Grasslands: Photographs by Michael Berman and William Sutton, a partnership exhibition between the Wyoming Chapter of The Nature Conservancy and the Buffalo Bill Center of the West's Draper Natural History Museum, commenced in 2012 as an initiative to photograph Wyoming's grasslands. The project has now evolved into a major exhibition touring Wyoming's museums, libraries, and art centers. Accompanying the exhibition

is a book with essays by Dr. Dan Flores, A.B. Hammond Professor Emeritus of Western History at the University of Montana; Dr. Charles R. "Chuck" Preston, Draper Natural History Museum Curator; and Heard Museum Director Emeritus Frank Goodyear, along with Berman's and Sutton's photographs. Finally, the project includes an ambitious education program on grassland ecologies and photography.

The idea behind the project is to use photography to draw attention to these grasslands, among the most threatened

ecologies in the world. During the past three years, Berman and Sutton have crisscrossed Wyoming—from Devil's Tower National Monument to Thunder Basin National Grasslands and from Shirley Basin to dozens of private and public landscapes in almost every corner of Wyoming. They captured images at all seasons of the year, spending countless days and unknown hours in the field, to capture images of these oft-forgotten places. Their photographs are testimony to their own endurance, commitment, and dedication

“It’s all a bunch of nothing.”



Meadow with flowers, Packsaddle Ridge, Lincoln County, Wyoming, August 6, 2013 (left) and Natrona County meadow with long grass, June 17, 2013. Michael Berman photos.

to these newly-discovered places.

The project has generated tens of thousands of digital files from which organizers selected specific images for the exhibition. The intent has been to cast the net widely to show prairie grasslands, sagebrush-steppe, and the grasslands of the foothills. Whatever Berman and Sutton encountered on these modern day grasslands, if it interested them, they photographed it. The images are as diverse as the grasslands themselves: vast expanses of prairie lands; low hanging, dramatic skies; cultivated hayfields; watering holes and dried up river beds; vestiges of an earlier time in images of broken down corrals, barns, and abandoned, one room school houses; skeletal remains of animals as well as giant wind turbines; oil and gas rigs; power plants fracking pools; and other signs of modern day industrial incursions.

Among these thousands of images, some of the best are simply images of pure nature: healthy families of grass, rolling hills of sagebrush, cottonwoods that sparkle a radiant spring hue, and rivers and their banks that expose the rubble, earth, and roots that support the grasses above. There is much to consider.

Berman and Sutton stand in a long line of photographers, both historic and contemporary, who have photographed the American West, a subject that has broad popular appeal. Many, if not most, of these

photographers have chosen to define the American West by its picturesque snow-capped mountains; its broad, mighty rivers and crystal lakes; and its deep canyons and forested panoramas. This scenery has become the iconic imagery for how the natural West is defined visually.

For the *Wyoming Grasslands*, Berman and Sutton have taken a less traveled road in confronting grasslands with a camera. In doing so, they have discovered the inherent difficulties in capturing the grassland image. What are these difficulties, one might ask? The first is the sheer enormity of the scale of the grassland's landscape. No other physical characteristic better defines America's grasslands than their overwhelming magnitude. Author Gretel Ehrlich, in her book *The Solace of Open Spaces* (1985), allows an old Wyoming cowboy to express her feelings about the plains. "It's all a bunch of nothing," she writes, "wind and rattlesnakes—and so much of it you can't tell where you're going or where you've been, and it don't make much difference."

Scale also produces other factors that impact the photographers. Some have called it the unwelcoming, even intimidating, nature of the grasslands. The argument goes that you're not particularly well received when you show up "there." Author and conservationist William deBuys, writing about Michael Berman in an article on

grasslands, says of the landscape, "They demand strength and persistence and loyalty. They turn away the insincere." Finally, grasslands are complex ecosystems; they are slow to unveil their "mysteries." It takes time to appreciate them; it takes time to tell their stories.

What do these inherent qualities of America's grasslands mean to photographers like Berman and Sutton as they set out to acquire grassland images? And just how do they go about the task of photographing them? These photographers' approaches to capturing the grasslands are not dissimilar; they bring a physical and mental strength to their work. Their routines are, in equal parts, ritualistic and reverential.

The ritual begins with the old pickup truck outfitted for a prolonged camping trip. It takes them far off the beaten path, where social interactions are few, if any, and long days trudging the land are routine. Berman says of this ritual, "It takes time and miles to begin to see." And Sutton talks about walking miles and listening to the landscape. Into their routine, they bring with them a profound respect for the land; they approach their subjects with a humility and eagerness to learn. It is the land, above all else, that is important to them. "Let the land guide you" is the advice they repeat to themselves and give to their students. And do not expect it to be easy. Even over the course of a lifetime,



The billowy clouds of a storm brewing, Laramie County, August 21, 2013, (left), and a desolate road in Carbon County, June 13, 2013. Michael Berman photos.

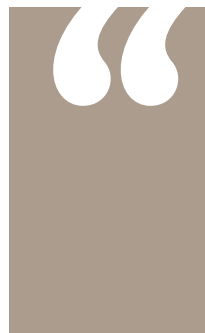
they realize their knowledge of the land will be incomplete.

This shared ritual and reverence results in landscape images from Berman and Sutton that reveal certain things in common. Both photographers prefer to make frontal images in a traditional panoramic format. Their photographs have both a hard, documentary edge, as well as a distinctive, artistic personality. They inadvertently tell stories about real life things, even though the photographers do not consider themselves storytellers. But while Berman and Sutton may be considered “kindred spirits,” for both, photography is a deeply personal and individualistic act. Who are these two individuals?

Michael Berman was born in New York City in 1956. He earned a BS in biology from Colorado College in Colorado Springs in 1979 and an MFA in Photography from Arizona State University in 1985. He lives and works in San Lorenzo, New Mexico. He received a 2008 Guggenheim Fellowship in order to photograph the grasslands of the Chihuahuan Desert. Until recently, he has used a view camera to make images; in 2012 he began using a Leica Monochrome, the only digital black and white camera on the market with a very small digital file. He uses this camera because it optimizes his need to record the magic of simple things or, as he puts it, “the complexity innate in systems, the dimensionality of seeing, and

the nature of what is significant in life.” About this new equipment, Berman explains, “...the difference between what I could do three years ago (2012) when we started this project, and what I can do today, is profound. In seconds, I can make an image that would have taken days in the not-so-distant past. It changes everything.”

Berman’s photographs often seem to be



*Let the
land
guide
you.*

less than optimistic; he talks about much of the grasslands that he has encountered as “having no dimensional complexity.” By this, he means their natural state has been badly compromised. He seems drawn to the sand, dirt, rubble, and hardscrabble of a landscape that has known better times. And yet, the black and white images that he renders—from what appear to be such mundane

subjects—radiate with beauty. He is literally able to find beauty in nothing. In other images, his approach is more celebratory, marking the quiet, intimate clumps of grasses, the open skies with billowy clouds, or the romance of a sunset on a vast empty plain. In all of Berman’s images, one understands that he has a relationship with the land that is deeply personal and profoundly comprehended.

William Sutton was born in Toledo, Ohio, in 1956; he was raised in New York State, Scottsdale, Arizona, and the suburbs of Chicago. He studied at Arizona State University and completed his BFA and MFA in photography at the University of Colorado in Boulder where he now lives. In 1981, he was awarded a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship in photography—the same year he also met Michael Berman. Sutton also uses a digital camera and shoots in color; he gave up black and white photography around 2003 and says emphatically, “I love color.” He pushes color boldly, willing to “try anything to make a picture work,” he notes, but also recognizes that once color “breaks down the validity of the visual world, it has gone too far and doesn’t work.” His preferred cameras are a Nikon D800 single lens reflex camera and a Canon DSMark III. The Nikon has a very large digital file; the Canon’s is much smaller. He uses both cameras with zoom lenses.

As with his friend Michael Berman,



...a place of hope,
dreams, and aspirations.



the land itself is everything to Sutton. But he is more of a romantic than Berman. He attaches the idea of Eden to the American West, calling it a land that “remains a place of hope, dreams, and aspirations.” He worries that the West that he loves is changing forever and runs the risk of only being remembered by photographs like his. Sutton’s use of color in his photography enhances his romantic bent; it allows him to heighten or turn down the intensity of color to increase the magical realism of his images. Sutton believes that to make a successful landscape picture “you have to create a coherent structure, with balance, and with lines and shapes that are beautiful.” It is not enough to describe something with the camera. When all is said and done, what Sutton is consciously setting out to do is to create beautiful pictures—images that must have the language of art ingrained in them.

In 2015, America has become a nation of cities, suburbs, and urban sprawl. Tourists visit wilderness sites in their cars. In this context, one wonders if there is any

perceived value to Wyoming’s grasslands, or for that matter, to any of the threatened ecologies around the world other than commerce. Perhaps the importance of these places will only be valued when they are lost forever?

Michael Berman and William Sutton see, and understand, the threats the natural world faces. To both photographers, the importance of nature and wilderness is paramount. It adds meaning and relevance to life. If their work can help others to understand the value of land in our world, then they have realized an important goal.

Together, the work of these photographers commands our attention. It embraces the monumental scale of the grasslands. It divines the small and intimate, the quiet and reflective. The images are dark, fearsome, and brooding, or drenched with the heavenly light of the Creator. They are hot and cold, dry and wet. The images invite the viewer into the spaces the photographers have created, and have come to cherish, with their cameras. The reality of this viewing experience can be transformative; the photographs activate our senses and leave no

emotion or sensation untouched.

Wyoming Grasslands: Photographs by Michael Berman and William Sutton is on view in the Center’s John Bunker Sands Photography Gallery, June 4 – August 15, 2015. The accompanying book of essays and photographs will be available for purchase from our Museum Store. ■

Along with Charles R. Preston, Frank Goodyear is co-curator for the Grasslands exhibition. He was the director of planning and development at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West in the mid-1990s. His museum career began in 1972 as a curator at the Pennsylvania Academy in Philadelphia. During his tenure there, when the facility closed for renovations, he was acting curator of American Painting and Sculpture at Yale University Art Gallery. He earned a BA from Yale University and a MA from the Winterthur Program in Early American Culture at the University of Delaware. Currently, he is retired and lives in Cody, Wyoming, and Paradise Valley, Arizona.

Cows in Laramie County, May 20, 2013. William Sutton photo.



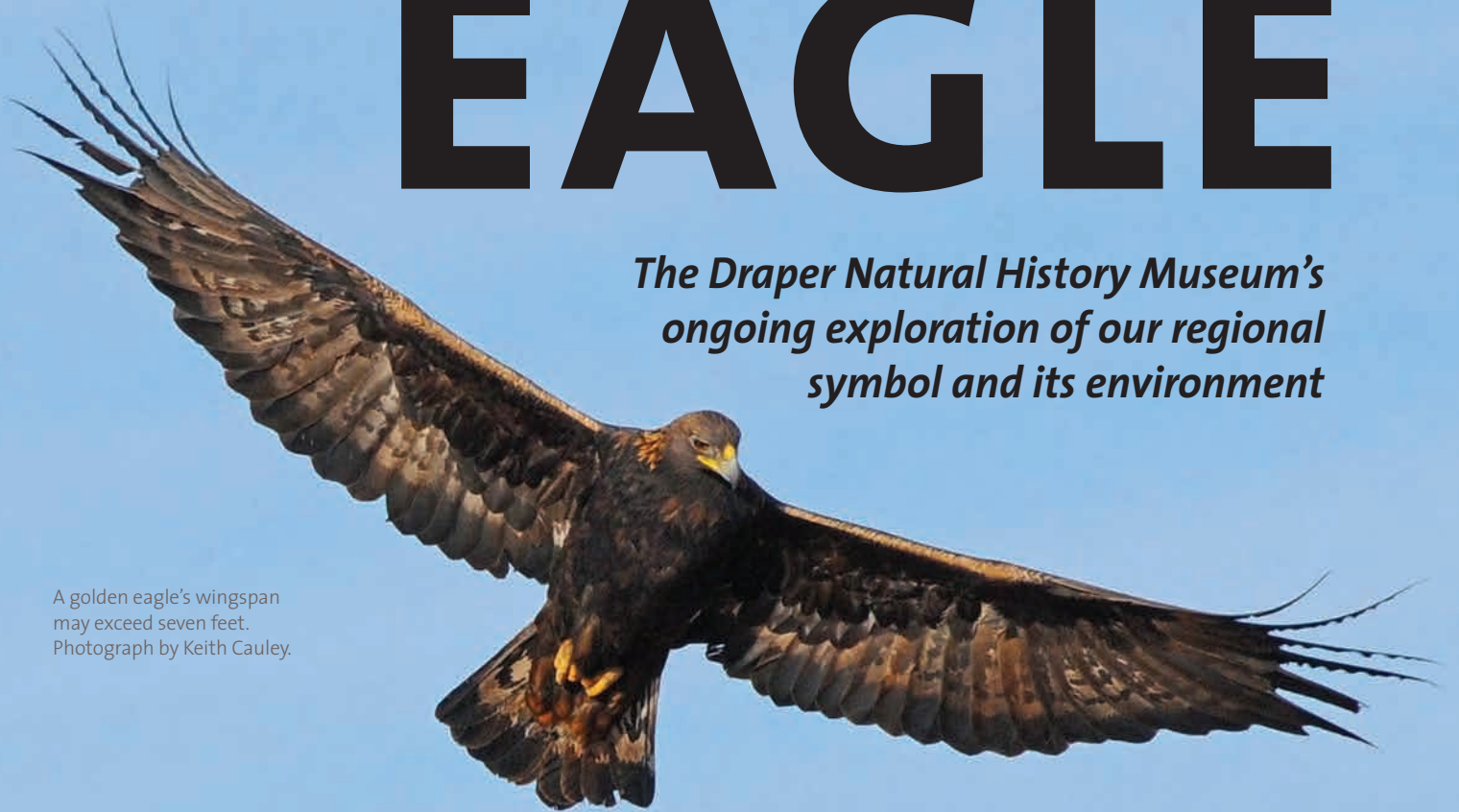
The LU Ranch in Hot Springs County, June 22, 2012. William Sutton photo.

Icon of the American West

GOLDEN EAGLE

*The Draper Natural History Museum's
ongoing exploration of our regional
symbol and its environment*

A golden eagle's wingspan
may exceed seven feet.
Photograph by Keith Cauley.



BY DR. CHARLES R. PRESTON

There she goes, and she's flying right toward you!"

The shout came from Nate Horton, a fourth-year summer research assistant working on the Draper Natural History Museum's long-term golden eagle research project in Wyoming's Bighorn Basin. Nate had been approaching the recently fledged eagle from above the

ridge where the big, chocolate-brown bird was perched. Volunteer Richard Jones and I were in a sagebrush flat below, hoping the eagle would land nearby. Richard has been conducting nest surveys, producing computer-generated maps, and assisting with all aspects of the project since 2009. Together, the three of us have developed a technique for capturing young eagles soon after they've left the nest and begun flying on their own. We are thus able to capture

and band eagles of known nest origin without invading the nest.

Soon after the young eagle touched down in the sagebrush flat, I had her gently, but snugly, in hand with a leather hood covering her eyes. A hood, specially designed and fitted for an eagle, blocks the bird's view and reduces stress. We found a shady spot where we could weigh, measure, and assess the bird's health. Then, we placed an identification band



Research assistant Nate Horton and project director C.R. Preston (photograph by Richard Jones) with two recently captured eagles that will be banded and released. The uniquely coded, colored leg bands can be identified from a distance with the aid of a spotting scope.



around each leg and released her in a protected niche along the sandstone ridge where we first spotted her. She is one of more than a dozen fledgling eagles we banded in 2014.

Since the project's inception in 2009, it continues to grow in importance each year. Researchers, observers, bird enthusiasts, and scientists have increasing concerns about the decline of sagebrush-steppe habitat through much of the American West, as well as escalating threats to golden eagle populations in some areas. Although we focus on golden eagles, we designed our study to provide insights into the broader effects of environmental change on the structure and function of sagebrush-steppe environments. Thus, the golden eagle provides a convenient barometer to detect and measure environmental change.

Both golden and bald eagles hold a

highly revered place in our national history and culture. They have been awarded special status and protections under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (enacted 1940 and subsequently amended several times) and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (enacted 1918 and subsequently amended several times). The bald eagle was once included on the Endangered Species List due to dramatic population declines related to the widespread use of DDT and similar pesticides. These pesticides became concentrated in the bodies of insects and in aquatic environments. Predators such as bald eagle, osprey, and peregrine falcon were especially vulnerable because of their position high in these food chains. Thanks to additional protections and costly, active management efforts under the Endangered Species Act, the bald eagle has recovered. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service removed the bald eagle from the

Endangered Species List in 2007.

However, DDT does not significantly affect golden eagles because they prey primarily on terrestrial mammals. Historically, golden eagle populations have been relatively stable in western North America. In recent years, however, some golden eagle populations in the American West have been declining, and there are new, widespread, and significant threats on the horizon. In addition to its cultural status, the golden eagle plays an important role in ecosystems by preying on rodent and rabbit populations, and scavenging large animal carcasses. Therefore, it is important to understand golden eagle ecology and threats to its future. In that way, we can purposefully avoid unnecessary disturbance of ecosystem function and the drastic step of listing our other iconic American eagle as endangered.

As we have reported in several earlier



Pilot Richard Jones has been spotting and mapping golden eagle nest sites for the Draper Museum study since 2009. Photograph by Richard Jones.

issues of *Points West* and other venues, the Draper Natural History Museum is conducting an extended study of golden eagles in the area of the Bighorn Basin located within the northeastern portion of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. To provide perspective on our work, it is useful to explore the basic golden eagle natural history, and the current status and threats to this iconic species.

The golden eagle is one of the most widespread and best-known raptors, or birds of prey, in the Northern Hemisphere. It was once fairly common in large stretches of Eurasia, North America, and North Africa, but has

declined or been eliminated from landscapes heavily populated by humans or converted to agriculture. The golden eagle is highly valued by falconers, and hunters sometimes train eagles to pursue and kill foxes, gray wolves, and other large prey. Because of its size, power, and hunting ability, the golden eagle has been highly revered through history by many cultures. It adorns the flags of several nations, and Native Americans widely use golden eagle feathers and parts in ceremonies and apparel. In contrast, the golden eagle has also been greatly maligned and persecuted for killing domestic



The Center of the West's resident golden eagle, Kateri, teaches audiences the importance of wildlife conservation.

sheep, reindeer, and other livestock in various parts of its range.

As with most raptors, female golden eagles are larger than males. A large female may sport a wingspan of up to seven and one half feet and usually weighs between ten to fourteen pounds. A golden eagle captured with a full crop and banded in Wyoming's Bridger-Teton National Forest, however, weighed a record-breaking sixteen pounds. The great eagle is best adapted to hunting in large, open, or semi-open environments, and typically avoids large tracts of developed and agricultural lands. It is also largely absent from heavily-forested areas and true deserts with less than eight inches of precipitation.

In North America, the adult golden eagle is an apex predator (an animal with no natural predators) in native grasslands, sagebrush-steppe, alpine tundra, and other large expanses of mostly open environments—especially those with high cliffs or other elevated perch and nesting sites nearby. The golden eagle once nested widely in open marshes and near large burns in the Appalachians, but is absent or very rare as a breeder now in the eastern United States. The species still breeds in portions of eastern Canada and migrates south through the eastern U.S. Golden eagles breed through much of western North America from Alaska to Mexico. In fact, the greatest density of golden eagles anywhere in the world occurs in western Canada and the western U.S., and this magnificent bird is widely renowned as an icon of the American West. Nonetheless, the number and range of golden eagles have declined in some areas of the West during recent decades.

Some North American eagles are still illegally shot, poisoned, and trapped. The greatest current threats, though, to eagle populations in the American West relate to habitat change caused by our expanding human footprint. In some areas, invasive cheatgrass, introduced to this continent from Eurasia more than a hundred years ago, is altering the natural fire regime and nature of native grassland and shrub-steppe habitats. Cheatgrass cures early in summer, setting the stage for increased wildfire occurrence. Because cheatgrass survives and even thrives with frequent fires, it replaces native vegetation and affects prey availability and thereby, the ability of the landscape to support eagles and other native wildlife.



Wind turbine surrounded by birds.
Summerview Wind Farm, Pincher
Creek, Alberta, Canada. David Dodge,
Pembina Institute. 2005

Recently, media reports have brought much attention to the impacts on golden eagles of the rapidly growing numbers of wind farms. Eagles are among many bird species that are killed by flying into the blades of wind turbines. A 2013 article by Joel Pagel and colleagues in *Journal of Raptor Research* (47:pages 311–315) reported that seventy-nine golden eagles were killed at thirty-two wind farms in ten states between 1997 and 2012—with sixty-seven of these mortalities occurring since 2008. The authors did not include the massive Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area in California in this study, and consider the

number of documented mortalities to be a substantial underestimate of actual eagle deaths at wind facilities.

In 2009, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service issued regulations under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act that allowed some lethal “take” and disturbance of golden eagles under a formal permitting process. The Secretary of the Interior is accountable for that process of permitting take of eagles “necessary for the protection of other interests in any locality” if the take is “compatible with the preservation of the bald eagle or golden eagle.” The intent is to ensure no net-decrease in the number



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service collaborators attach a satellite transmitter to one eagle while project director C.R. Preston looks on with the next eagle in hand. Photo by Nate Horton.

of breeding pairs of eagles within regional geographic management units.

The American Bird Conservancy has filed suit against the federal government over a rule allowing wind energy companies to obtain thirty-year permits to kill or injure eagles, thus extending permit limits by twenty-five years. The lawsuit highlights a significant environmental conundrum related to the emergence of wind energy. While wind energy reduces the need for fossil fuel-powered electricity and associated air and water pollution, wind turbines also disrupt wildlife habitats and may kill large numbers of birds and bats.

Our study of golden eagles in the Bighorn Basin has therefore taken on new significance as we provide information on the status and dynamics of a substantial regional breeding population of a species under heightened scrutiny by federal managers, commercial interests, and the public at large. In addition to our regular research protocol in 2014, we collaborated with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to

place four satellite transmitters on eagles fledged from nests in our study area. Many recognize our study as a model program to better understand the factors that impact golden eagle reproduction in the American West.

Thus far, we've been able to document wide year-to-year fluctuations in golden eagle reproductive effort and success tied closely to cyclic abundance and availability of cottontail rabbits. Although nesting golden eagles prey on other species, cottontails comprise an overwhelming percentage of the diet in our area. This is in contrast to other areas of the West, where ground squirrels, marmots, or jackrabbits make up the majority of golden eagle nesting diet. In addition to cottontails, nesting eagles in our study area also regularly prey on ravens, magpies, rattlesnakes and bullsnakes, pronghorn fawns, and a variety of small birds and mammals.

Individuals often assume that golden eagles prey heavily on sage grouse, but we have identified only a handful of sage

grouse remains from our analyses of more than six hundred prey items collected from nests during the past six years. We have found a surprising number of remains from great horned owls among prey items we've collected.

We've discovered quite a difference in productivity (the number of young produced) among individual golden eagle nesting territories. The most highly productive territories include fewer roadways and off-highway vehicle (OHV) trails, and a patchwork of open and densely vegetated landscape. Long-time eagle researcher Karen Steenhof and her colleagues recently examined more than forty years of data collected in southwestern Idaho. Their study published online by *The Wildlife Society Bulletin*, June 1, 2014, concluded that golden eagle nesting territories in areas where OHV use has increased were less likely to be productive than those territories in areas that included little or no motorized recreation. The link we found between productivity and patchwork landscapes

makes sense in that the mixture of dense vegetation and open ground provides ample structural habitat for cottontails, but also includes relatively barren areas where moving rabbits are vulnerable to capture from above.

As we continue our research in the Bighorn Basin, we plan to expand our efforts into winter to determine movements of our marked birds, as well as the breeding origin of eagles overwintering in the Basin. From past banding records and satellite tracking, we know that some birds that overwinter in our region are from breeding populations as far away as Alaska. Beginning in November 2014, we began to trap and band adult and juvenile eagles, and use remote cameras to record the presence of marked eagles in local and continental populations.

Finally, I am pleased to acknowledge the critical financial support provided to this project by the Bureau of Land Management, Wyoming Wildlife—The Foundation, Rocky Mountain Power, Nancy-Carroll Draper Foundation, and many contributors to the Draper Natural History Museum's Cal Todd Memorial Research Fund. The Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Geological Survey—Bird Banding Laboratory, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, HooDoo Ranch, and Monster Lake Resort have been especially helpful with logistical support.

I especially want to thank our loyal Golden Eagle Posse citizen science volunteers, who have assisted with nest monitoring and data collection since 2009. Their great work and enthusiasm continue to provide inspiration. You can check out some their contributions and comments at wyofile.com/kelsey-dayton/volunteers-help-document-bighorn-basins-golden-eagles. For more reading on the subject, contact the editor at editor@centerofthewest.org and request "Selected References on Golden Eagles," *Points West*, spring 2015." ■

A prolific writer and speaker, Dr. Charles R. Preston serves as the Willis McDonald IV Senior Curator of Natural Science at the Center's Draper Natural History Museum. He is an ecologist and conservation biologist who explores the influence of climate, landscape, and human attitudes and activities on wildlife, and is widely recognized as a leading authority on wildlife and human-wildlife relationships in the Greater Yellowstone region.



The golden eagle research project provides a platform for educational programming. Here, the Center's natural science educator Emily Buckles and Draper Museum research assistant Nate Horton help two students from our 2014 "An Eye on Eagles" Discovery Field Trip find a raptor nest.



In June 2014, Draper Museum Advisory Board members visited a golden eagle nest site (on cliff in background) to learn about the latest research developments.



Prey remains are collected from nest sites and brought to the Draper Museum's Discovery Laboratory for identification.



North American river otter specimens (*Lontra canadensis*). DRA.305.219 and DRA.305.229

NORTH AMERICAN RIVER OTTERS

Most of the animal specimens that inhabit the Draper Natural History Museum exhibit environments have been acquired through salvage permits or transferred from wildlife agencies when an animal dies in the wild. These two magnificent North American river otter specimens, recently added to the Draper's Mountain Meadow Environment, were transferred to us by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. A licensed beaver trapper accidentally trapped the otters and turned them in to the Department.

River otters were once common along waterways through much of North America, including the Greater Yellowstone region. Their range has significantly declined in some areas of the continent, however, due to habitat loss and pollution. Adults can weigh up to thirty pounds! Though otters spend

most of their time in water, they can move about very well on land and are often seen crossing roadways as they move from one body of water to another. They are predators and members of the weasel family who kill and eat a variety of mostly aquatic species, including fish, frogs, turtles, crayfish, and occasionally birds and other mammals.

River otters are well-known for their playful habits, and are frequently observed wrestling with one another and using well-worn mud and snow paths to playfully slide into a river or pond. River otters are often active during the middle of the day, especially during winter. One of the best places to see river otters in the Greater Yellowstone region is the snowy, icy bank of Yellowstone National Park's Upper Falls during mid-winter. ■

TREASURES FROM OUR WEST



Plinky Topperwein's Winchester Model 1890, 1918. Gift of Olin Corporation, Winchester Arms Collection. 1988.8.2469

THE SHOOTING GALLERY RIFLE

The Winchester Model 1873 frequently has been called "The Gun That Won The West." In his massive—and brilliant—two volume tome about it, James D. Gordon, a member of the Cody Firearms Museum's Advisory Board, said of this Winchester, "And of those guns which came out of the plant in New Haven, Connecticut, by far the most sought-after by all parties was the Model 1873." This was certainly true of those

chambered for the Winchester Center Fire cartridge. There was, however, an exception: the .22 caliber rim fire version, which never attained any great popularity.

Winchester knew what to do about that. The company requested that John M. Browning develop another model to take its place. The result was the Winchester Model 1890, which became the most popular, all-purpose repeating rim fire rifle ever produced

by Winchester. The Model 1890 was also the most famous shooting gallery rifle ever known. There were about 849,000 of them manufactured between 1890 and 1941.

This particular model, a beautiful rifle with a nickel receiver and bird's eye maple stocks, belonged to Elizabeth "Plinky" Topperwein, wife of the famous exhibition shooter Adolph "Ad" Topperwein, and a world-record shooter in her own right. ■



Cyrus E. Dallin (1861–1944). *Appeal to the Great Spirit*, 1913. Bronze, 21.375 x 22 x 14.325 inches. Clara Peck Purchase Fund. 17.70

CYRUS E. DALLIN'S *Appeal to the Great Spirit*

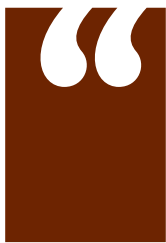
Born in Springfield, Utah, in 1861, Cyrus E. Dallin spent his childhood among the Paiute and Ute Indians. There he developed a close familiarity with American Indians and their struggles with the United States government. Born the same year as noted western artist Frederic Remington, Dallin's talent and unique understanding of Native communities made him one of the most successful sculptors of American Indian

subjects at the time. His monumental sculpture, *Appeal to the Great Spirit*, garnered much acclaim, including a gold medal at the Paris Salon in 1909. The original now stands at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.

Appeal to the Great Spirit is the fourth and final bronze sculpture in the popular series *The Epic of the Indian*. In this sculpture, Dallin conveys the American Indian's strained relationship with the federal government

through a minimalist equestrian sculpture. The Indian sits, eyes cast upward and arms outstretched on either side. As negotiations for peace between Native American and white communities seemed hopeless, the Sioux's action epitomizes surrender to futility. Resonating with spiritual vulnerability, Dallin's sculpture captures a simple, yet moving plea to the Great Spirit for supernatural deliverance. ■

2014 Patrons Ball



*When
someone
does
something
good,
applaud!
You will
make two
people
happy.*

— **SAM GOLDWYN**
(1882 – 1974), film producer



Colin Simpson (left) raises a glass with his wife Deb (hidden), Stacia Jensen, Philip Lajaunie, and a gallery full of party-goers.

Since its first gala in 1977, the Buffalo Bill Center of the West Patrons Ball has had plenty to applaud in its thirty-eight years of celebration. Founded as an occasion to commemorate the year's accomplishments, the Ball has grown to be much more. It's now an evening of goodwill, good friends, and good fun—all the while raising funds to benefit the Center's programs and activities.

Many thanks to our volunteers and their tireless efforts. This group manages and coordinates themes, music, food, wine, decorations, and the evening's schedule. When one year's Ball has passed, the group enjoys a much-deserved rest for only a month or two, and

then it's back to planning for the next year's event.

Our event sponsors are also integral to the success of Patrons Ball. In 2014, the *Spirit of the American West* sponsors were Chevron and Marathon Oil Corporation, and the *Scout* sponsors were the University of Wyoming and Hirtle, Callaghan & Co. Inc. Numerous other individual and business sponsors contributed, too—we are grateful for their generosity. It's never too early to become a sponsor!

Make plans today for the 39th Annual Patrons Ball, September 26, 2015. Patrons Ball is part of *Rendezvous Royale*, a celebration of western art with limitless reasons to applaud. Get details at centerofthewest.org/event/patrons-ball-2015.



Chatting in the Whitney Western Art Museum are Annie Hartford, Gordon Barrows, and Peter Kuyper.



TOP: A quiet moment on the dance floor with Samuel Western and Jessica Clement.

BOTTOM: Ted and Kathy Vlahos—part of the “packed house” at Patrons Ball.

Photos courtesy of Kathy Singer.



The popular Denny Leroux Orchestra provides yet another extraordinary night of dance music.

bits & bytes

Warren Newman retires as firearms curator

Longtime firearms historian and Robert W. Woodruff Curator of the Cody Firearms Museum, Warren Newman, has announced



Warren Newman

his retirement effective January 12, 2014.

"We're very grateful to Warren for his work as curator of the Cody Firearms Museum," Executive Director Bruce Eldredge said. "He has always had the knowledge 'at the ready' to do the job, and his passion

for the subject, our collection, and the interpretation of the collection is self-evident."

Newman had been curatorial assistant of the Museum since April 2000 with stretches during that time as interim curator. He was also curator of *Colt: The Legacy of a Legend*, a major exhibition at the Center in 2003. Prior to 2000, he served for four years as a volunteer research assistant and firearms catalogue in the Firearms Museum.

"Whether he's leading a VIP tour or teaching school kids about firearms safety, Warren has been the 'go to' man for questions about firearms and their place in American History," Eldredge notes. "Throughout his nearly twenty years with us, he's been the consummate professional who always put the Center and its collections at the forefront. We wish him well in his retirement."

Under Newman's leadership, the Firearms Museum installed a new rolling rack display system that allows visitors to see all sides of a firearm in a two-sided Plexiglas rack. "It's the first time such a display system has ever been used for firearms," Newman explains. In addition, Newman facilitated numerous gifts and exhibits, including the Coors Collection of Schutzen target rifles, the "art guns" of Raymond Wielgus, the Wes Adams private collection exhibit (loan), Hollywood guns

belonging to John Hart (television's Lone Ranger for two years) and Audie Murphy, and the extraordinary *Journeying West: Distinctive Firearms from the Smithsonian* on display at the Center through 2015.

Newman has been the Center's liaison with numerous firearms organizations such as the Winchester Arms Collectors Association and the Garand Collectors Association. He has also been an integral part of the Center's annual Buffalo Bill Shootout.

A retired U.S. Navy Captain, Newman holds a BA from Texas Christian University, master's degrees from TCU and Duke University, and was a Rotary Foundation International Scholar at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland.

Newman is succeeded by Assistant Curator Ashley Hlebinsky. ■



Kids enjoying summer activities in the Center's gardens

Center plans western-themed playground

In summer 2015, expect to see a new addition to the Center of the West facility: a playground for kids.

"Museums are generally viewed as quiet, reverent places," says Gretchen Henrich, the Center's Interpretive Education Division

Director. "While reflection and learning are important, fun is too," she continues. "Sometimes the best museum experiences happen when children can learn while playing—by 'doing' rather than simply observing."

The Center invited kids to draw pictures of what their dream playground would look like. Then, Henrich forwarded them to Leathers and Associates, a company with decades of experience creating play structures, to draw from the kids' ideas and develop a cohesive, custom design for the playground.

"We're inviting participation from the community throughout the project," says Henrich. Future opportunities to help make the playground a reality include volunteering time, or donating materials or funding. Upon completion, "The project will be capped off by a grand-opening celebration," Henrich adds.

To learn more about the playground project or to make contributions, visit centerofthewest.org/learn, or contact Henrich at gretchenh@centerofthewest.org or 307-578-4061. Center staff regularly posts updates on the project, as well as opportunities to help, on the Center's website. ■

Cody Firearms Museum names first female firearms curator in the country

The Cody Firearms Museum announces the appointment of Ashley Lynn Hlebinsky as Associate Curator of the Cody Firearms Museum. Hlebinsky becomes the first female firearms curator in the country.

"I don't consider myself a groundbreaker at all," Hlebinsky says. "And I'm certainly no Annie Oakley." She explains that women have always had an extensive role in firearms history; they have just become more prominent in the twentieth century.

"To diverse audiences, firearms mean different things, especially within their context," Hlebinsky continues. "Firearms have always been part of American history and tell rich stories that can spark an interest in even the most uncommon places and individuals. Our goal is to present those extraordinary stories in the Cody Firearms Museum."

News, activities, events, and calendar

Hlebinsky has a combination of hands-on experiences, research fellowships, internships, and museum employment focusing around the study of firearms. A Pittsburgh native and former competitive



Ashley Lynn Hlebinsky

ballroom dancer, Hlebinsky had her first experience working with firearms in a museum context through a curatorial internship with the Soldiers and Sailors National Memorial Hall in her hometown. She completed a BA and MA in American

History and Museum Studies from the University of Delaware, where she taught the weapons portion of an undergraduate military history survey course.

Three years prior to her full-time position in Cody, Hlebinsky worked between the Cody Firearms Museum and the National Firearms Collection of the National Museum of American History at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC. In Cody, she has served as a Buffalo Bill Research Fellow, publishing and presenting on the perception of firearms in popular culture; a Cody Firearms Museum Kinnucan Arms Chair Grant recipient, studying the role of women in the industry; an intern; a firearms assistant; Curatorial Resident; Assistant Curator; and now Associate Curator—making her the first female firearms curator in the country.

Her biggest collaboration between Cody and the Smithsonian is the loan exhibition, *Journeying West: Distinctive Firearms from the Smithsonian Institution*.

In addition to her work at the Cody Firearms Museum, she has been visible in the firearms industry as a firearms writer for Harris Publications, FMG Publications, and the Shooting Wire, and appears as a firearms historian on various television and radio programs.

Hlebinsky officially takes the reins on January 12, 2015. She is available at ashleyh@centerofthewest.org or 307-578-4048. ■



John Mix Stanley (1814 – 1872). *Kettle Falls, Columbia River*, 1860. Tinted lithograph on paper from illustrated reports of the Pacific Railroad Survey, 1853 – 1854. Gift of David E. & Dianne L. Michener and James H. & Nancy L. Michener. 2.87.5 (detail)

J.M. Stanley exhibition receives two grants

National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Chairman, Jane Chu, has announced that the Buffalo Bill Center of the West is one of only 163 nonprofit organizations nationwide to receive an NEA Challenge America grant. The Center will use the \$40,000 grant toward its upcoming exhibition, *Painted Journeys: The Art of John Mix Stanley*.

“I’m pleased to be able to share the news of our support through Challenge America including the award to the Center of the West,” Chu said. “The Challenge America category supports projects that extend the reach of the arts to underserved populations whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited by geography, ethnicity, economics, or disability. The NEA received 347 eligible Challenge America applications and

awarded 163 grants for a total of \$1.63 million.

Previously, the Center obtained an \$11,367 grant from the Wyoming Arts Council primarily for interpretive education for the Stanley exhibition. The Wyoming Arts Council receives funding from the Wyoming State Legislature and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Painted Journeys: The Art of John Mix Stanley is on view June 6 – August 29, 2015. Read more on pages 4 – 10 of this issue. ■

Center’s facebook fans exceed 8,100

The Buffalo Bill Center of the West joined the social media world with its Facebook page on December 31, 2009. As of December 1, 2014, the Center has 8,088 fans! ■

SPRING | CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Center hours:

- Through February 28: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Thursday – Sunday
- March 1 – April 30: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. daily
- May 1 – September 15: 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. daily

Draper Museum Raptor Experience (*included with admission*):

- Through April 30: Relaxing with Raptors, informal Q & A with our birds and their handlers, every day the Center is open, **1 – 1:30 p.m.**
- May 1 – 31: Relaxing with Raptors, **11 a.m. and 3 p.m.**

Family Fun Days (*free for members; \$10 per family for non-members*): 3 – 7 p.m., with a family-friendly meal starting at 5 p.m.

SUPPORTED IN PART BY THE R. HAROLD BURTON FOUNDATION.

- January 23: Night at the Museum. Dress in your jammies and get a glimpse of nighttime at the museum.
- March 20: Games of the Old West. An evening of fun and games, including western card games and Plains Indian games.

Draper Natural History Museum Lunchtime Expeditions (*free*):

SUPPORTED IN PART BY SAGE CREEK RANCH

- February 5, March 5, April 2, and May 7: Speakers to be announced., **12:15 p.m.**

Spring into Yellowstone Birding and Wildlife Festival:

- May 13 – 17: The Buffalo Bill Center of the West joins the Cody Country Chamber of Commerce and several other partners for this festival exploring the Greater Yellowstone region's abundant wildlife and vegetation through field trips, seminars, a trade show, and more. For more information visit www.springintoyellowstone.org.

Cody Firearms Records Office special gun show coverage:

- January 10 – 11: Attending Crossroads of the West Gun Show in Mesa, Arizona
- January 23 – 25: Attending Las Vegas Antique Arms Show in Las Vegas, Nevada
- February 14 – 15: Attending Dakota Territory Gun Collectors Association Show in Sioux Falls, South Dakota
- February 28 – March 1: Open for National Gun Day in Louisville, Kentucky
- March 27 – 29: Open for Big Reno Show in Reno, Nevada
- April 11 – 12: Attending Wanenmacher's Tulsa Gun Show in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Open for NRA Annual Meeting/Winchester Arms Collectors Association show in Nashville, Tennessee
- May 16 – 17: Attending Colorado Gun Collectors Association show in Denver, Colorado
- May 30 – 31: Open for Ohio Gun Collectors show in Wilmington, Delaware

Coffee & Curators

Members gather for refreshments and a curator's talk inspired by the Center's collections. Enjoy special up-close or behind-the-scenes access as part of each event, 10 – 11:30 a.m. Advanced reservations required: membership@centerofthewest.org or 307-578-4008.

- March 7: focus on the McCracken Research Library
- April 11: focus on the Buffalo Bill Museum
- May 2: focus on the Draper Natural History Museum

Buffalo Gals Luncheon

- May 20, 11:45 a.m. – 1 p.m. Speaker Mark Miller with *Sidesaddles and Geysers: Women's Adventures in Early Yellowstone*. \$20 for members; \$30 for non-members. Reserve a seat by calling 307-578-4008.

The construction site of the Irma Hotel with the completed western wall braced with timbers, 1901. P.6.871.



A THOUSAND WORDS

Readers of *Points West*, area residents, and visitors to Cody can hardly miss the famous Irma Hotel located in downtown Cody. Many are also familiar with this 1908 F.J. Hiscock photo of the Irma (below) from the Center's McCracken Research Library's enormous historic photograph collection.

However, most have probably not seen an image of the construction project itself (above). "This is a unique

panorama of the construction of the Irma Hotel, a building on the National Register of Historic Places," writes Kathleen Broeder, the Library's Photograph Cataloger. "Named after his daughter Irma, William F. 'Buffalo Bill' Cody built the hotel in 1902. This particular photograph shows the barren landscape of the site and building techniques of the early twentieth century." ■



The Irma Hotel in downtown Cody, Wyoming, ca. 1908. Photo by F.J. Hiscock. P.6.726. Both photographs are from the McCracken Library's MS6 The William F. Cody Collection.

One picture is worth a thousand words.

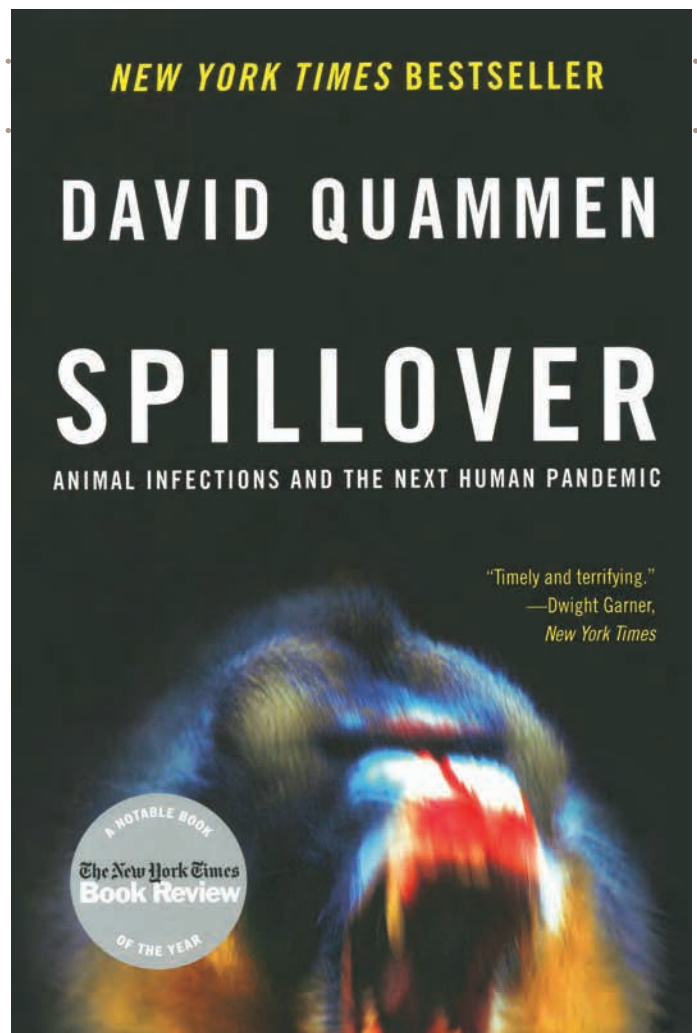
The McCracken Research Library at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West offers access to thousands of historic images for research and publication. To learn more, contact the library at 307-578-4063, or search the online collections at library.centerofthewest.org.



Spillover:

Animal Infections and the Next Human Pandemic

By David Quammen | **REVIEW BY ALEXANDRA WITZE,**
DALLAS MORNING NEWS, NOVEMBER 17, 2012



Editor's note: With the deadly Ebola outbreak currently ravaging western Africa, David Quammen's book, and Alexandra Witze's review, couldn't be more timely.

Right now, somewhere in the world, an animal is bleeding or excreting something bad. What that animal is, and where, isn't clear; it could be a chimpanzee in Cameroon or a bat in Borneo. Its bodily fluids are ferrying a nasty virus out of a wild creature and into the environment. One day the virus will spill over—leap from its host animal to humans.

You've heard this scenario if you've read *The Hot Zone*, watched *Contagion*, or otherwise dipped into the vast literature of disease doom. But you've never heard it as eloquently and authoritatively told as in David Quammen's new must-read book.

Quammen, a writer best known for his masterful *Song of the Dodo* on island biogeography and extinction, has now moved into even scarier territory. This is the realm of zoonoses—diseases that can

jump from animals to humans. Think Ebola, SARS, AIDS. All are caused by rogue viruses—those microscopic organisms whose entire purpose is to hijack the cellular machinery of another living being and turn it to the virus's will.

Against such menaces, humanity's first line of defense is science. Hunting zoonoses is dirty work, and researchers brave horrendous field conditions to collect crucial samples. In Bangladesh, Quammen tags along with a team of ecologists who snare flying bats in the dark, from a rooftop. "Keep your mouth closed when you look up," a seasoned biologist tells the rookie writer. "Remember, the bats' urine might contain Nipah virus."

It's that close proximity between animal and human, the constant pressing of seven billion people into habitats and regions once left well enough alone, that radically raises the risk of spillover. Often people deliberately make things worse. In China, the "Era of Wild Flavor" led to trafficking and consuming of practically every meat possible, the weirder the better.

In parts of Africa, villagers prize every food they can get, even if that means a

chimpanzee carcass found rotting in the forest. Such a discovery may have given rise to the greatest spillover in history nearly a century ago, when HIV leapt from a chimpanzee into somebody's cut finger in southeastern Cameroon. Quammen spins this moment into a speculative and spellbinding narrative that erases the line between humans and other animals. A virus does not care whose cells carry it, as long as it can multiply and adapt and evolve and thrive. Today, more than 25 million people have died from AIDS.

Discovering where and how HIV spilled over was a triumph of disease detective work, but what can it tell us about the Next Big One, a future viral pandemic? Sadly, not much. Science can wait, watch, and prepare—but not prevent.

When that next big one strikes, *Spillover* is the book you'll want to have on your shelf—if only to say you saw it coming. ■

Reviewer Alexandra Witze is a contributing editor for Science News magazine. Spillover is published by W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. New York and London. ISBN 978-0-393-06680-7. Spillover is available for purchase from the Center's Museum Store by calling 800-533-3838.

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TICKETS – Center of the West admissions desk, online at centerofthewest.org/car, or by phone at 307-578-4008

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