

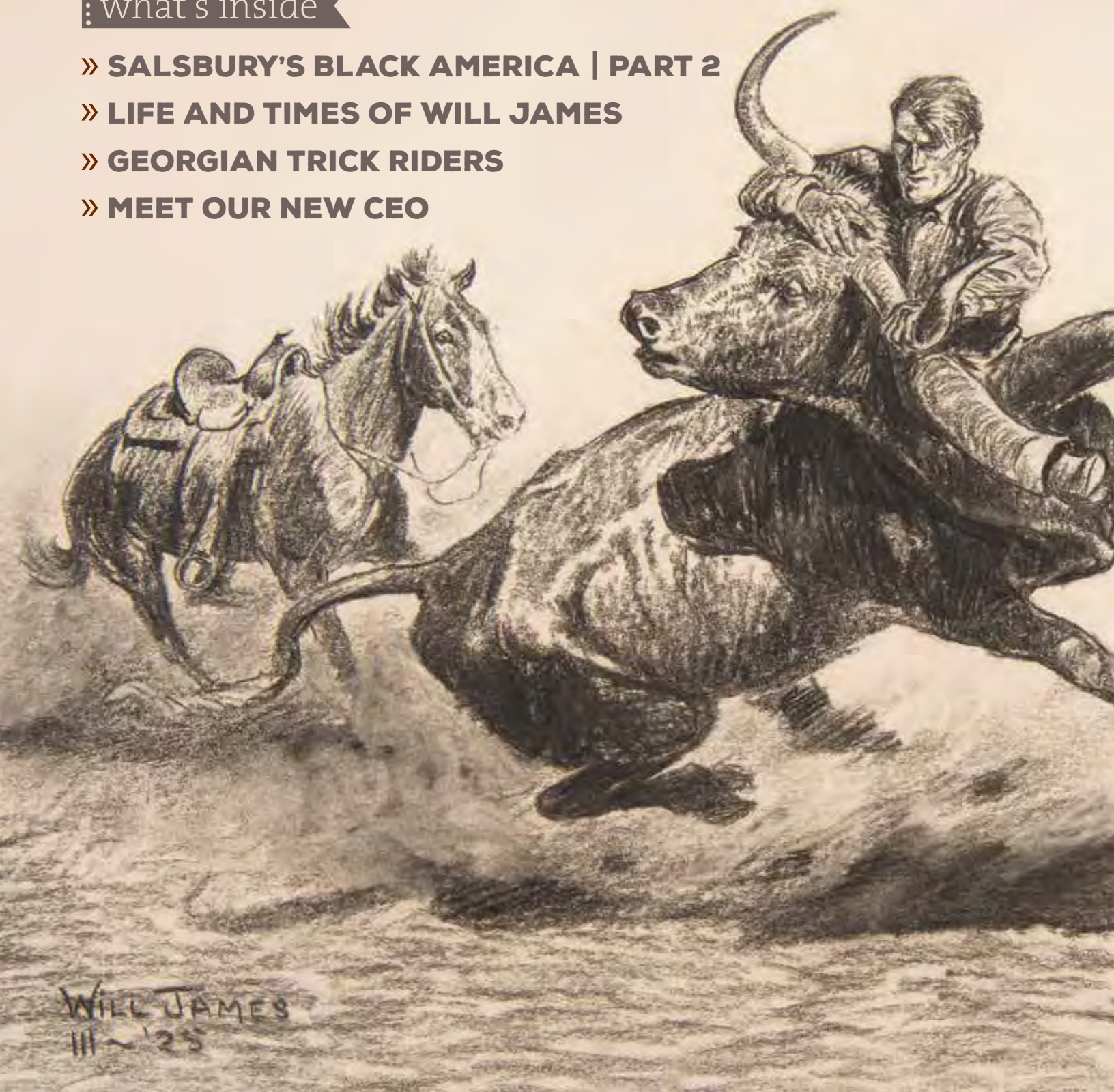
SPRING 2019

POINTSWEST

BUFFALO BILL CENTER OF THE WEST

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Pointing WEST

.....
BY PETER SEIBERT
Executive Director and CEO

During the plane trip to New York I had plenty of time to think about the new situation into which I had involved myself. There were some strongly appealing aspects to be sure. Becoming director of a museum of western art and a historical center at the East Entrance to Yellowstone National Park would satisfy my long-delayed desire to return to the West. — Harold McCracken, Roughnecks and Gentlemen: Memoirs of a Maverick

When I read Harold McCracken's biography, this quote seemed almost apocryphal about my thoughts upon being named as the new Executive Director and CEO of the Buffalo Bill Center of the West.

Coming here, for me, is the fulfillment of a dream that goes back more than two decades to when I first came to the museum as a visitor. Since my first visit, I have watched the museum with both great interest and professional envy as it grew and evolved. When the call came about the opportunity to become your director, I was quick to raise my hand and yell "YES!" as loudly as I could. I can truly say that the Center holds an extraordinary collection curated by a world-class staff led by a superb Board of Trustees. What museum director could ask for anything more in an organization?

Having grown up in the East, I'm often asked when I first became attracted to the American West. It began for me in 1968 when I traveled to Arizona to winter with my grandparents. Former Senator Barry Goldwater had acquired a world class Katsina collection, and it was then on exhibit in Phoenix. My mother took me to see the show, and then purchased a small souvenir commercial Katsina for me that my daughter now has in her room.

The experience lit a fire that always brought me back to the Rocky Mountains and the American West. ■

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About the cover:



Will James (1892 – 1942). *Steer Wrestling*, 1925. Charcoal on paper. Gift of David DeWitt Dominick in honor of Dr. DeWitt Dominick. 7.12.1 (detail)

Read more about artist, author, and illustrator Will James beginning on page four with Nicole Harrison's story.

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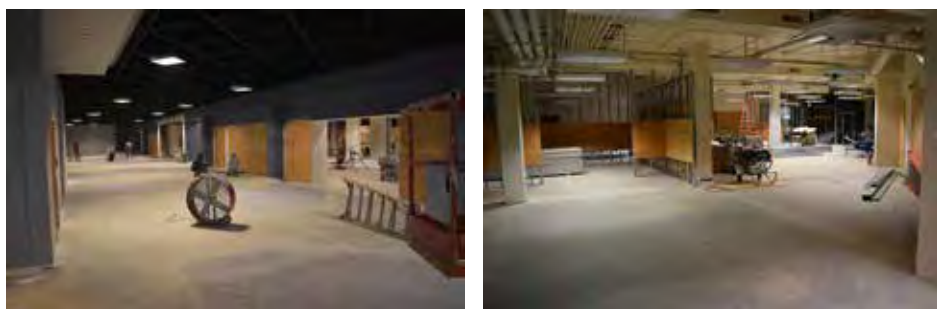
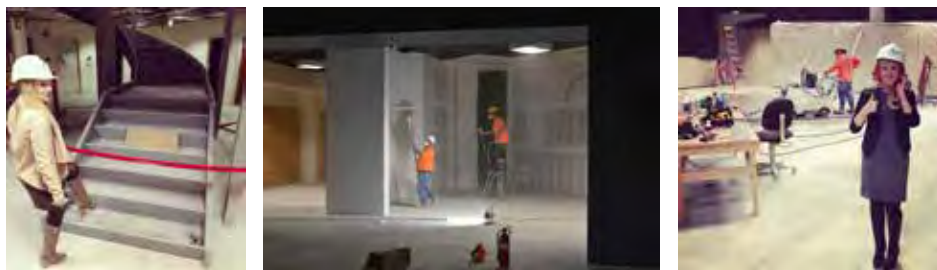
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The Buffalo Bill Center of the West is a private, non-profit, educational institution dedicated to preserving and interpreting the natural and cultural history of the American West. Founded in 1917, its collections include: Buffalo Bill and the West 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* uses 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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More in the summer issue of *Points West*, in your mailboxes May 1.



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VISIT US ONLINE | Stay in touch with all that's happening at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West; visit centerofthewest.org.

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



Smithsonian
Affiliate

Will James (1892 – 1942). *Hello, Chas. M. Russell*, May 30, 1920. Pen and ink letter from Will James to Charlie Russell. Gift of William E. Weiss. 79.60.2A/B
(Note: All images herein are works of Will James unless otherwise indicated.)

Hello, Chas. M. Russell

Sausalito Cal
5/30/20

Well we just got back from a trip in Nevada, had a little business to tend to and also see some of the old boys of course, — by my return I find your letter waiting for me, my mail doesn't follow me wherever I go, I'm not that popular as yet, and I don't get enough of the said mail to make it worth while, furthermore I did not think I'd be gone quite that long, anyhow I am mighty glad to hear from you, I sure have to laugh everytime I look or think of the drawings you sent along, it brings memories, and by the contents of the letter throughout I figure you as the kind of a man I'd sure like to meet and have a talk with, I'm right sorry I did not get to see you while you came by Reno, Maynard Dixon telephoned and hunted all over for me, but it was just my luck that I could not be found, but this world is not so very big and we may run across one another someday. Many thanks for the advice on painting and other things, I'll sure follow it.



I think if anyone wants to study the drawing of horses, the best place for them is to hire out to one of those southern cow outfits — pick out a good rocky country where all the rounda has to be shod, and the best time is to get there preliminary to either round up, I think then a fellow would sure learn "how to feel" and know for sure just how flat, how wide, how big, and how damn strong a horse's leg can be — that's the main part of him anyhow — the rest sort of comes natural after one has learned that, and I think that beats studying anatomy all to hell — don't you? — a fellow sure has to "snap"



The life & work of WILL JAMES

Will James, *Minneapolis Morning Tribune* photo, October 29, 1926. Minneapolis Newspaper Photograph Collection, P01256. Use permitted with proper citation, i.e. courtesy Hennepin County Library. Digital Public Library of America.

BY NICOLE HARRISON

The life of Will James is one of both mystery and mayhem. His work, however, tells the story of a life he was meant to live.

Born Joseph Ernest Nephtali Dufault on June 6, 1892, in the Québec parish of Saint-Nazaire-d'Acton, the boy grew up yearning to be a cowboy. Exposed to stories of cowboy life and the North American West in his youth, Dufault headed to western Canada in 1907 to fulfill his dream.

In 1910, believing he had killed a man, Dufault fled for the United States. He adopted several aliases before settling, for reasons now unknown, on William Roderick "Will" James. He even created a backstory for himself—where he came from, what happened to his parents, and why he spoke broken English. His self-taught grammar

and, subsequently his writing later in life, gave merit to his fabricated personal history. During his travels James managed to steal cattle, survive jail and a hospital stay, and attend art school. These events, and the people he encountered along the way, played an important role in his decision to become a full-time author-illustrator.

By the time James became a cowboy in the early 1900s, the effects of barbed wire and the expansion of farming in the American West had broken up most of the large-scale ranching operations into stock farms. At the same time, the emerging automotive revolution began to impact roundups and the role horses played on the range. The industrialization and automotive expansion into the West affected James's perception of what it meant to be a cowboy.

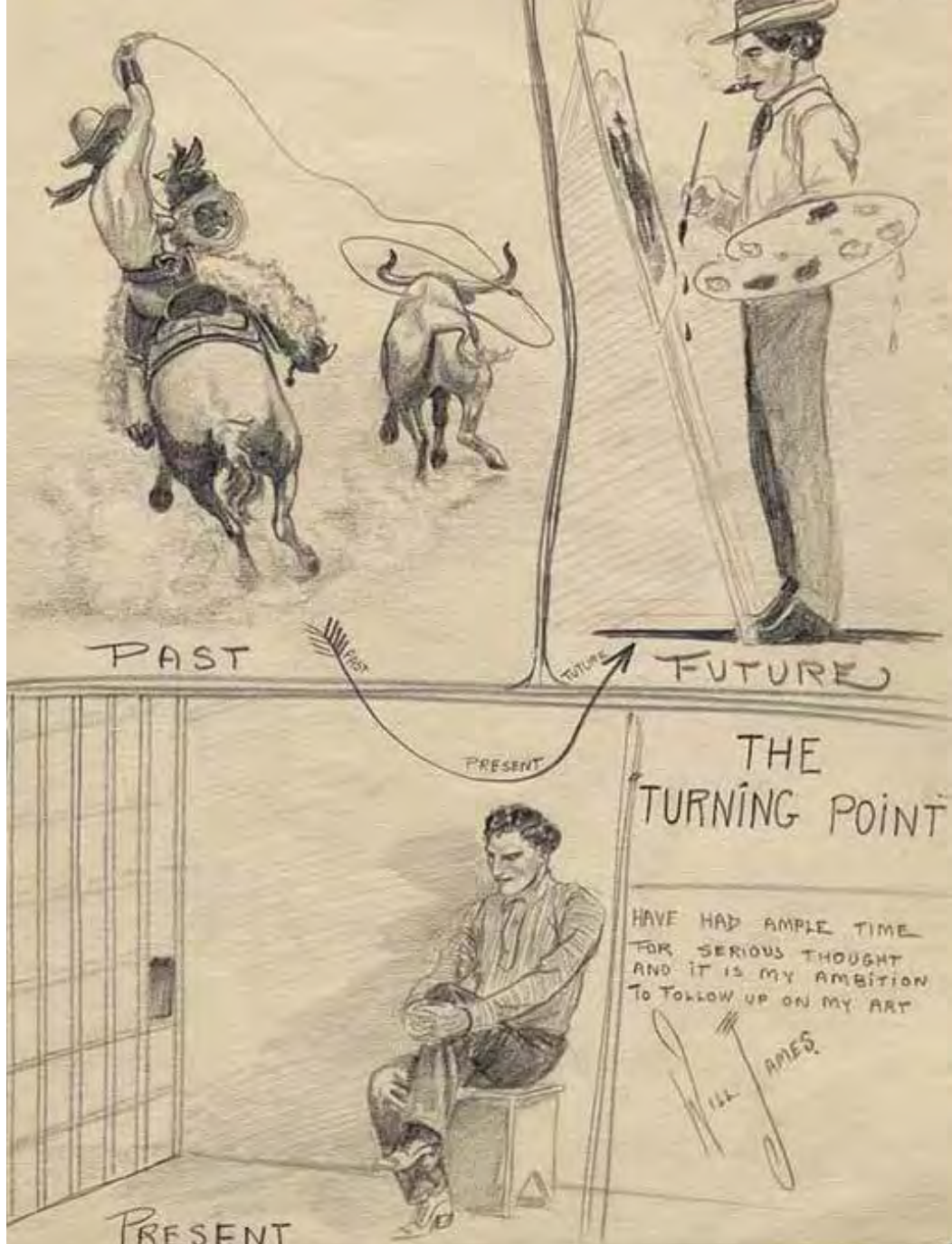


Will and Alice James, Washoe Valley cabin [NV], ca. 1923. Mountain West Digital Library, Digital Public Library of America. University of Nevada, Reno Libraries Digital Collections. UNRS-P2270-20.tif

Pining for the Old West, James illustrated the American cowboy before the effects of barbed wire and the automotive revolution took place. His art not only served as illustrations for the books and short stories he wrote, but also helped shape and extend the historical, cultural, and mythological perceptions of the cowboy-hero in American culture during the early twentieth century. In his depictions, the cowboy is almost invariably accompanied by horse and cattle. To James, the three were indispensable to his way of life.

MAKING A HAND

In 1914, James was imprisoned for stealing cattle in Ely, Nevada, and sentenced to seventeen months in jail. He included in his application for parole a sketch he titled *The Turning Point*. The small vignettes bear individual titles, "Past," "Present," and "Future" and demonstrate various stages of his life.



The Turning Point, ca. 1915. Carbon pencil drawing. Papers of Will James, Collection No. NC579, Series 8: Art work of Will James, Special Collections Department, University of Nevada-Reno Library.

A cowboy on horseback roping a steer depicts the artist's "past"; a drawing of a solitary prisoner seated on a stool, his "present"; and the "future" portrays a cigar-smoking James, palette in hand, standing at an easel, painting. In the lower right corner of the drawing James inscribed "Have had ample time for serious thought and it is my ambition to follow up on my art." Although these drawings signified a change in James's perspective on life and his outlook on the future, it is unclear if his artistic expression of remorse and renewal influenced his release from prison. Nevertheless, James was set free on April 11, 1916, only to continue his nomadic lifestyle.

James pursued the life he had come to love for another three years until a bucking horse accident in 1919 sent him to the hospital. The mishap sidelined his occupation as a working cowboy and inadvertently launched his career as an author-illustrator. Impressed by some of James's sketches, a fellow hospital patient provided James a letter of introduction to the associate editor of *Sunset Magazine*.

Upon his release from the hospital, James enrolled in the California School of Fine Arts in San Francisco where he met fellow artists Harold von Schmidt and Maynard Dixon. Both Dixon and Von Schmidt assisted James, providing contacts



James's work can often be characterized as "simplified with crisp draftsmanship" as in these sketches from *Watched by Wild Animals* / [Enos A. Mills, New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1922; not published]. Cabinet of American illustration. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, DC 20540 USA.



with publishers and suggesting useful materials for drawings and paintings. But James bridled at the demands of the school's curriculum, and it was with Dixon's encouragement that James quit attending classes to pursue a career in illustration.

It was these connections—and the letter of introduction—that resulted in James's first published drawing, *A One-Man Horse*, which appeared in the January 1920 issue of *Sunset Magazine*. The seventeen-page article launched James's career as an author-illustrator with the promise to publish more of his work. In time, he succeeded in placing his work in some of the most popular periodicals of the day, including *Saturday Evening Post* and *Scribner's Magazine*.

In 1923, James sent an illustrated article to *Scribner's Magazine*. Seeing potential in James's works, the magazine offered him a contract for a self-illustrated book titled *Cowboys North and South*. During the next two decades, James would write and/or illustrate more than twenty novels and anthologies of short stories on cowboy life, virtually all of them based largely on his own life experiences.

James's work can often be characterized as simplified with crisp draftsmanship. He worked in several media throughout his career—pencil, pen and ink, and oil. However, by "using pencil, as opposed to ink, James was



Steer Wrestling, 1925. Charcoal and conte crayon on paper. Gift of David DeWitt Dominick in honor of Dr. DeWitt Dominick. 7.12.1. (See cover image.)

able to make a stronger, more powerful depiction of his action scenes,” according to art collector Abe Hays in *Will James: The Spirit of the Cowboy*, a 1985 catalogue of the artist’s work from the Nicolaysen Art Museum in Casper, Wyoming.

By romanticizing his own experiences and the stories he had heard, James personalized and tailored his own version of the cowboy-hero. “James wanted the world of the cowboy to be appreciated for its realities and its values as he understood them,” Hays added. In order to express such truths, James’s cowboys rarely resorted to the sort of theatrics and fatal gunplay that artists Frederic Remington and Charles M. Russell depicted.

Despite Remington’s impact in the western American art world, no artist was more influential on James than Russell. Through the years, the two became good friends, and it was this friendship that inspired James to imitate Russell’s illustrated letters and seek advice and encouragement from the veteran artist on several occasions. Horses were a regular feature of James’s illustrated letters. His illustrations almost always reinforced the text—a practice he borrowed from Russell. It was Russell who

encouraged James to paint as well as draw and urged him to continue to focus on cowboys, horses, and cows.

In a letter penned to Charles M. Russell, on April 11, 1920, James showcased a pen and ink drawing titled, *I’m Riding an Artistic Steer, and Doing My Best to Put the 111 on His Shoulders*. The loose pen strokes suggest James sketched the illustration spontaneously. The illustration and caption reinforce the text and hint at some of the difficulties James faced as an artist and illustrator. The steer’s expression and body contortion suggest distress, confusion, and uncertainty—all qualities James expresses in the body of the letter. The phrase “trying to put the 111 on his shoulders” refers to James’s desire to make his mark on his profession, much as a rough rider’s spurs often left scratch marks on the hide of a horse or bovine.

Another of James’s drawing, *Steer Wrestling*, alludes to the difficulties of working with wild range cattle. The cowboy holds on to the cattle’s horns as he tries to gain control of the animal. In this case the cowboy is the artist himself. The determined look upon the cowboy’s face suggests the struggles James faced in his career and

personal life. This work is a reminder of the crucial roles that both horse and cattle played, and demonstrates the realities of the cowboy profession.

PAINTING THE COWBOY

Although his pencil, and pen and ink illustrations drew as much praise as his writing during his career, James’s oil and watercolor paintings were little known or appreciated, especially compared to his drawings. Furthermore, they were overshadowed by the canvases of William H. Dunton, W.H.D. Koerner, and William R. Leigh, among other artists and illustrators of the West active in the 1920s and 1930s.

James often chose to portray the physical and emotional interactions of and between cowboys and horses. The violence and hostility that often accompany the breaking and training of range horses, however, are the centerpiece to some of his most dramatic scenes, including the painting *Where the Bronco-Twister Gets His Name* (1924). The interaction between man and beast is obvious as a cowboy clings to the horse’s head while the horse violently bucks. Thus, this is where the bronco-twister gets his name. His ability to cling to the horse during the act of bronco bucking has earned him a title worthy of admiration.

His first novel, *Smoky the Cowhorse*, published in 1926, thrust the author-illustrator into the front rank of interpreters of the cowboy West. *Smoky and Clint*, a color plate from *Smoky the Cowhorse*, depicts the main characters of the novel in a moment of quiet reflection in the shade as a cattle drive passes in the distance. Unlike many of his other drawings and paintings, James chose to portray a side of the cowboy most viewers often neglect, reminding his audience the cowboy’s life can often be isolated and lonesome.

If 1926 was the year that pushed Will James into the spotlight, it was 1929 that built upon his newfound popularity. Charles Scribner’s Sons published his new novel, *Sand*, which would prove to be one of his most popular stories and reprinted *Smoky the Cowhorse* in an Illustrated Classics Edition that included his oil painting *Smoky and Clint* on the front cover.

The debilitating effects of alcoholism had begun to take their toll on the quality of James’s work by 1937 when he was first hospitalized for the disease. As his pen and pencil strokes became less steady, James’s horses, once the epitome of muscle and



Where the Bronco-Twister Gets His Name, 1924. Oil on canvas. Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Gift of the Thomas Gilcrease Foundation, 1955. 0137.1471

motion, began to look skinny and stiff. Although the illustrations clearly declined in quality, some of James's best portrayals of cowboy life in word and image occur in his last book, *The American Cowboy*, published in 1942, the year of his death. The illustrated volume addresses the history and iconography of three generations of western cowpunchers and discusses the significance of their legendary counterparts as the West gradually changes from a dangerous frontier to a settled landscape. Despite the rapid pace of change, James was optimistic that working cowboys would always persevere, if not in reality, in the imagination. He ended *The American Cowboy* with one simple yet resolute sentence: The cowboy will never die.

INFLUENCE FOR THE AGES

Despite achievements that helped sustain his name within the art community, James remains largely forgotten. Several factors have contributed to his decline in popularity. Foremost is the fact that most of his output was created to illustrate magazine articles and children's books. Little, if any, of his work was created with the art collector's market in mind. Economic factors, particularly the Great Depression, also played a role, severely depressing the fine art market at the very moment that the artist's popularity was on the rise.

Marginalized to the far corners of western American art, James's work endures, inspiring a new generation and creating a love for the old West. Several of James's books,

including *Smoky the Cowhorse*, *Sand*, and *Lone Cowboy*, were made into films. Beyond film adaptations of his work, James has been the topic of more than one documentary, including *Alias Will James* (1988), written and directed by Jacques Godbout, and *The Man They Call Will James* (1990), by Gwendolyn Clancy.



Smoky and Clint, 1926. Oil on canvas. Image courtesy of Abe Hays.

James's art, correspondence, and artifacts are found in private collections and several museums across the American West, including the Yellowstone Art Museum, Billings, Montana; the Big Horn County Historical Museum, Hardin, Montana; the

Northeastern Nevada Museum and the Western Folklife Center Wiegand Gallery, both in Elko, Nevada; the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; the Phippen Museum, Prescott, Arizona; and the Buffalo Bill Center of the West. Not surprisingly, relatively little Will James material exists east of the Mississippi River. A notable exception is the archives of James's publisher Charles Scribner's Sons, held at the Firestone Library of Princeton University in New Jersey, which houses correspondence, contracts, and other information related to his books and illustrations.

Despite his obscurity, the writings and art of Will James inspire musicians and artists of today. James's own embodiment of the mythic cowboy is celebrated by Canadian singer-songwriter Ian Tyson in his 1988 song, "Will James." Montana sculptor Bob Scriver once stated, "When I was getting started, and with many other artists trying to break into the art field, all of us tried to draw horses like Will James and not Charles Russell." Although Will James is no longer a household name, his impact is still felt in the work of contemporary artists of the American West.

Following in the artistic footsteps of Remington and Russell, James became one of the most influential western artists and writers of his generation, and was one of the principle factors in guiding the public perception of the American West and the cowboy-hero during the 1930s. Will James assisted in creating one of the greatest stories America has ever produced—the story of the American West and its cowboy-hero in the final days of the open frontier. ■

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Nicole Harrison is the Curatorial Assistant for the Center of the West's Whitney Western Art Museum. She holds a BS in zoology, a BA in art history, and an MA in art history from the University of Oklahoma. Her master's thesis topic covered the works of Will James and his contribution to the mythology of the American cowboy. Her research spans a variety of topics including nineteenth-century artist-explorers, the Golden Age of Illustration, and the Taos Society of Artists. Harrison assists Curator Karen McWhorter in object curation, exhibition, and research. She uses social media to take the collection beyond the walls of the Center and is a Certified Interpretive Guide through the National Association for Interpretation.

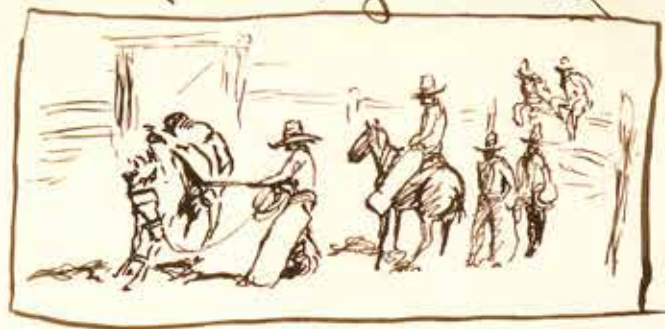
Dear Mr. Winston

Remo. Tex
Oct 19/23



I'm not at all familiar with the packing of ponies the way they do it in the Canadian Rockies - but I've done a heap of packing for myself while riding in the desert low outfits - and after all I think there's only one way of packing - I savvy the "diamond hitch" the "square" and the double S - and as for the ponies used up in them countries I know they're mostly of the indian breed - Anyway if you decide you want one of them pictures I'm sure I can handle it, scenery and all - for I was raised by a trapper up in them territories and haven't forgot what they looked like -

As for the other picture you want and being my suggestion agrees with Mr Herman I'll go ahead and make it as to this sketch -



Sincerely Yours -
Bill James



Nate Salsbury's **BLACK AMERICA** Its Origins and Programs

PART 2

BY SANDRA K. SAGALA

Unless otherwise noted, all images are from the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, DC 20540 USA.

In the previous issue of Points West, Sandra Sagala introduced readers to Nate Salsbury's Black America, a June 1895 attraction focused on the pre-Civil War lives of negroes. As a partner in Buffalo Bill's Wild West, Salsbury used his Wild West know-how to launch an experience that represented the bygone antebellum era. Using a host of newspaper accounts of the day, Sagala continues the story below.

Strolling the *Black America* grounds

At the [*Black America*] gate in Ambrose Park, Brooklyn, New York, visitors paid 25¢ for general admission or 50¢, 75¢, or \$1 for increasingly desirable reserved seats. Before the more traditional "theatrical" performances began, organizers encouraged audiences to stroll the grounds to witness how Southern life was lived "befoh' de wah." A black village from a southern plantation had been reproduced, and visitors could watch the black performers "keeping house" in 150 log cabins that also served as their accommodations.

Salsbury also had an acre of cotton planted so visitors could observe how it was harvested and pressed into bales. As they worked, the negroes sang about their happy life, "the contented, lack-of-thought-for-the-morrow sort of life." The bales were then disassembled and readied for the next performance.

The stage itself measured 120 by 134 feet, large enough to hold 620 musicians and singers. The backdrop, painted by a Boston artist, featured mountains sloping down to green fields and a steamboat moored at a river's wharf. The right side depicted a plantation's residence with the musicians positioned to appear as if they were on the veranda.

There were many exhibition shows at the turn of the twentieth century during *Black America's* run; here are four examples, from top to bottom:

Hyde & Behman's Minstrels, 1884. LC-USZ62-26099

Primrose & West's Big Minstrels, ca. 1896. LC-USZ62-24635

Primrose & West's Big Minstrels always up to date, ca. 1895. LC-USZ62-24637

William H. West's Big Minstrel Jubilee, 1899. LC-USZ62-24131



Let the show begin

The program began with singers promenading into place from both sides of the field—women from one side, men from the other—to the music of the stage band. When all were in position, show manager Billy McClain, in a dress suit and tall hat, mounted a pedestal to conduct the 500-strong chorus...Whatever visitors had anticipated in an all-negro show, they were undoubtedly surprised and startled at the sights and sounds. One reviewer remarked:

The negro is a natural musician, and there is no sweeter or prettier music than that from the negro's throat. The singing of these black people invites curious attention, not only from its wonderful precision, marvelous vitality and unique quality of tone, but because of the demonstration of the potency of what might be called naturalism.

Following the extensive selection of popular songs, specialty acts stereotyping black culture commenced. According to the contemporary press, while the chorus sang "Watermelon Smiling on the Vine," an old, white-haired black man rode onstage in a two-wheeled cart heaped with watermelons and pulled by a donkey. A mad scramble ensued as all the members tried to grab a melon, while the audience reveled in the hilarity.

A cakewalk—the most popular act on the program—ended the first part. The dance originated in slave celebrations when the work week was finished. At first, only men participated in the high-stepping dance, often dressing in hand-me-down finery, mocking their masters' dress and lifestyle. When women were allowed to join in, couples competed with graceful or grotesque struts in hopes of winning the cake, the best prize plantation slaves had to offer.

In *Black America*, twenty or thirty couples, costumed in their gaudiest outfits, paraded around the arena in hopes of winning the audience's favor.

The second part opened with specialty acts, such as acrobat Charles Johnson, juggler James Wilson, and soloist Madame Flower.

Contortionist Pablo Diaz, "the creole corkscrew," then "showed what remarkable twistings can be accomplished by the human form." These were followed by "barrel boxing" in which two men, each standing in a barrel, tried to knock over the other.

With the Wild West, Cody and



Nate Salsbury's work with Buffalo Bill's Wild West afforded him the experience to strategize a new exhibition, *Black America*. Here he's pictured with William F. Cody and Chief Iron Tail, ca. 1900, in front of Wild West show tent. MS 006 William F. Cody Collection. P.69:1020

Salsbury were greatly concerned with the authenticity of anything or anybody connected with the show, and Salsbury insisted on that same standard for *Black America* as well. No white men or northern negroes appeared in the program. He told one reporter, "The negro of the north has become a different being from his brother in the south, and hence all our performers have been brought direct from the southern states. There is not a northern dandy to be found among the whole three hundred."

Consequently, Salsbury sourced the twenty soldiers of the Ninth Cavalry from a unit on furlough from the regular army. In full uniform, they performed precise military maneuvers and exhibitions of riding and sabre exercises. The press reported:

It is rather an impressive and suggestive sight to see these men who a few years ago were regarded as mere property arrayed in the livery of the country whose martyred President struck the shackles from their limbs. These men are all giants in Stature, fine looking fellows, and the gaudy cavalry yellow present[s] a striking and picturesque line to the spectator.

The program continued with a host of banjoists and two dozen players who clacked the "bones"—a folk instrument shaped like ribs which, when knocked together, produced a rhythmic percussive sound—that brought out the "plantation hands." They engaged in "buck and wing" dancing, resembling modern tap dancing, that opened with performers in a circle being encouraged to stomp and hop in time to the beat. The irresistible music had the audience clapping along, urging the dancers on to faster and faster rhythms.

The Grand Finale commemorated the prominent place slavery had held in America's history, and one that had been ended by Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation barely thirty years earlier. The chorus paid tribute to abolitionists and Union generals as their images appeared on canvas. To close, they sang "America," and the chorus saluted a representation of Lincoln and made their final bow.



Billy McClain, *New York Times* review of *Black America*, June 2, 1895. Public domain. Wikipedia.

Running the operation

Salsbury and McClain soon discovered that *Black America's* musical numbers were the most popular. Within only a few weeks, all the specialty performers had been let go with full salary. Jugglers, jockeys, and foot racers were eliminated in a concerted effort for improvement, i.e. more musical acts. As one newspaper raved, "The singing is really the greatest and most impressive feature...It is the singing more than anything else which everyone leaves the grounds talking about."

Stage Manager Harry Tarleton recalled Salsbury as "a very particular man in the way acts should be shown, clean cut and every act finished...His shows never had any objectional [*sic*] features, but were educational always and always clean."

"There was no acting," wrote one reviewer. While there was a general program, "they never sing nor dance nor go through their Jim Crow antics the same way two nights in succession." Although slavery had been abolished years earlier, prevalent early nineteenth-century prejudices persisted. Thus, the contemporary press, meaning to be complimentary, found that:

It is a common remark of theatrical men that the negro is funny only when he isn't trying to be...He does what seems to him the most natural thing to do, and the result is that about everything he does is funny.



Primrose & West's Big Minstrels color lithograph poster featuring a cakewalk, ca. 1896. LC-USZC2-1773

Just as the Wild West's cowboys and Indians were contracted to a certain number of performances, they also promised to "keep themselves and [their] gear clean, conduct themselves in orderly manner, no fighting, drinking, gambling." Cast members of *Black America* were held to the same requirements. Salsbury claimed that any performer "attempting affectation will be instantly discharged," but he felt he had no need to discipline.

Touring *Black America*

Reviews appear to indicate that *Black America* was extremely popular. But despite good press and attendance counted in thousands, Salsbury felt hopeless and was ready to close the exhibit after only three weeks. The negativity may have been due to his ongoing health concerns—he had had a "severe surgical operation" in mid-June—or to his feeling that the enterprise was ahead of its time. In an interview, Salsbury suspected that the show had only limited appeal. The public, he intimated, was not yet ready for an all-black exhibit, that there seemed to be a popular impression that this kind of performance was suitable only to the taste of poorer classes.

The *New York Times* noted that black Northerners had little in common with the negro of the South who was more interesting, simply because "characteristics

of slavery days still clung to him." Thus, Salsbury believed it was advantageous for Northerners to see the "bright side of the slave's existence" with their "peculiarities" and "good traits," perhaps in counterpoint to persistent racial prejudices.

When Cody argued that the show should continue, Salsbury did carry on despite his qualms. Once he overcame his reservations, Salsbury's instinct to keep the show at Ambrose Park—despite a scheduled opening in Boston in mid-July—substantiates the show's success. He offered the Boston venue \$10,000 to postpone the date, but the offer was refused.

On July 13, 1895, *Black America* concluded its Brooklyn engagement, and the entire company (except the McClains who had moved on to participate in Suwanee River, a similar production) boarded a chartered steamer that would ferry the 587 performers, 150 cabins, cotton baler, and scenery to Boston. A grandstand seating 7,500 persons had been built at the Huntington Avenue Grounds. Shortly after the first performance, it was obvious that this was an entertainment that fulfilled every promise, being one of the most weird, amusing, and instructive exhibitions ever placed before the Boston public.

It was, observed the *Boston Herald*, "strikingly original and full of interest." Bostonians patronized the show in such great numbers that the new grandstand proved

Specialty acts of all kinds—like this contortionist (ca. 1892)—were popular additions to minstrel shows and other exhibitions like *Black America*. Detroit, Michigan: Calvert Litho. Co. 2014636964

inadequate. Salsbury instituted matinees to relieve the overcrowding when special trains brought thousands from the nearby towns of Lowell and Lawrence. To entice return visitors five weeks into its Boston stay, he introduced new song and dance acts.

The production ended its Boston stay in early September 1895, and *Black America* undertook a tour of other New England cities. In order to make one-night stands feasible, Salsbury was required to cut the number of cast members nearly in half. Still, even with this reduction, moving the massive *Black America* company was a logistical feat.

To convey the residual cast to subsequent venues, Salsbury ordered a special train of twelve white railroad cars with gold leaf trim and "Nate Salsbury's Black America" emblazoned in red letters across the side. Nine sleeping cars could be converted for dining; a cooking and commissary car



William Sidney Mount (1807 – 1868). *The Bone Player*, 1856. Oil on canvas. Museum of Fine Art, Boston. Determined by MFA to be in Public Domain. 48.461

supplied meals; and a special car equipped with an office, private dining room, drawing-room, bath, and three apartments made up Salsbury's quarters. Like the Wild West show's train of fifty-two cars, the picturesque convoy attracted plenty of attention and served as additional advertising.

After the company visited several more American cities, rumor had it that Salsbury would take the spectacle to London since he had received several tempting offers to do so. Stories in both the *Boston Herald* (July 28, 1895) and the *Washington, DC Morning Times*, (October 19, 1895) noted Salsbury's opinion that *Black America* in London would be as much of a hit as the Wild West show.

For three weeks, the production played in Madison Square Garden in New York City, which was "much better adapted for this style of entertainment than was Ambrose Park. The voices of the singers are heard to

Wearing what one writer called "the gaudy cavalry yellow," negro soldiers fought the Battle of Quasimas near Santiago June 24, 1898. The 9th and 10th colored cavalry in support of Rough Riders, print. LC-DIG-pga-01889





The Huntington Avenue venue in Boston (full name: Huntington Avenue American League Baseball Grounds) was the first home of the Boston Red Sox and a huge arena for *Black America*. (This game is Boston vs. New York on October 8, 1904, attendance 28,040.) LC-USZ62-97762

greater advantage here than in the open air.” *Black America* headed to Philadelphia in mid-October where the Grand Opera House was transformed into a “Negro ‘quarter’ on a gala day and night, with the white folks from the ‘big house’ as the audience.” They, “probably with a few exceptions, saw for the first time the bright side of slave life.” The chorus of three hundred Negroes was recorded on a phonograph “that accurately reproduced the singing, the shuffle of the dancers’ feet, and the ‘patter’ that accompanied the buck and wing dancing.”



Madison Square Garden, 1907. LC-DIG-stereo-1s07631

Washington, DC’s Convention Hall provided the next venue. The city’s *Evening Star* quoted Salsbury: “[T]hey sing in perfect harmony, and with an earnestness that can be brought out of no similar body of white people.” The enclosed space amplified and centered the voices so the music could be even better appreciated than in an outdoor arena. Salsbury continued:

Since I have been handling this entertainment, I have met the best people in every city, and they have expressed to me their surprise and gratification at the work produced by these negroes. In some of the larger cities, the newspapers have taken up the subject and treated it from an ethnological point of view.

It has been a revelation to them, the precision and perfection of the work performed by these people of color.

***Black America* closes**

After Philadelphia’s second two weeks’ engagement ended on November 23, and after a total of six months of performances, Salsbury disbanded the exhibition forever. It did not travel to London as anticipated, nor to any other U.S. cities, nor did it resurrect the next summer. Historians offer varied and sometimes contradictory reasons for its unexpected demise. Tarleton explained:

About the time the show was in Washington, Mr. Salsbury was taken sick and things went wrong so the show was disbanded, and all Negroes were sent home, and everything was sent back to Ambrose Park for storage...Had *Black America* gone to Europe, Salsbury would have made a fortune.

Perhaps frustration intensified Salsbury’s illness with the added stress of having to defend his exhibition against one Al G. Field (Alfred Griffin Hatfield). Field had appropriated the title *Black America* for his cypoccat program, even though Salsbury made it clear that the exhibition was his “sole and exclusive property.” If Field persisted using the title, Salsbury insisted he would not hesitate to “proceed again him...and hold him in heavy damages.” A weary-sounding Salsbury said:

Everything that I have invented is being plagiarized. They stole my ideas in the Troubadours, flied

[sic] from the Wild West, and now they are not only imitating *Black America*, but trying to steal my best people. It is disheartening, and I’m done.

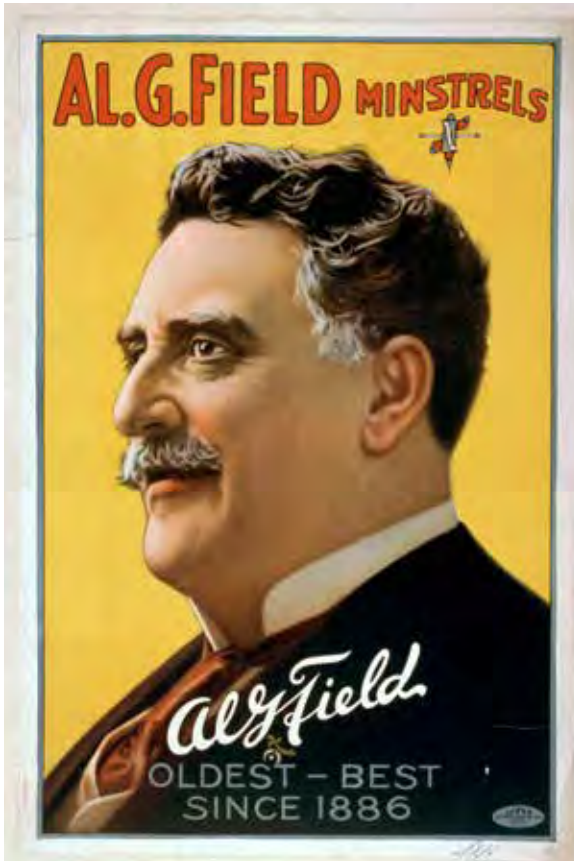


Cody and Salsbury, ca. 1895. Detail, Wild West poster. Gift of the Coe Foundation. 1.69.170



Illustrations of Negro life in Washington, DC: *The Colored Band*, ca. 1887. LC-USZ62-78425

Reports of insufficient patronage, despite most newspaper observations of overflow crowds, may have also been among the reasons for the closure. Were gate receipts enough to cover the extraordinary expenses of salaries and transportation of three hundred cast members, scenery, and a



Al. G. Field Minstrels, ca. 1900. LC-USZ62-24421

whole village? Clearly disappointed, in one of his letters home, Cody told his wife that he had lost \$10,000 on *Black America*.

Four years later, Cody and Salsbury were still blaming each other in vitriolic correspondence for the show's failure. Cody claimed \$78,000 was lost "through speculations of [Salsbury's] suggestions." Salsbury retaliated by reminding him that Cody approved of Ambrose Park, that he approved of *Black America*, and that, though Salsbury wanted to close it earlier, Cody had insisted on keeping it going.



Nate Salsbury used his theatrical interest and business savvy to stage a novel exhibition of pre-Civil War slave life, recognizing that the program would seem appealingly exotic to New England audiences. Drawing on a tumultuous partnership with Buffalo Bill Cody and the experience the two had gained in the promotion and execution of their Wild West, Salsbury

and Cody knew that for such a venture to be successful it needed to present authentic scenes and use actors who had lived the experience.

So, although *Black America* may appear exploitative to a twenty-first-century majority, it presented antebellum culture to thousands of northerners; furnished employment for, at times, more than five hundred performers; and showcased the talents of many individuals. As was frequently observed, *Nate Salsbury's Black America* "must be numbered among the successes of the century." ■

Sandra K. Sagala is currently a member of the Papers of William F. Cody Editorial Consultative Board and has contributed several stories to Points West. She has also authored four books about William F. Cody, including Buffalo Bill on Stage and Buffalo Bill on the Silver Screen. This spring, the University of Kansas Press publishes Buffalo Bill Cody, A Man of the West, written by Prentiss Ingraham and edited and introduced by Sandra K. Sagala.



Salsbury's nemesis may have been a cause of *Black America*'s closing. Al. G. Field Minstrels, ca. 1903. 2014637425



GEORGIAN HORSEMEN

.....

in the Wild West show

BY IRAKLI MAKHARADZE

(TRANSLATED FROM GEORGIAN BY SALOME AND NINO MAKHARADZE)

Unless otherwise indicated, all images are from the collection of Irakli Makharadze, used with permission.

In 1905, American journalist and author Ernest Poole and his Russian guide traveled the Russian Empire's South Caucasus, Georgia (now the Republic of Georgia) and visited the western part of Georgia—Kutaisi, Batumi, and Guria. (Compared to the other parts of the country, Guria is relatively young, being first mentioned in the annals of the Eighth Century AD. Gurians are ethnic Georgians who speak a local dialect of the Georgian language). In one Gurian village, the pair bumped into a "sad-eyed" peasant who spoke fluent English.

"Where in hell did you learn English?" Poole asked.

"Four years with Buffalo Bill," the peasant replied. "He made me a Cossack in the Rough Rider troop, and we had one hell of a good time. But I broke my leg bad. So here I am at home..."

Although the identity of this rider has not been confirmed, it's possible he was Batholme Baramidze, a member of Buffalo Bill Cody's famous "Congress of Rough Riders of the World"—who broke his leg in 1902.

Georgians or Cossacks?

The history of the Georgian-Gurian riders began in 1892, when they first joined Buffalo Bill's Wild West in England. For more than thirty years, they performed as the Russian Cossacks in the Wild West, as well as other shows and circuses. The Gurian riders were called Cossacks for different reasons, but perhaps the most important was the fact that Georgia was part of the Russian Empire at that time (Georgia was annexed by Czarist Russia in 1801 and by Soviet Russia in 1921.), and so each Georgian was considered Russian.

Regarding this confusion, it might be worth mentioning that the group's employers were the ones responsible for creating this initial mystery in the media of the day. They declared that the riders came from the southern part of the Russian Caucasus, the mountains where the Cossack family in Lord Byron's *Mazepa*



Georgian horsemen in England, circa 1903. Standing on the horse, in white chokha, Luka Chkhartishvili.

were located. Even the riders boasted that they were awarded medals for bravery, but it was a con, of course. Other newspapers, like the *Hutchinson Leader* of Hutchinson, Minnesota, went even further, reporting on July 24, 1908, that "The Cossacks were the real thing, right from the Czar's army. Splendid horsemen and brave fighters, they are also fierce and cruel. They were members of the same regiment that charged upon a throng of men, women, and children in the streets of St. Petersburg two

years ago and shot, sabered, and murdered a thousand." No wonder such stories helped make them popular figures.

Of all the tales told about the riders, though, the one most often repeated is the story of their recruitment. One Thomas Oliver arrived in Georgia to locate riders for the show in the United States. (Later, Oliver interpreted for the Georgian riders in 1892–1896, presumably in Russian or quite possibly, in Georgian. Riders called him "Tommy.") At the Black Sea port of Batumi, Oliver stopped at the home of James Chambers, the British Council. An employee of Chambers—a fellow named Kirile Jorbenadze, who was on familiar terms with some of the riders in Guria—offered help. Oliver accepted, and soon the two men, plus vice-council Harry Briggs, departed to the village of Lanchkhuti. On the way, they stopped at the village of Bakhvi where they visited Ivane Makharadze, a distinguished rider who promised Oliver that he would be responsible for signing up other riders.

It wasn't long before a group of ten riders underwent a special training, sewed six pairs each of the national dress "chokha" in different colors, and moved to Great Britain via France. Their chokhas were orange, yellow, green, and motley purple, colors that Georgian men occasionally used in their dress. Apparently, it was part of the spectacle to catch audience attention.

The first group of riders caused great excitement in London: The Georgians' daggers, swords, and especially their eye-catching chokhas—decorated with pockets for cartridges—were a special topic of conversation. Aficionados said they resembled miniature sticks of dynamite.



Russian Cossacks for the First Time in America by Permission of the Czar Wild West poster, 1893. Center of the West. Gift of the Coe Foundation. 1.69.123

On June 25, 1892, “Prince” Ivane Makharadze led the Georgians who performed in Windsor in front of Queen Victoria, the royal family, and other members of the aristocracy. (Note: Group leaders were mostly referred to in the programs as “Prince.” In fact, only some of the riders were of noble origin; the rest were mostly peasants from the surrounding Gurian towns of Ozurgeti and Lanchkhuti. Apparently, it was a publicity stunt to attract more people.) At one point in the performance, when the Cossacks were doing their horseback work, Prince Henry of Battenberg (husband to the Queen’s youngest daughter), who was standing in the rear of the pavilion, said to the Queen in German, “Mamma, do you think they are really Cossack?”

Before the Queen had time to reply, Wild West show manager, Nate Salsbury, answered, “I beg to assure you, sir, that everything and everybody you see in

the entertainment are exactly what we represent it or them to be.”

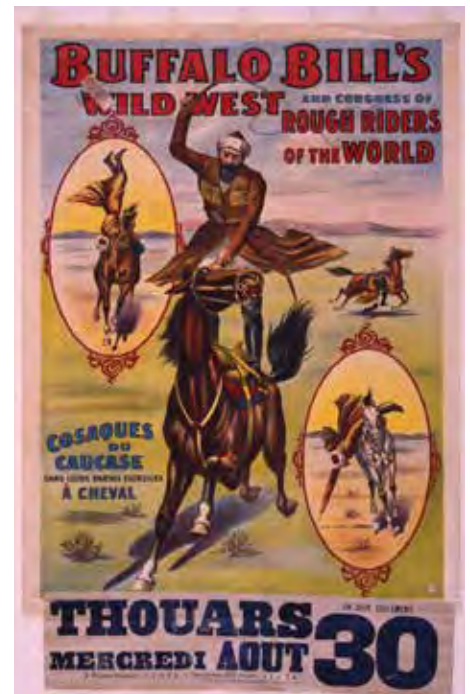
“It is probable that audience members were satisfied that the performers were Russians, and that they could present a colorful and exciting part of the show,” wrote historian Sarah J. Blackstone in her 1986 book, *Buckskins, Bullets, and Business: a History of Buffalo Bill’s Wild West*. Audiences wanted to see different kinds of presenters, and clever businessman Buffalo Bill Cody decided to involve representatives of other nations in his show. Georgian peasants became Cossacks; Sioux Indians became Cheyennes or Apaches; all Native Americans were chiefs; all Asiatic women were princesses; all army horsemen were colonels, and so on.

Off to America

In 1893, the Gurians traveled to the United States where they joined the Wild West show at the World’s Columbian Exposition or Chicago’s World Fair. “When the Cossacks came to the United States for the World’s Fair in Chicago in 1893, the Americans picked up some hints and bright ideas,” penned Frank Dean in his 1975 *The Complete Book of Trick and Fancy Riding*. “From that date on, trick riding had a boom from coast to coast.” It must be noted that many visitors who came to see the fair attended Buffalo Bill’s Wild West show and then left, more than satisfied. Apparently, they thought the Wild West *was the Fair!*

Georgians won widespread recognition and significantly influenced cowboys. According to the noted western historian Dee Brown, “Trick riding came to rodeo by way of a troupe of Cossack daredevils imported by the Miller Brothers 101 Ranch [in Oklahoma]. Intrigued by the Cossack stunts on their galloping horses, western cowboys soon introduced variations to American rodeo. Colorful costumes seem to have become a necessary part of trick riding, and it is quite possible that the outlandish western garb which has invaded the rodeo area can be blamed directly on Cossacks and trick riders.”

The owners of circuses and shows had found a real gold mine—cheap artists, who were so popular that lots of people came just to see their performances. It is very interesting that the Cossacks became an essential feature of every respectable show of that time. Out of all the international performers, the Georgian riders’ performance was perhaps the most popular feature of the Wild West show; only Indians and cowboys enjoyed similar



Cossacks on Horseback Wild West poster, France, 1905. Center of the West. 1.69.2175

popularity. Here are two quotes from American newspapers:

■ “The strangely garbed Cossacks from the far-off Caucasus mountains, the most expert riders in all Europe, perform feats of daring horsemanship that make even our reckless cowboys take notice and admire them.” *Boston Globe*, June 16, 1907.

■ “The most thrilling riding was done by the Cossacks, standing on their high saddles and riding at breakneck speed, or dashing away with one heel on the saddle and head within an inch of the ground.” *The Evening News*, Toronto, Canada, July 6, 1897.

Getting in the act

The usual performance of Georgians began with the riders, each dressed in the chokha, taking the stage while carrying their weapons and singing. First, they marched around the arena, and then stopped and dismounted on mid-stage. There, they broke into a new song and started to perform one of the Georgian native dances to the accompaniment of handclaps. Sometimes this dance was executed upon a wooden platform.

The act was usually followed by stunt riding. It represented the perfection of man and horse, and the Georgians did the most unbelievable stunts while galloping.



Cossack of the Caucasus Wild West poster, ca. 1900. Center of the West. Museum purchase. 1.69.1821



Trick riding, ca. 1902, USA.



Trick rider Serapion Imnadze, ca. 1898.

The riders performed a series of maneuvers including standing on their heads or standing upright in the saddle, riding three horses simultaneously, jumping to the ground and then back up on the horse, and picking up small objects from the ground. One of the tricks most popular with the spectators was the rider at full gallop, standing on horseback, and shooting.

The riskiest tricks were carried out

only by a chosen few. One of these tricks had the rider removing his saddle and dismounting while riding at a full gallop, and then remounting to fix the saddle back on a horse. This trick-riding style was called “dzhigitovka,” a Turkish word taken to mean “skillful and courageous rider”; the word in Georgian is “jiriti.”

Some Georgian sources claim, rather unconvincingly, that they rode the Georgian

breeds. That hardly seems possible, first because it was very expensive to transport a horse across the Atlantic. Second, as I know, it was prohibited by quarantine regulations. (One rider recalled that American horses needed time to get accustomed to their way of riding).

The Cossack saddle also attracted much attention with the July 7, 1904, issue of Iowa’s *Neola Reporter*, observing, “...Its chief



Georgian trick riders with weapons, 1903.

peculiarity, seen from the sides, is two thin pads, fore and after, resembling loaves of bread. A closer examination shows there are four of these pads. The Cossacks stand up in their stirrups with two or three pads on, before and behind his legs. They [the pads] are stuffed with horsehair.” These saddles were not cheap; an ordinary Cossack saddle cost \$75; the one custom made for well-known rider Alexis Georgian-Gogokhia cost \$275.

Life in the traveling show

In general, the Georgians' decision to travel to distant lands was based on financial hardship: Touring meant profits. However, on occasion group leaders were targeted with bribes in their native villages. Their American employers paid relatively good money, up to \$40 – \$50 per month or 100 rubles. It was a huge amount as the price of a cow in Georgia in those days was three to five rubles.

It must be said that not all of the riders went to America voluntarily. A Gurian rider Vaso Tsuladze, known by the name Sam Sergie (performing during 1911 – 1914 and reportedly working in wild west shows after 1917), with his brother Onopfre—also a future Wild West performer—fled to the United States following a train robbery. It was said that during the robbery several people were killed. Later, Tsuladze used to show off a gold cigarette case engraved with a double-headed eagle, boasting that he took it from a Russian army officer.

In America, Tsuladze changed his name

to Sam Sergie. This was not uncommon as the Georgians typically took on nicknames since their real names were unpronounceable to the show's organizers and to the public. The show's financial manager even had to call them by numbers on payday. Sergie died in Fort Worth, Texas, in 1965 at the age of 81. He was an owner of a café, Sam's Club, and word has it that his lawyer took all his belongings after his death. Sergie's Georgian friends in the United States protested but couldn't do anything at the time to stop the

confiscation.

Unfortunately, the riders were not insured against tragic accidents. Who can count how often they broke their arms and legs, or how many might have died after such accidents? For instance, on July 3, 1901, an unknown Gurian rider died during a performance of Pawnee Bill's Wild West Show in Iron River, Michigan. On October 28, 1907, another unknown Georgian rider died during a performance of the same Pawnee Bill's Wild West Show in Amarillo, Texas, and Khamlampri Pataraia was killed in Louisa, Kentucky, in 1914.

The Wild West show's female employees brought more grace to the Georgian performances. Five Georgian ladies used to participate in these shows in the United States: Frida Mgaloblishvili, Kristine Tsintsadze, Babilina Tsereteli, Maro Zakareishvili-Kvitaishvili, and Barbale (Barbara) Zakareishvili-Imnadze. After the Russian Revolution, Barbale and her husband, rider Christophore Imnadze, stayed in America and continued to perform. One of the highlights of Barbale's act was her riding with the American flag in her hands while standing on the shoulders of two riders on galloping horses. Barbale Imnadze died in 1988 in Chicago.

Georgian riders after 1917

World War I, the 1917 Bolshevik coup, and Georgia's annexation ended the Georgians' voyages abroad. Those Georgians who found themselves stranded



Cossack (Georgian) saddle, ca. 1900. Center of the West. 1.69.2410

in the States, mostly in Chicago, continued performing in the Miller Brothers show and in the Ringling Brothers circus, and returned to their homeland only when the war was over. Many Georgians settled in the U.S., raised American families, and lost ties with their homeland. In one case, a rider who had a family in his native Guria, wed an American woman, and returned to Georgia after a while. But when he was ready to return to the States, the Bolsheviks refused to let him leave the country, and he committed suicide.

Hard times were ahead for those who did return to Georgia. Thinking they all were American spies, the Bolsheviks either imprisoned or exiled the riders. Many had to destroy all evidence and photographs



Vaso Tsuladze, a.k.a. Sam Sergie, 1961 (left) and 1914.

of their trips abroad in order to survive the new regime's iron hands. There were cases when riders were forced to sign documents in which they promised never to mention America or Europe again.

The Bolsheviks confiscated all the precious gifts and souvenirs the riders had received. Usually, these mementos surfaced in the houses of the party principals. Daughters of rider Pavle Makharadze recalled, "They used to take different things that had been brought from the United States from the families of all riders. Finally, they took a comb and a tab from our family. My mother was so horrified that she fell ill. She was always waiting for the Bolsheviks to come again." Nervous stress was too much for many: Some committed suicide; others died in oblivion.

The Georgian riders, so long misnamed, had no desire to become famous or make history. They were simply doing what they did best to make a living and support their loved ones. These trick riders who performed for Buffalo Bill and other American showman might well be viewed as the first Georgian ambassadors to the United States. The connection between Buffalo Bill and Georgian trick riders represents one of the oldest known relationships between Georgia and the United States of America. ■



Georgian trick riders, including two women riders in front, ca. 1912. Clockwise from left: Kirile Pirtskhalaishvili, Kitilia Kvitaishvili, Kristephore Imnadze, Veliko Kvitaishvili, Varden Kvitaishvili, Barbale Zakareishvili-Imnadze, Maro Zakareishvili-Kvitaishvili.



Wild West show members including, Georgians and Native Americans, ca. 1900.

- *Irakli Makharadze (b. 1961) is no stranger to the many resources at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West. The researcher and filmmaker has produced several popular documentary films such as Riders of the Wild West, Italian Opera in Tbilisi, and Artist Dimitri Shevardnadze. For many years, he was a host of various Georgian television programs regarding American film, culture, and contemporary music. In addition to his successful film career, he has spent years documenting the unique equestrian history of Georgia and the first riders who reached America in the 1890s. He published Georgian Trick Riders in American Wild West Shows, 1890s–1920s in 2015.*



J. W. Crawford
"Capt. Jack"

Captain Jack

the Poet Scout

Tales of the West in rhyme

.....

John Wallace Crawford (1847–1917) was a prolific writer and poet, chronicling the American West in prose and iambic pentameter. He and Buffalo Bill were “pards,” and he even named his daughter after his friend William F. Cody: May Cody Crawford.

What do I know? (undated)

What do I know? Poor little me,
I need a microscope to see
What I do know;

The overflow

Of Nature’s riches, all aglow
And sparkling with the stars and
dew.
I only know, beyond the blue
I cannot see.

Poor little me.

What do I know? I know but this —
I know my ignorance is bliss
Most wisely planned.

I understand

That tow’ring pines and mountains
grand
Are dear and beautiful to me;
Beyond their peaks I cannot see
But God is there,

Sublimely fair.

(MS 322.09.08.39)



John Wallace “Captain Jack” Crawford, undated.
P.322.0283

The Grip

You bet I’ve got the grip, and hip
Hip, Hip, Hurrah, I’m mighty glad
I’ve got the grip, so let ‘er rip
B’gosh, I’ve got it mighty bad.
And when I take a fellow’s hand
And look into his eyes, I know
If he can feel and understand,
The grip that keeps my soul aglow.

And let me tell you, honest pard,
The greatest work I’ve ever done,
Was when I conquered this old bard
And found that life had just begun.
You’ve bet I’ve got another grip
It’s not on property or pelf,
Please God I’ll never let it slip
I’ve got a grip on me, myself.

And if I live a thousand years,
And mind you I don’t say I will,
But through the sunshine and the tears
I’m going to keep on gripping still.
And when I find I’m in the hole,
And needing sympathy and pelf
I’ll go to one who will console,
And that is Broncho me, myself.

(MS322.09.08.15)

Poetry and photos from MS 322 John Wallace Crawford Collection. Gift of Harriet Crawford Richardson.

A man is shown from the chest down, wearing a bright orange polo shirt and blue jeans. The shirt has a small logo on the left chest that reads "BUFFALO BILL CENTER OF THE WEST" and "Guided Tours" below it. The background is plain white.

**BUFFALO BILL
CENTER
OF THE WEST**
Guided Tours

THE PRIVILEGE AND HONOR OF A BUTTERSCOTCH SHIRT

BY HENRY MACK YAPLE

The Buffalo Bill Center of the West's guided tours are the perfect way for visitors to get an inside look into the Center's galleries, especially if they're pressed for time. One of those guides, Mack Yaple, collected some stories and observations. Here's an excerpt:

It has been a privilege and a distinct honor for me to serve as a Center of the West Tour Guide the last two summers. It's easy to identify us: We're the ones wearing butterscotch-colored shirts with the "Buffalo Bill Center of the West" monogram! We manage the Tour Guide and Information Desk in the Center's main lobby where we are in almost constant contact with Center visitors and guests as we respond to their questions, and lead three different, subject tours through the various museums within the Center.

Upon commencing work in summer 2017, I found both of these tasks—responding to questions at the Information Desk and leading tours—fairly straight forward. Some questions and comments were quite routine; others simply surprised and amazed me by their very sincere appreciation of the Center of the West.

The guests on my tours particularly enjoy learning about William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody's adventurous life riding as a messenger boy on bull whacker wagon trains, harvesting bison for the Kansas Pacific Railroad crews, guiding royal visitors to the Wild West, scouting for the U.S. Army, and receiving the U.S. Medal of Honor for valor in combat. Visitors are amazed to learn that twelve-year-old "Willie" Cody was forced to leave school to support his mother and three sisters after the deaths of his older brother, Samuel, and his father, Isaac.

As I explain these facts on the tour, I sometimes inquire whether anyone has eleven or twelve-year-old sons or grandsons. Usually a hand or two raise. Then, I ask, "Would you let a twelve-year-old son or grandson leave home to work on bull whacker teams crossing the wild and hostile plains?" All would shake their heads "no" quite emphatically.

One day, I noticed a grandmotherly type lady rubbing her chin as she pondered my question. I asked again, "Would you let your grandson go with a bull whacker team?"

She paused and then said, "I have two grandsons. I would keep one. But I would send that other!"

The Plains Indian Museum is extraordinarily well-conceived and executed. The effect of this museum on guests is visible and profound. The museum itself is cool and dark to protect and preserve the fragile, historic items in the exhibits from ultraviolet rays and heat. However, cool and dark also suggests a sanctuary that merits respect and attention. Once visitors step inside, they're clearly fascinated.

We Tour Guides have a small collection of artifacts for guests to handle on this tour: bison bladder, beaded moccasin with the very durable bison leather sole, sinew, and a plastic bag of buffalo chips. These items were integral to Plains Indians lives, but foreign to today's guests. It's interesting for visitors to discover and come to understand this culture. A dried bison bladder could be utilized as a canteen on the hot, dry plains, or bison sinew could be teased out into thread used to sew tipis and clothing.

I did not pass the bag of buffalo chips around as I did with the other items. I would simply hold up the bag and ask visitors what the bag contained. Invariably, if a small child were present, a piercing little voice would say quite loudly, "Poop!" Everyone would usually giggle a bit, and I would then explain, "Native Americans used buffalo chips to make cooking fires as did Oregon Trail immigrants on the treeless plains."

Throughout the summers, I made many other observations about the Center of the West that were either given to me by our guests or were things I experienced:

■ For instance, I noticed a pretty four or five-year-old girl approach the large Annie Oakley photograph immediately adjacent to the Tour Desk. Her mother, a Native American, followed her, and we watched as the little girl did several twirls and pirouettes in front of Annie Oakley.

I asked, "Does she know who that lady is?"
"Yes, she does. Would you like to know her name?"
"Yes, I would."
"Oakley Anna."
"How wonderful!"

■ One day early in the summer, a petite lady walked briskly up to the desk on her way out of the Whitney Western Art Museum. She said, in a clipped British accent, "This is the most amazing museum! The western art is simply fabulous. But why did you locate it in such an out of the way place?" That's a question for our founders...101 years ago!

■ A little more predictable was an encounter I had during my first summer. A somewhat distraught father appeared at the desk and said, "I was looking at an exhibit and somehow my seven-year-old son got away from me. Help!" I escorted him to the Security Desk where gallery guards and security launched a search, and within just a few minutes, father and son were reunited.

■ Less predictable that first summer was the appearance at the Tour Guide Desk of an extremely precocious twelve to thirteen-year-old girl with her younger brother firmly in hand. She held up her Smart Phone for me to see, and said, "I want to report lost parents, and this is what they look like!"

■ Last summer, a select group of C.M. Russell art, letters, and appreciative letters from western artists Russell mentored was displayed in the forecourt of the Cody Firearms Museum. Tour guests visibly enjoyed the fabulous western art in this exhibit. However, it became imperative to explain the word "chinook" in Russell's well-known landscape *Waiting for a Chinook*. Most people seemed to think that "chinook" referred to the large U.S. Army helicopter of the same name!

■ Yet another day early in the summer, a gentleman wearing a name tag that clearly identified him as a professional tour guide on one of the multitudinous commercial buses approached the Tour Guide Desk. He had high praise indeed for the Center of the West:

When we drive up to the Center, I always make the same statement, "Each year I travel many miles and visit many different cities, but I only visit—actually go into—two art museums: the Metropolitan in New York and the Buffalo Bill in Cody." When our guests return from their visit, they are simply raving about what a wonderful museum it is.

Sharing the Center's stories of the American West has been truly rewarding for me. As is typically the case with these efforts, we Tour Guides learn more than those with whom we're sharing stories! If you're visiting the Center this summer, be on the lookout for those butterscotch shirts—and bring lots of questions... ■

An all-American berry



Huckleberry autumn. Gifford Pinchot National Forest. U.S. Forest Service photo. Oregon State University Special Collection. Flickr.

BY LIZ BOWERS

As a part of her family's Montana outfitting business, Liz Bowers is a sixth-generation horse woman. On numerous rides with guests, she's expressed to them her fondness for huckleberries—abundant in the Montana landscape. A prolific blogger who uses life experiences for content, those trail rides prompted her inquiry to learn more. During her summer 2018 social media internship in the Center's Public Relations Department, Bowers produced weekly blog posts—including this one on huckleberries. Read the complete post at centeroftthewest.org/2018/07/06/american-huckleberry.

Riding down the trail in the Absaroka Mountains of Montana with a few of my family's guests, I gaze out across the glorious fields of wildflowers and the towering blue mountains still capped with snow.

"Have you been to Yellowstone yet?" I start the small talk with the one riding horseback behind me. "Not yet, but we're planning to do that tomorrow!" She smiles; I can tell this is all new for them. They've never seen or done anything like this and are excited for every part of their adventure!

"Well, if you go to Old Faithful—and you really shouldn't miss Old Faithful—go in the lodge and try some Wilcoxson's huckleberry ice cream!" I enthusiastically recommend it. Come to think of it, I would really like some right about now, too!

What is a huckleberry anyway?

Wild huckleberries in the Pacific Northwest are members of the *Ericaceae* family's *Vaccinium* genus," writes Rebecca T. Richards and Susan J. Alexander in the United States Forest Service publication *A Social History of Wild Huckleberry Harvesting in the Pacific Northwest*, February 2006. "The word 'huckleberry' originally referred to the circumboreal species, *Vaccinium myrtillus*, which occurs in England, Europe, and as far north and east as Siberia.

"According to [author and poet] Henry David Thoreau, huckleberry appears to be an American word derived originally from 'hurtleberry,' a corruption of the Saxon heart-berg or 'the hart's berry,'" Richards and Alexander continue. "It was first used by John Lawson in 1709 to describe berry use in North Carolina where 'the hurts,

huckleberries, or blues of this country are four sorts...The Indians get many bushels, and dry them on mats, whereof they make plumb bread, and many other eatables."

Some claim that wild huckleberries taste like blueberries, but beyond their shape and color, I think huckleberries stand on their own. The flavor is hard to describe if you've never experienced it before. Here in the Wild West, we use it for a lot more than ice cream—think honey, syrup, soap, coffee, salad dressing, pies, and so much more.

What's interesting about this story is



Women picking berries, Gifford Pinchot National Forest, ca. 1940. U.S. Forest Service photo. Oregon State University Special Collection: "Harriet's Collection." Flickr.

that wild huckleberries have never been commercially cultivated. That means that the businesses who mass produce wild huckleberry products must go berry picking alongside hobbyists, home cooks, and all the other berry pickers.

An age-old food source

Before the commercial huckleberry products, and even before the settlers picked them to can for a winter food source, Native American tribes harvested these berries and preserved them as a major food source.

Richards and Alexander write that huckleberries have been a staple of life for Northwest and Rocky Mountain Native American tribes for thousands of years. In the *Journals of Lewis and Clark*, the explorers wrote of the tribes west of the Rocky Mountains using dried berries extensively in 1805 and 1806. The authors quote Captain Meriwether Lewis who, upon reaching the Shoshone Tribe (also known as the Snake Nation, occupying areas both east and west of the Rocky Mountains), and the Great Divide on August 15, 1805, wrote the following:

This morning I arose very early and as hungry as a wolf. I had eaten nothing yesterday except one scant meal of the flour and berries, except the dried cakes of berries, which did not appear to satisfy my appetite as they appeared to do those of my Indian friends. I found on inquire of McNeal that we had only about two pounds of flour remaining. This I directed him to divide into two equal parts and to cook the one half this morning in a kind of pudding with the berries as he had done yesterday, and reserve the balance for the evening. On this new-fashioned pudding four of us breakfasted, giving a pretty good allowance also to the chief, who declared it the best thing he had tasted for a long time.

"Northwest tribes made special combs of wood or salmon backbones to strip huckleberries off the bushes," Richards and Alexander write. "They dried the berries in the sun or smoked them, and then mashed



Native woman picking berries, undated. Oregon State University Special Collection: Gerald W. Williams Collection. U.S. Forest Service photo. #281584. Flickr.

them into cakes and wrapped these in leaves or bark for storage." One can see the importance of these berries even in the beautifully beaded designs that are included on pieces of clothing.

In the 1920s, there was a huckleberry boom in Montana which led to massive tent towns springing up around prime huckleberry picking locations. Outside Trout Creek, the settlers would camp on one side of the road, and the Natives from the Flathead Reservation would camp on the other side. During the day, they would all go out and pick berries together.

My colleague Hunter Old Elk, the Center's Plains Indian Museum Curatorial Assistant, shared with me how different berries would be gathered and used:

Berries used on the Plains included chokecherries, buffalo berries, elderberries, Sarvis berries, wild rose berries, and wild plums among many other wild fruits and vegetables foraged. Often, the cherries would get ground into a paste with dried wild game such as buffalo, elk, and deer to make a food called Pemmican. We also make a hot pudding from berries when boiled for long periods of time. Tribes would use highly sought-after chokecherry bushes as switches in the sweat lodge. Some tribes would dry berries and eat them in the winter while others would freeze them in the winter and eat them as well.

The Berry Diva

Chances are that even though individuals may not have tasted these amazing huckleberries, they have at least heard the term. In Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*, the name Huckleberry was used to represent a character inferior in status to the Tom Sawyer character. During the time the book was published, calling someone a "huck" or "huckleberry" meant exactly that.

At the same time, in watching the movie *Tombstone*, one might be a bit confused as to why Doc Holliday would refer to himself as a huckleberry. In this case, to be a huckleberry meant to be the person for the job, much like we would say, "I'm your man!" or "I'm your woman!" We may not use either saying today, but this fruit has a cultural impact second to none.

A berry difficult balance

Interestingly, huckleberries grow best after a fire. The Great Fire of 1910 that burned in Idaho, Montana, and Washington swept through the forests where berry-pickers had traditionally found huckleberries. Afterward, the fire caused the huckleberry boom Montana experienced throughout the 1920s.



Huckleberries. National Park Service photo. Undated.

Today, as officials fight wildland fires, the residual overgrowth in these forests is encroaching on what once were magnificent huckleberry patches. When one combines that overgrowth with commercial berry picking, a devastating conclusion emerges: Unless something changes, there will soon be a time without huckleberries.

We all love the amazing products available to us from those companies that commercially pick and process the berries for our pleasure. However, it is vital to find a way to conserve this special berry. Maybe the answer is a controlled burn of pivotal sections, or possibly clearing out some of the overgrowth with selective logging—or maybe, there is a solution we haven't even realized yet...■

Letter to an intern

Dear Summer Intern,

These few weeks of your internship will fly much more quickly than you think at first. Here at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West, you won't stand on the sidelines, make coffee runs for your supervisors, or mindlessly stand at a copy machine all day. On the contrary, you may find yourself conserving a priceless piece of art; presenting a real live, up close and personal wild raptor; writing blog posts about your discoveries and experience; photographing kids; or showing off our collections and activities through social media.

As an intern, you become an integral part of the team here at the Center of the West. Your talents and curiosity are invited daily to participate in projects that have a long-term impact here. Take every opportunity to participate in the daily life of the museum: Maybe that means volunteering to peel paper off glass for a new exhibit, decorating the float and participating in the annual Fourth of July Parade, or attending docent talks and special speaker events. You can only get out of an internship as much as you're willing to contribute.

Ask yourself, "Why is an internship important?" Yes, the job experience you receive is second to none, but perhaps more important are the connections you make along the way. Venture outside your internship and immerse yourself in the Center's extraordinary galleries. Take time to learn from the many talented staff members

who surround you. Reach outside the box to fill a need with your talent and knowledge. Actively seek collaboration with other departments that enhance your projects and experience.

Instead of thinking, "What will this internship do for me?" Think, "What can I do for the Buffalo Bill Center of the West with the opportunity I've been given to become a part of the community here?" Your accomplishments here will surprise you! Don't be afraid of criticism. Be ready to grow through every memory, experience, discovery, and connection.

Enjoy your adventure!

Sincerely,
Liz Bowers - Last Summer's
Public Relations Intern





Interns met weekly with the Center's curatorial, education, administration, and museum services departments for in depth conversation about the Center's operation. Here Conservator Beverly Perkins talks about object preservation.

INTERN INSIDE SCOOP



Claire Pfister works in the Center's Conservation Lab.



There's always paperwork as Sarah Freshnock discovered in the Conservation Lab.

Thanks to generous funding from the S.K. Johnston, Jr. Family, the Buffalo Bill Center of the West is able to offer a number of internships each year in several departments from Public Relations to Conservation, Raptor Wranglers to summer programming. The internships offer specialized experiences to students that enhance their coursework, and at the same time, lend fresh voices and perspectives to the Center's operations. Indeed, supervisors routinely observe how they learn as much, if not more, from their interns.

On the previous page, Liz Bowers shares insights about her 2018 summer internship with the Public Relations Department (an experience that led to her current position as the Center's Social Media Specialist). Additionally, she offers new interns "how-to" advice to maximize their experiences at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West. Here are images of Bowers's fellow interns in the Class of 2018.

Application deadline March 1, 2019

The deadline to submit applications for 2019 internships is fast approaching. For more information, visit centerofthewest.org/learn/internships. ■

The Center's internship program is funded in part by a grant from the Tucker Foundation through the S.K. Johnston, Jr. Family Fund of the Wyoming Community Foundation. We are grateful for their support!

DEVELOPMENTS



DONOR IMPACT | *Mary Hiestand*

Charles G. Clarke was a pioneering Hollywood cinematographer, one of the first to film “talkies.” His real love, though, was history, especially that of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, and his home state of California. A self-taught scholar, Clarke wrote what is still considered to be one of the seminal books on the Lewis and Clark Expedition. He also amassed a research library of rarities related to the California gold rush, overland journeys, and government surveys in the American West.

Clarke’s daughter, Mary Hiestand, inherited his collection and built a library in her Northridge, California, home to house the exceptional volumes. Then, in 1994, came the magnitude 6.7 Northridge earthquake. The precious books her father had spent so many years collecting tumbled from their shelves, many of them badly damaged. It became clear that her home was not an ideal, long-term storage solution, and Hiestand considered options to make the collection accessible to scholars and others who shared her father’s passion for history.

Hiestand’s good friend Hal Ramser, a longtime member of the Buffalo Bill Center of the West’s Board of Trustees, suggested donating the books to the Center’s McCracken Research Library. The McCracken hosts many scholars researching the West who would use the collection. And, with the Center’s full-time conservator and a summer conservation internship program, museum staff could repair books that had been damaged in the earthquake.

Hiestand was sold. In addition to donating the collection, she also became a contributor to the internship program. She recently received a copy of one of the treatment reports submitted by an intern who worked on her father’s collection last summer.

“I was thrilled to see the before and after photos and read



Comparison from treatment report prepared by Conservation Intern, Brianna Cunningham.

Conservation Intern Brianna Cunningham’s report,” Hiestand said. “I had no idea how thoroughly the department would document the condition and the repairs they made. I feel like I chose the right home for my father’s beloved collection, and I am happy to support training new conservation professionals who will preserve these and other important links to our past.”

The Center of the West hosts interns every summer in the McCracken Research Library and in many other departments. Contact Carolyn Williams at 307-578-4013 in the Development Department if you would like to sponsor an internship. (Read more about internships with Liz Bowers’s story beginning on page 28.)

Bison Circle
IMPACT



1 year | \$250 5 years | \$1,250 20 years | \$5,000

Your support adds up over time! Consistent giving ensures the Center’s programs and operations continue to flourish. Whether your generosity flows monthly, yearly, or somewhere in between, we appreciate your commitment to sustaining the Spirit of the American West. Thank you! To enjoy the convenience of automatic monthly giving, sign up at centerofthewest.org/trailblazer



Courtesy photo for *Cody Enterprise* story, October 21, 2015.

MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

“When the winter-time blues hit, a visit to the Center of the West never fails to lift my spirits.” ~Phyllis Preator, Cody, Wyoming. Member since 1981.



WAYS TO GIVE | *Donor-Advised Funds*

You may have heard of “Donor-Advised Funds” (DAF), but dismissed them as not applicable to you. However, with recent changes to the federal income tax laws and the increase in the standard deduction, a DAF might appeal to a whole new group of donors, including you.

■ What is a DAF?

Think of a DAF as having your own mini-foundation. You contribute funds (cash, long-term appreciated assets, real estate, etc.) to the account and take a tax deduction in the year you make the donation. The IRS must recognize the sponsoring organization which holds your account as a public charity. They invest the principle based on your investment preferences, and you “advise” them as to the charity you wish to support.

■ What is the advantage of a DAF?

As in the case of a private foundation, a DAF allows you to put aside money for charity, get tax benefits now, and determine the specific timing, amounts, and recipients of your charitable gifts at a later date. This is helpful when you need a tax write off in a year you have

a large increase in income (you star in a movie, write a best-selling novel, or get a huge bonus at work, for example). You put a large percentage of your windfall into the DAF and then you can make grants to your selected charities over a period of years. Because the funds are invested, the amount available for your charities may grow, tax free. You also can add to your fund at any time and take the tax benefits in the year in which you make the additional donations.

With the higher federal tax standard deduction, you may have a new reason to start a DAF: You no longer have enough deductions in a typical year to make it worthwhile to itemize.

Let’s say you normally contribute \$5,000 per year to charity, but in order to itemize you need to make \$10,000 in charitable contributions. If you contribute \$10,000 to a DAF in year one, this allows you to itemize for maximum tax savings. Then you can recommend that your sponsoring organization make \$5,000 in grants to charity in year one and \$5,000 in year two. In the end, you’ve contributed the same amount to charity, supported organizations you care about (such as the Buffalo Bill Center of the West!), and saved on your taxes.

■ What is the disadvantage of a DAF?

Once you’ve made the donation to your DAF, you technically no longer control the funds; you only advise the sponsoring organization about the grants you want to make. However, since most DAF sponsoring organizations are “charitable arms” of for-profit institutions, it is in their best interest to follow your wishes.

Also, DAFs cannot be used to pay a legally binding pledge. Remember that you technically do not control the funds in the account. If they are used to pay your pledge, the IRS could interpret that as a benefit to you (paying a debt), resulting in possible tax consequences for you.

DAFs are great vehicles to gain tax benefits when you need them and make distributions to charity in a thoughtful way. Your financial planner can recommend funds to you. A quick Google search also returns many options.

This is not intended to be professional advice. As always, please consult your personal financial and tax professionals to find the best solutions for your particular situation. ■



treasures

FROM
OUR
WEST



CODY
FIREARMS MUSEUM

Herb Parson's Winchester Model 1871

To make movie magic, all it takes is a wizard. In the 1950 Universal International film *Winchester '73*, all they needed was the “Wizard with a Winchester” known as Herb—Herb Parsons, that is.

Parsons served as technical advisor on the set and not only did he ensure correct firearms handling, he used his shooting skills to make actor Jimmy Stewart look like an expert marksman. Off camera, Parsons stood next to Stewart with this Winchester Model 71

lever-action and conducted the actual shooting.

Most notably, the Model 71 was used during the shooting competition scene between Stewart and Steven McNally. In the scene, Stewart stood on wooden Coke cases to achieve the desired camera effects, while Parsons stood beside him with the Model 71. Stewart wins the competition by shooting through a disc. Parsons impressed the crew so much with his talent and expertise that the cast signed the stock

of the firearm and embedded one of those discs into the wood.

In short, it must have been quite an event to have Herb Parsons, the “World’s Greatest Exhibition Shooter,” on the one hand, and Jimmy Stewart, one of the most beloved actors of all time, on the other—both coming together to make movie magic. And to top it off, *Winchester '73* was one of the first films to make a firearm the lead character—although no one probably told Jimmy Stewart.



WHITNEY
WESTERN ART MUSEUM



White Horse and Sunset, 1863. Oil on board. Gift of Carman H. Messmore. 2.62

Bierstadt's *White Horse and Sunset*

Ah, steeds, steeds, what steeds! Has the whirlwind a home in your manes? Is there a sensitive ear, alert as a flame, in your every fiber? Hearing the familiar song from above, all in one accord you strain your bronze chests and, hooves barely touching the ground, turn into straight lines cleaving the air, and all inspired by God it rushes on!
~Nikolai V. Gogol, *Dead Souls*, 1842 (translated from Russian)

So integral was the horse to the American West that there's hardly a story about the West that doesn't include at least one. The relationship with its owner is described variously as magical, spiritual, emotional, intellectual, or all of the above.

And a white horse was something special—the one the “good guy” rode. Indeed, the “Pacing White Stallion” or “White Steed of the Prairies” is a prominent and enduring legend representing the Spirit of the American West. Here, artist Albert Bierstadt (1830 – 1902) celebrates the romanticism of this beast in his detailed study of a white horse over an already complete landscape.



BUFFALO BILL
MUSEUM

Irma Hotel Chamber Pot

In the days before indoor plumbing, that thirty-yard dash through the inky dark to the outhouse to relieve oneself in the middle of the night was reason enough to avoid any drinks after 6 p.m. And the cold, hard wooden seat with the cavernous black hole underneath only added to the ordeal.

To remedy the situation, families began to use chamber pots, like this enamel one that was used at Buffalo Bill's Irma Hotel around 1910. At the time, the bedroom was called the “chamber”; hence the name for this contrivance. The individual places the pot alongside the bed to answer nature's call during the night, and the nighttime jaunt to the outhouse becomes a thing of the past. ■



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Ty, Grounds Supervisor, is wearing

CUSTOM BUFFALO BILL CODY HAT | A commemorative celebration of the life of W.F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody. The hat features 50 percent beaver, custom sizing, and interior band imprint with 4.75 in. crown; 3.75 in. brim with a kettle curl and hand roll; 2 in. grosgrain hatband, ribbon, and bow. Made in USA. Color: Whiskey. #41047446 | **\$664.99**

VINTAGE MESQUITE VEST-BLANKET LINED | Rangewashed with the feel of a five-year old closet favorite, with an abundance of pockets. Machine washable. Made in USA by Schaefer Outfitters. Sizes M-XXL. Color: Suntan. #41047451 | **\$156**

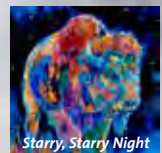
CLASSIC ABILENE WESTERN SHIRT | Rugged, pure cotton fabrics, double-needle tailoring, and premium pearl snap trim throughout. Features classic spread collar, traditional western patch pockets, single-yoke back. Tone on tone logo with *Long Live the Wild West!*™. Made in USA by Schaefer Outfitters. Sizes M-XXL. Color: Indigo. #41047453 | **\$104**

BOLO | Sterling silver bolo set with Candelaria turquoise by Howard Nelson. Slide measures 2.5 x 3 in.; tips are 2.5 in.; total length 44 in. #1041707 | **\$6875**

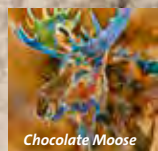
Laura, Center Store Co-Manager, is wearing

STARRY, STARRY NIGHT SCARF BY CAROL HAGAN | A touch of the Old West is captured in the night grazing bison. Made in Italy. Delicate cashmere blend finished with hand-rolled, hand-stitched edges, 36 in. x 36 in. #41047407 | **\$185**

BUFFALO LEATHER PURSE | Made of 100 percent American buffalo leather with a shoulder strap and made to last. Made in USA by the Buffalo Billfold Company. Color: Brown. #71044719 | **\$122.99**



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CHOCOLATE MOOSE SCARF BY CAROL HAGAN | Montana artist with a passionate color palette. Made in Italy. Cashmere blend, 36 in. x 36 in. #41047406 | **\$185**



INVISIBLE BOUNDARIES SCARF BY JAMES PROSEK | Yellowstone Composition No. 1 was created especially for the Buffalo Bill Center of the West's exhibit, *Invisible Boundaries*. 100 percent silk, 36 x 36 in. #41046495 | **\$49**



Pointing West

Continued from page 2

Throughout the next thirty years, I visited the West many times, up and down the spine of the continent. I was fortunate enough to become the Executive Director of the Millicent Rogers Museum in Taos, New Mexico, where I worked closely with both the Native American and Hispanic communities in that state. I also got to “pal around” with many of the fine artists and crafts people who live in Taos. In the process, I gained a true respect for some of the



West’s great historic artistic masters such as Joseph Henry Sharp, who will be featured in the next *Whitney West* publication.

One of my first actions as Director was to send a message to our dedicated staff about my vision for the Center’s future. It was, and is, a message that is bright with opportunity. I envision new research to feed into new programming and exhibitions. It is also about the on-going development and refinement of our world-class museum, library, and archival collections. Finally, and arguably most importantly, it’s about building experiential opportunities here to attract new and diverse audiences.

As I noted to our staff, we stand upon the shoulders of the giants who created the museum and look forward to creating a museum for our time in 2019 and beyond.

I do encourage you to share your feedback with me and our leadership team as we explore, develop, and evaluate new plans and opportunities. This is a great opportunity for us all to explore the undiscovered country of the future of the Buffalo Bill Center of the West.

Draper Museum’s Preston retires

At the end of 2018, the Draper Natural History Museum said farewell to its first and only curator, Dr. Charles R. Preston, who retired December 31. He and his wife, Penny, plan to spend six months of the

year in Wapiti and six months in Arkansas, where he grew up.

Preston arrived in Cody after a stint at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science. Planning for “the Draper” began almost immediately upon his arrival at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West in 1998. From its opening in June 2002, the Draper Museum has become one of the most respected natural history museums in America. Beyond its exhibits, it boasts its popular Draper Museum Raptor Experience, now with eleven live birds of prey in residence at the Center.



And starting ten years ago, Preston led the Draper in its research on the golden eagles of Wyoming’s Bighorn Basin. The extensive staff, volunteer, and intern research produced a permanent exhibit about the birds in the Draper titled *Monarch of the Skies: The Golden Eagle in Greater Yellowstone and the American West*.

As Curator Emeritus and Senior Scientist for the Center, Preston will continue to conduct research on the influence of climate, landscape characteristics, and human attitudes and activities on wildlife.



Center of the West wins big with *True West* readers

Once again, the Buffalo Bill Center of the West has earned several top honors in *True West* magazine’s “Best of the West” awards for 2019. Of the five readers’ choice awards earned this year, three of them—including “Best Western Museum”—have now been bestowed on the Center for the third year in a row.

The popular western magazine’s editorial staff and readers choose their favorites in a broad spectrum of categories each year—everything from museums and collections, to restaurants and shows, to re-enactments and apparel. A compilation of all the votes determines the Editor’s Choice Award and the Readers’ Choice Award in each category.

The three repeat awards earned by the Center since 2017 include “Best Western Museum” for the Center as a whole; “Best American Indian Collection” for the Center’s Plains Indian Museum; and “Best Western Art Gallery” for its Whitney Western Art Museum.

New this year are the readers’ choice awards for the Center in the category of “Best Western Collectibles Gallery,” and for the Center Store in the category of “Best Western History Book Store.”

i-Scout: Programming the Future at the Center of the West

The Buffalo Bill Center of the West’s popular i-Scout app is set to receive new updates during the winter season, changing the way visitors plan their visits, explore the Center, and enjoy museum content.

The i-Scout app launched in 2015 as a vehicle to browse the Center’s collections from one’s mobile device. A visitor not only could view artifacts from the Center’s many collections through the app, but they could also view any articles, videos, or additional

SPRING CALENDAR OF EVENTS

research information available about what they're seeing. "Throughout the past seven years, traffic to our website has more than doubled," says IT Technician and i-Scout developer, Seth Johnson. "In many ways, digital space has transcended physical space in terms of capacity and ability to reach wide audiences."

Features of the app now include viewing maps of each gallery that correspond to the artifacts on display, an event calendar of the day's tours and special programs and their locations, and badges earned for browsing in the collections and completing scavenger hunts. Visitors are invited to dive deep into the background of the Center's artifacts with blog, article, and video content. One can even get an in-depth preview of the Center's new Cody Firearms Museum, opening in July 2019!



iSCOUT

In 2018, Johnson enhanced i-Scout to include more layers of interactivity, including the integration of more stories, collection pieces, and videos from the Center's YouTube platform with the help of Nancy McClure in Electronic Communications.

Johnson says that during this process, he is always asking the question, "What is useful for guests and staff?" Johnson explains, "This is about building a connection between the physical and digital space that is lasting and meaningful to actual museum visitors, potential museum visitors, and 'virtual' visitors who may never come to Cody. With McClure's help, we've been able to share the amazing exhibits, ideas, and stories that so many other people at the Center have worked hard to create through the years. The large volume of content available now is just a small taste of what we have in store for the future."

Upcoming updates to the i-Scout app include 360-degree gallery panoramas, profile customization, and trip planning along with improvements to existing app functions.

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

Programs, Talks, and Events

- **Draper Museum Raptor Experience**
Relaxing with Raptors, 1–1:30 p.m. each day the Center is open to the public.
- **Havana Nights: A Mardi Gras Social**
March 2, 7–10 p.m.: Join us for a Cajun-inspired dinner and music by John Roberts y Pan Blanco.
 - \$50 per person for dinner and show; \$90 per couple. Reservation required by February 28, tickets@centerofthewest.org.
 - \$25 per person for show only if purchased in advance; \$30 at the door.

Lunchtime Expeditions

- Organized and hosted by the Draper Natural History Museum, and supported in part by Sage Creek Ranch and the Nancy-Carroll Draper Foundation. 12:15 PM, free.
- **March 7:** speaker to be confirmed.
 - **April 4:** Ivy Merriot, *Archeoastronomy of the Big Horn Medicine Wheel*.
 - **May 2:** speaker to be confirmed.

Cody Culture Club

- Sponsored by BHHS Brokerage West, Inc.; Burg Simpson, P.C.; Carlene Lebus and Harris Haston; Irma Hotel; and the UPS Store. 5:30–7:30 p.m. Heavy hors d'oeuvres and cash bar. \$20 per person.
- **March 14:** *Celebrities of Cody, Part 1*. At Buffalo Bill Center of the West.
 - **April 11:** *100th Anniversary of the Cody Stampede*. At Cody Club Room.

Earth Day Celebration

- **April 27:** The Center celebrates Earth Day on Saturday, April 27 with a FREE day. Watch our website for details on activities!

Workshops for Kids

Made possible in part through a generous grant from the R. Harold Burton Foundation.

Workshops for Kids continued

- Register at tickets.centerofthewest.org.
- **March 15, 22, 29:** Lovable Lines Art Class Series for kids in grades K–2, 2:30–3:30 p.m. \$50 per student; \$40 for Center of the West members.
 - **April 5, 12, 26:** Art, Art, Art Workshop for kids in grades 3–5, 2:30 – 3:30 p.m. \$50 per student; \$40 for Center of the West members.

Membership Events

- **Members Double-Discount Shopping Days**
 - **May 4–5**, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.: The weekend before Mother's Day, Center of the West members receive a special 20 percent discount in our Center Store, and online at store.centerofthewest.org.

- **Coffee & Curators:**

Members gather for coffee, refreshments, and a curator's talk inspired by the Center's collections. Space limited; reserve in advance at membership@centerofthewest.org or 307-578-4008.

- **April 6**, 10 – 11:30 a.m. features the Draper Natural History Museum
- **May 4**, 10 – 11:30 a.m. features the Cody Firearms Museum

- **Buffalo Gals Luncheon:**

Our Spring Buffalo Gals Luncheon takes place in mid-May. Watch our website for details!

Cody Firearms Records Office special hours

Regular office hours are Monday–Thursday 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m., Friday 8 a.m.–3 p.m.

- **March 15–17:** Attending Maryland Arms Collectors Baltimore Show (Timonium, Maryland)
- **April 6–7:** Office open for Wanenmacher's Tulsa Arms Show (Tulsa, Oklahoma)
- **April 27–28:** Office open for Texas Gun Collectors Show (Waco, Texas)
- **May 11:** Office open for Ohio Gun Collectors Show (Wilmington, Ohio)
- **May 17–19:** Attending Colorado Gun Collectors Show (Denver, Colorado)

Stay abreast of all the Center's activities at centerofthewest.org/calendar.



Making a garden, 1909.
Individuals unidentified. North
Platte, Nebraska. MS 006 William
F. Cody Collection. P.6.647.04a

1000 words

For these folks, spring undoubtedly meant consulting the Old Farmer's Almanac and poring over seed catalogues. Today, however, gardeners—both experienced and wannabes—have a multitude of resources, especially on the Internet. Launching a search returns sites like the National Gardening Association, Masters of Horticulture, Mother Nature Network, Garden Learning Library, and, of course, YouTube. One wonders what these 1909 gardeners would have thought of twenty-first-century gardening resources. Is that a “Pshaw!” we hear? ■



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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, maps, and other documents for research and publication, thanks in part to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). To learn more, contact the library at 307-578-4063, or visit library.centerofthewest.org.

**BUFFALO BILL
CENTER
OF THE WEST**

720 Sheridan Avenue
Cody, Wyoming 82414
centerofthewest.org

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SAVE THE DATE *Patrons Ball* **SEPT. 21, 2019**
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