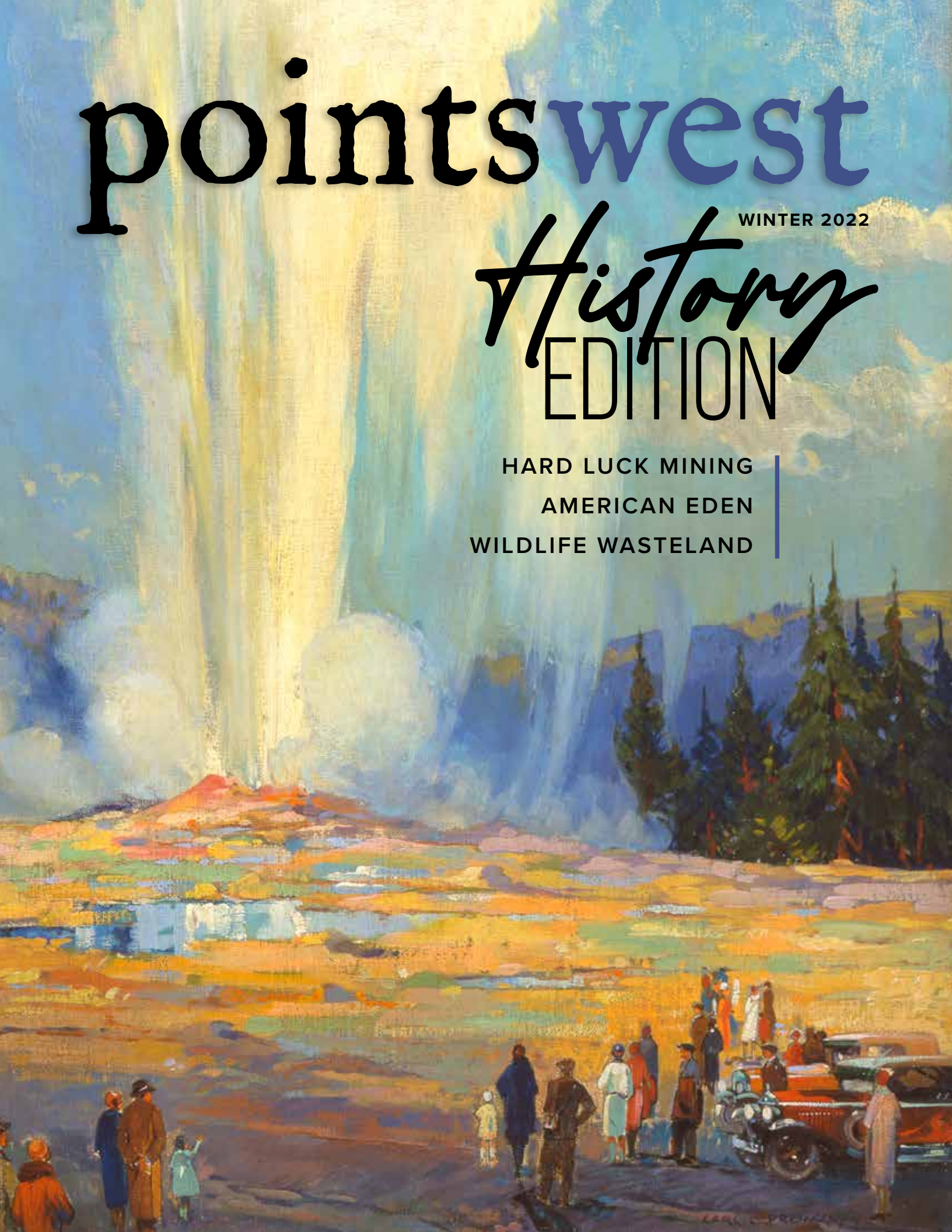

pointswest
WINTER 2022
History EDITION
HARD LUCK MINING
AMERICAN EDEN
WILDLIFE WASTELAND

THE CURATOR CHRONICLES

JEREMY M. JOHNSTON
Guest Editor

When the *Papers of William F. Cody* launched in 2007, the project's primary goal was to publish the collected writings and correspondence of Buffalo Bill. The scattered corpus of archival material necessitated an international team of researchers. In addition to finding unknown document collections, several emerging scholars dedicated themselves to studying Bill Cody and Buffalo Bill's Wild West. Their interpretations offered new perspectives of Cody as a scout, entrepreneur, international showman, and cultural ambassador.

This special History Edition of *Points West* highlights only a few of these findings. The *Papers* collaboration with Curator Brian Beauvais of the Park County Archives benefited from his expertise in local mining history.

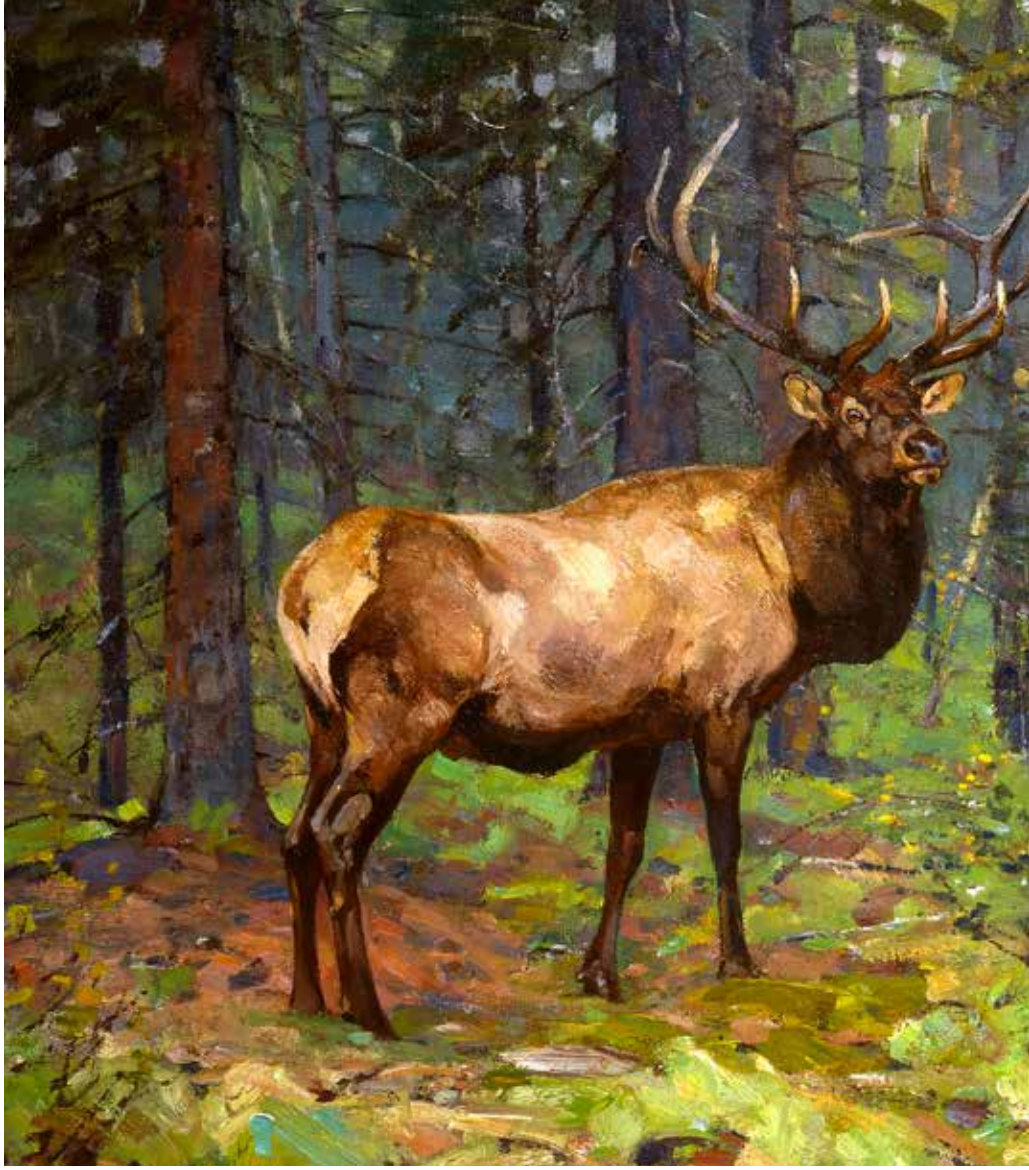
And the further search for archival materials led to developer George Beck's granddaughter, Betty Jane Gerber, who possessed his unpublished memoir—now part of the McCracken Research Library's collections.

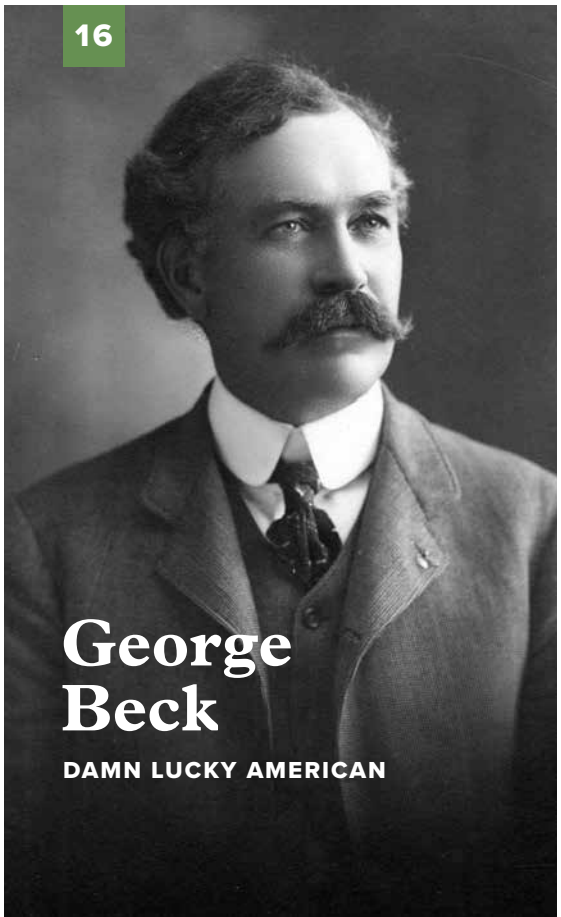
Working alongside various scholars studying Buffalo Bill's international status influenced my research into how South African big game hunter Frederick Courtney Selous's characterization of the Bighorn Basin as a poor hunting ground strengthened regional wildlife conservation efforts.

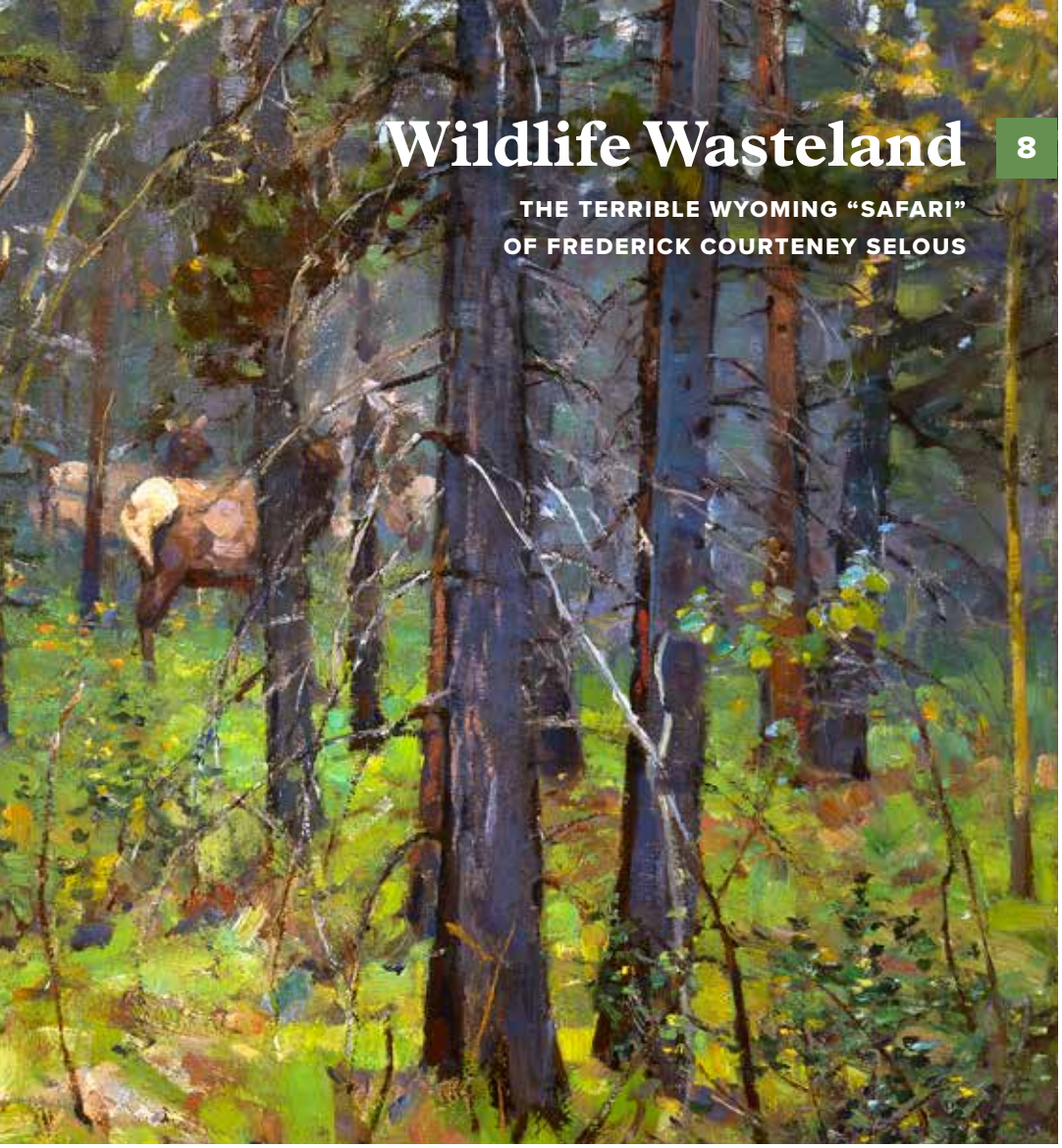
Buffalo Bill's entrepreneurial legacy runs deep in northwest Wyoming, and significantly shaped the region's modern economy and lifestyle. Residents and visitors continue to marvel at these tremendous efforts that irrigated arid lands, developed new towns, and promoted wildlife conservation and an appreciation for rugged wilderness regions. This heritage established a strong sense of place that resonates today.

Our shared past shaped who we are today, and a better understanding of history allows us to better plan for the future. I encourage readers to learn more from the *Papers* digital archive *(CodyArchive.org)* and website *(CodyStudies.org)*, as well as our two publication series with the University of Nebraska and University of Oklahoma Press.

Finally, be sure to visit the Buffalo Bill Center of the West's special exhibition, *Yellowstone: For the Benefit and Enjoyment of the People*, in celebration of the 150th anniversary of the creation of Yellowstone National Park, and its role in shaping our past, present, and future.







Wildlife Wasteland

THE TERRIBLE WYOMING "SAFARI" OF FREDERICK COURTENEY SELOUS

Needle Creek

SEEKING HIDDEN TREASURES

departments

ABOUT THE COVER | *Old Faithful*, a 1929 oil painting by Carl Preussl, depicts an earlier time when Yellowstone National Park visitors could enjoy the famous geyser from a closer perspective. Established in 1872 as the world's first national park, Yellowstone celebrates is 150th anniversary this year. The special exhibition *Yellowstone: For the Benefit and Enjoyment of the People*, opens March 19, 2022 and is on view at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West through January 29, 2023.

Points West is dedicated to connecting people to the stories of the American West as the membership magazine of the private, nonprofit Buffalo Bill Center of the West.

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BUFFALO BILL CENTER OF THE WEST

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WHAT DID  BUFFALO BILL DO?

BY WILLIAM F. "BUFFALO BILL" CODY

Points West usually presents a speculative advice column, "What Would Buffalo Bill Do?" For this History Edition, we take a look at what he actually did. This time, in the form of excerpts from an article Cody originally published in *Success* magazine in 1900. His advice to readers was simply to settle in the Bighorn Basin, an "American Eden"—where Cody happened to be developing vast tracts of land for sale. The full article is available at *CodyArchive.org*.

AN AMERICAN EDEN

A painting by Henry Howard Bagg of William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody's TE Ranch along the South Fork of the Shoshone River, near Cody, Wyoming.

To me, the most poetic spot on earth is that Great Divide which takes in the Big Horn Basin of Wyoming, a gigantic pocket of millions of acres in the midst of the Rocky Mountains. The basin was once, beyond doubt, the bed of a mighty inland sea. From its bottom one looks up to the Big Horn and Pryor Mountains to the east, the Snowy Range to the north, the Rocky Mountains to the west, and the Shoshone Mountains to the south…

Within a drive of a few miles one can pass through a multiplicity of climates, from warmth in the lowest part of the basin to a frigid atmosphere on the snow-covered summits.

This favored spot, until recently but little known in its perfection of climate, the healing power of its water, and the unsurpassed magnificence of its landscape, was the retreat of the red race alone, for many tribes sought the place. To few white men, indeed, was the basin really known; but to the explorer, perhaps, the men in buckskin, the hunter and the trapper, or the officers and soldiers of the United States army, who had braved the dangers of the trails that led there. Now the Big Horn Basin is awakening in its might. It is beginning to feel its power. It is a world of marvels in itself, and the pulse-beats of civilization are causing its mighty veins to throb with a new life, that is letting the world know all that is within itself. It is the heritage of the people, too, for no one can claim more than the usual limited homestead from the government…

To the westward of Big Horn Basin lies Yellowstone Park, also a natural wonderland. In fact, the whole region seems to have been created in some wonderous fancy of the Great Spirit.

From the Big Horn Cañon to its junction with the Big Horn River, the Shoshone runs through the valley, to which it has given its name, and, thus aided by nature, man has seized upon its advantages to irrigate, through the introduction of artificial waterways, the rich lands stretching away from its banks on either side to the beautiful foothills of the encircling ranges…

These lands are not to be held by trusts, or sold to millionaire purchasers, but to the "Man With The Hoe," who can buy and till his forty, eighty, or one hundred and sixty acres, as the case may be, for he is allowed to hold no more.

To this garden spot of creation I went years ago, in the discharge of my duties as a United States army scout. I took in the superb grandeur, the natural marvels, the wonders and the possibilities of the Big Horn Country…

Today, in Big Horn Basin, there has already sprung up the nucleus of a future great city, called Cody.

Already farms are dotting the hills, valleys, and plains, and Cody, scarcely two years old, has a church, a public school, a court house and a newspaper,— "The Enterprise,"—not to speak of stores, hotels, and many pleasant homes. Nearby is the De Maris Spring, the largest sulphur spring in the world, to which invalids are already wending their way to be cured of all the ills to which all human flesh is heir…

Into this country two lines of railroad, the iron arteries of our land, are now making their way, and hence came the prediction before made, that the human tide will soon flow toward the Great Divide, coming from the westward across the Pacific and the eastward across the Atlantic, to behold the mighty heart of our country, which beats beneath the shadows of the Rocky Mountains.

INDIGENOUS ART TOOLS

Indigenous artists and crafters cherish the tools of their trade. Historically, women created almost all items belonging to a family. Artistic abilities were considered gifts, often acquired through dreams or visions. Porcupine quilling and beading societies have ensured that artistic traditions and skills are passed on to future generations. Membership in a society, or guild, was reserved for the most talented and honorable women.

1 **PARFLECHE** A container of animal rawhide and natural pigments stores the contents of a beadwork sewing kit.

2 **CALICO** A cotton cloth woven, bleached, dyed, and printed for everyday clothing and household items.

3 **REMNANTS** Beaders keep remnants of beaded projects for repair or reuse.

4 **THIMBLE** Small metal cup worn on the fingertip to protect artists from needle pricks.

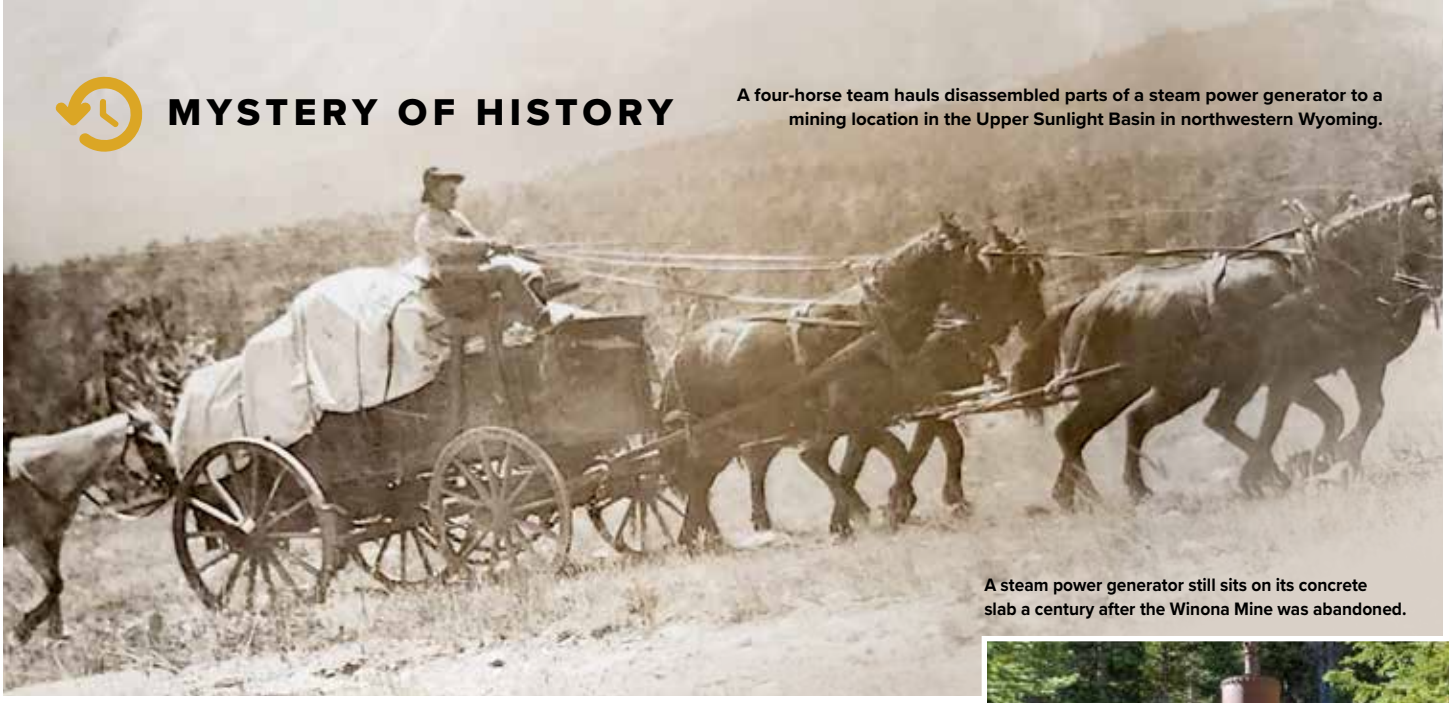
5 **SINEW** Harvested from deer and elk tendons, animal sinew is used as thread for beading, porcupine quillwork, and sewing.

6 **BEAD HANKS** Traded to the Americas from Europeans, hanks (or strands) of historic glass seed beads are made of hundreds of individual beads, sometimes smaller than a millimeter, or the size of a grain of sand. Artists use special beading needles to thread each bead.

7 **AWLS & KNIVES** Utilitarian tools are hung on the woman's belt. Beaded awl cases hold bone awls used for punching holes in the hide. Knife sheaths hold knives that cut hides and aid in the preparation of food and raw materials.

8 **PAINTING BONE BRUSHES** Beaders use brushes—one brush per color—cut from porous animal bones or joints, preferably buffalo. The bones soak up pigments allowing for smooth application.

9 **HIDE SCRAPER** Women cherish their bone hide scrapers, used for hide tanning. The notches on the scraper represent the owner's artistic accomplishments and life events.



A four-horse team hauls disassembled parts of a steam power generator to a mining location in the Upper Sunlight Basin in northwestern Wyoming.

Worth its weight in gold

A steam power generator still sits on its concrete slab a century after the Winona Mine was abandoned.

BY JOHN HOUSEL

Between 48 – 50 million years ago, a supervolcano erupted multiple times in the Upper Sunlight Basin, about 50 miles northwest of Cody, Wyoming. Much of the Sunlight Supervolcano has since eroded away, and today, near Sunlight Peak and Stinkingwater Peak, you'll find steep scree slopes which bear veins and stringers of copper, iron, gold, and silver.

John Housel enjoys late spring skiing near the site of the abandoned Winona Mine.

Along the east flank of the long-dormant volcanic vent, in a copse of pine and fir trees—like the colossal wreck in Shelley's "Ozymandias"—stands a rusted, derelict steam boiler. On the nearby forest floor are strewn rusted pipes, the boiler smokestack, a slate electrical switchboard, and other related detritus. The boiler is date-stamped 1910, a year when transportation over high mountain passes into Sunlight Basin was barely passable by team and wagon.

Many wandering alpinists have been baffled by the purpose of the steam boiler and the mystery of how it was transported to its site on the upper reaches of Sulphur Creek, some 2,000 vertical feet above the Sunlight Basin Valley.

These questions would remain unanswered, but for an obscure mining report compiled by Henry C. Beeler. He was a former geologist of the Territory of Wyoming, and in the early 1900s, a mining engineer for the Winona Mining Company. The Beeler Report provides some answers to the mystery of the old, rusted steam boiler:

• The Winona Mining Company, capitalized at $5 million, began mining copper and gold around the site in 1906.

• Miners dug a main tunnel more than 600 feet over the course of four years. They used a gasoline-powered, 12-horsepower motor to drive a 6-horsepower compressor for hard rock drills and a 3-horsepower fan for ventilation.

• From 1906 – 1910, horse-drawn freight wagons hauled all equipment for the Winona Mine from the Cody train depot. After a 4-day trip, crews unloaded gear at Sulphur Creek (including gasoline cans) and then packed supplies on horses and mules to complete the last three miles of the 60-mile trip.

• In 1910, the Winona Mining Company obtained additional shareholder funding to complete a wagon road to the main Winona Mine, near Sulphur Creek, and purchase a steam boiler to generate electric power.

• Workers completed the road to the mine by 1911. The disassembled parts of the steam boiler were shipped from Denver to Cody by rail, then loaded on freight wagons for the 5-day trip to the Winona Mine. Here they were reassembled and remain today—a decaying monument to the sweat, and toil of those miners of old, whose dreams and perseverance knew no bounds.

The Winona Mining Company eventually drilled 3,500 feet of tunnels near the vent from the dormant Sunlight Supervolcano with the steam generator. During World War I, President Woodrow Wilson fixed copper prices, making it unprofitable to mine at Winona. As a result, the company suspended mining operations by 1922.

Today, 100 years after the abandonment of the Winona Mine, a different glister reflects from the late spring snow overlaying the volcanic vent, beckoning the occasional intrepid wilderness skier. And if you ask someone like me, who has had the good fortune of carving a few lines in this hidden paradise on a crystalline sunny day, the experience is worth its weight in gold.

John Housel is a lifelong Cody, Wyoming, resident whose interests include outdoor adventures and local history. He is the son of Jerry Housel, who endowed the Buffalo Bill Center of the West's McCracken Research Library Chair.

CHICKEN SOUP

BOWL OF KIT CARSON'S WIFE ADAPTED FROM "THE FORT RESTAURANT COOKBOOK"

BY HOLLY ARNOLD KINNEY

Photo by Lois Ellen Frank

In the spring of 1961, two years before opening The Fort restaurant near Denver, my family and I took a road trip to Mexico. When we reached Durango, some 600 miles south of the border, we tried a local soup. It was a spicy broth of chicken made with chipotle, a smoked chili pepper that gave the soup a distinctive bite and delicious smokiness.

Caldo Tlalpeño is the soup's proper name, but no one at our restaurant could pronounce that, or knew what it meant. Despite its innate deliciousness, the soup did not sell. One day Leona Wood, the septuagenarian who ran our gift shop-trade room on weekends, told us that she remembered "my grandmother serving us this dish!" She was the last granddaughter of frontiersman Kit Carson, and with a little genealogical figuring, we dubbed the soup "Bowl of the Wife of Kit Carson."

INGREDIENTS

- 2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts (about 2 pounds)
- 4 to 6 cups chicken broth
- 1/4 tsp dried Mexican leaf oregano, crumbled
- 1 cup cooked rice
- 1 cup cooked, dried garbanzo beans, or canned garbanzos, rinsed and well drained
- 1 minced chipotle chili (canned), packed in adobo
- 4 to 6 oz diced Monterey Jack or Havarti cheese
- 1 to 2 ripe avocados, peeled, pitted, and sliced
- 4 to 6 sprigs fresh cilantro (optional)
- 1 fresh lime, cut into 4 to 6 wedges

METHOD

Place the chicken breasts and broth in a large saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, skimming off and discarding any foam that rises to the top. Turn off the heat, cover, and allow the chicken to poach gently for 12 minutes. Remove the chicken from the pot and cut into strips, about 1.5 inches long. Return the chicken strips to the broth and add the oregano, rice, garbanzos, and chipotle.

Divide the cheese among 4 to 6 deep soup bowls. Return the soup to a boil, then ladle it into the bowls. Garnish each portion with avocado slices, cilantro (optional), and lime wedge. Serve with hot tortillas.

Wildlife WASTELAND

THE TERRIBLE WYOMING "SAFARI" OF FREDERICK COURTENEY SELOUS

BY JEREMY M. JOHNSTON

The legendary British big-game hunter Frederick Courteney Selous longed to hunt in the American West. The juvenile adventure stories of Mayne Reid, the Scottish author Robert Michael Ballantyne, and the journals of the American artist George Catlin he read as a boy in the 1850s long fueled this desire. Selous eventually travel to Cody, Wyoming, on his dream western "safari," only to be disappointed by the lack of wildlife. His criticism of poor hunting in the region prompted William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody and others to advocate for wildlife conservation and promote the region as a sport hunters' paradise.

Long before his trip, Selous followed in the footsteps of his hero, the famed missionary David Livingstone, traveling to South Africa, where he became a professional hunter, respected naturalist, and safari guide. He was renowned as an explorer and military hero and was the model for H. Rider Haggard's Allan Quartermain character in *King Solomon's Mines* and other subsequent novels.

Despite an adventuresome life in Africa, Selous's desire to hunt in the American West remained strong. "The America I desired to visit was the America of my boyish dreams, the land of the vast rolling plains," wrote Selous, "I wished to see wild America if there was any left." With hopes of securing trophy mounts of mule deer, elk, and bighorn sheep, Selous traveled to Cody for two separate hunts in 1897 and 1898. Although the scenic wonders of the Bighorn Basin and the

Frederick Courteney Selous was a professional hunter, respected naturalist, and safari guide. He was renowned as an explorer and military hero and was the model for H. Rider Haggard's Allan Quartermain character in *King Solomon's Mines* and other subsequent novels.

Pronghorn (antelope) were a popular quarry for late 1800s Wyoming big game hunters like Frederick Courteney Selous. (*In the Foothills [Antelope]*, by Carl Rungius.)

Absaroka Mountains impressed Selous, both hunting trips proved disappointing, shattering his childhood expectations of adventure in the American wilderness.

In preparation for his first Wyoming trip, Selous consulted another renowned hunter and western rancher, Theodore Roosevelt, requesting his guidance for a proposed hunting expedition to the South Fork of the Stinking Water River, now called the Shoshone River. Roosevelt, then serving as Assistant Secretary of War, sent large maps of Wyoming and Montana that included hand-drawn routes of his past hunting trips. Regarding Selous's desire to shoot a bighorn sheep, Roosevelt informed him, "The best place I know for sheep is just east of the Yellowstone Park." However, Roosevelt cautioned that he had not hunted in that specific region.

Accompanied by his Scottish host, Wyoming rancher William Moncreiffe, Selous set off with his wife, two guides, and a wagon driver. Embarking from Malcolm and William Moncreiffe's ranch (now the Brinton Museum in Big Horn, Wyoming), Selous's party crossed the Bighorn Mountains, through the arid Bighorn Basin, and on to the South Fork of the Stinking Water River.

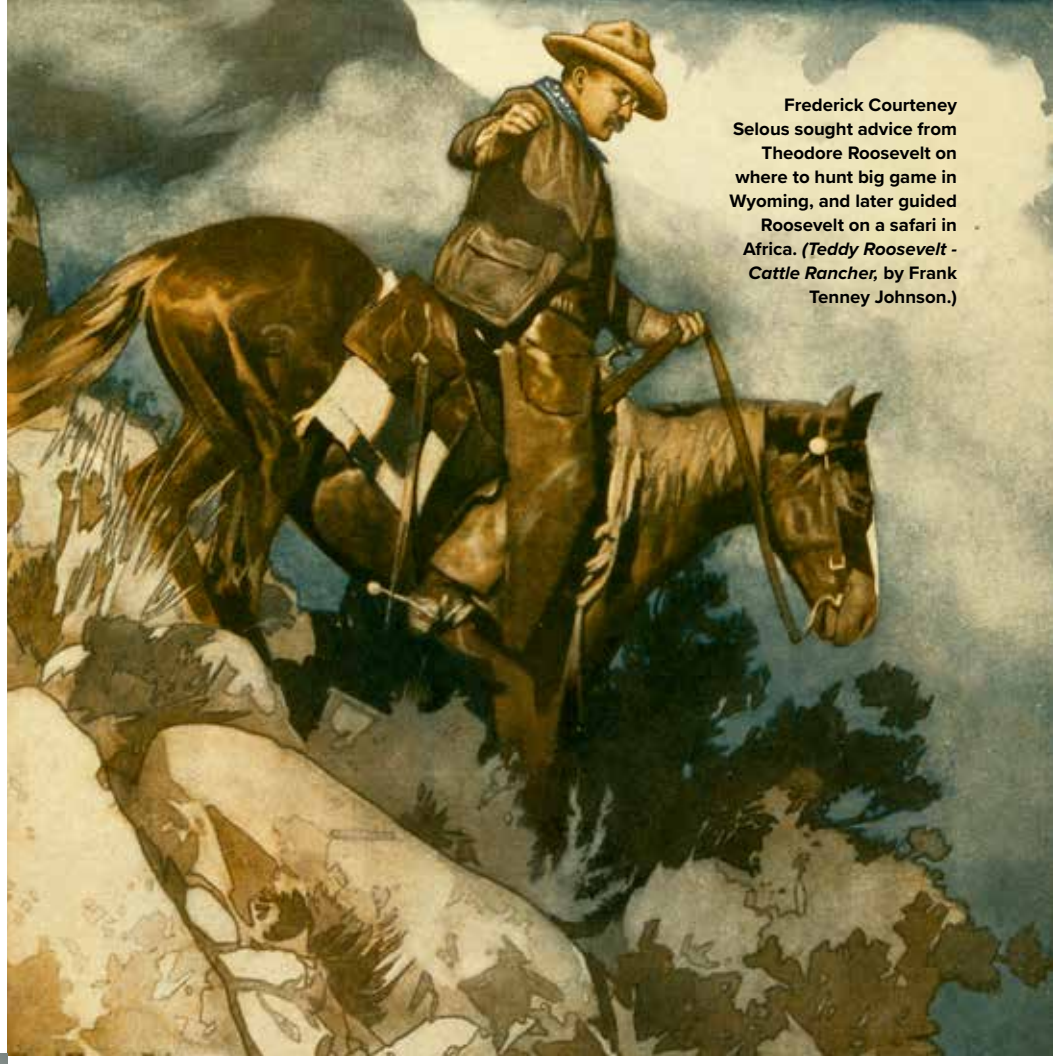
After many days of travel, they camped near "the embryo township of Marquette" (since flooded by the Buffalo Bill Dam) to catch fish before proceeding to the homestead of John "Reckless" Davies and his wife, Elizabeth. Their ranch was the last settlement on the South Fork and served as the base for their hunting treks. Selous noted, "Davies [pronounced as Davis] was a Welshman, though his wife was an English woman." Joe Magill and brothers Monte and Joe Jones purchased the Davies's place in 1913 and rechristened the Majo Ranch, using the first two letters of their last names for its current name.

"For any one fond of trout-fishing, fresh bracing air, and glorious mountain scenery, I know of no pleasanter place than Davies' Ranch," Selous informed his readers. Yet, he also reported the hunting opportunities in the region to be dismal. "I hunted hard for twenty days, and during that time probably walked on an average quite twenty miles a day in very rough country, before I carried my first wapiti head back to camp," he later recalled. He managed to kill a lynx, a few deer, and some elk, but "I had got nothing really large, nor had I seen a Bighorn ram at all." Selous blamed the lack of big game on over-hunting by local settlers and market hunters who ignored the state's game regulations.

Shortly after leaving Davies's ranch, Selous encountered a professional hunter from Texas known as "Timberline" Johnson. He had recently returned from the North Fork of the Stinking Water, where he shot a moose and many elk, both bulls and cows,

and planned to trade the hides to the Crow Indians. When Selous inquired about Wyoming's game laws, Johnson informed him, "He'd heard tell… that there were game laws, but they'd never troubled him much." One of Selous's hunting guides "expressed the opinion that all game laws in the United States were unconstitutional, as the game belonged to the people."

We will never determine the full extent to which market hunting contributed to the decline of wildlife, but archival resources provide glimpses into the vast slaughter. Ledgers kept by Yellowstone River fur buyer Walter Cooper, housed in the library of Montana State University, show a shocking and unsettling number of hides collected between January 1881 and March 1882. From posts and communities along the Yellowstone River where the Clarks Fork and Shoshone flowing to the Bighorn River joined, Cooper collected more than 280 antelope skins, 700 bison hides, 3,300 deer hides, 5,400 elk hides, and thousands of other furs, including the skin of a domesticated dog. Many of these hides likely originated from the South Fork region.



Frederick Courteney Selous sought advice from Theodore Roosevelt on where to hunt big game in Wyoming, and later guided Roosevelt on a safari in Africa. *(Teddy Roosevelt - Cattle Rancher,* by Frank Tenney Johnson.)

Wyoming rancher Malcolm Moncreiffe, seen here at his Big Horn, Wyoming, ranch with wife Amy, hosted Frederick Courteney Selous before a hunting trip through the Bighorn Basin in 1897. (Brinton Museum photo.)

Many hide-hunters and ranchers also poisoned carcasses, killing an untold number of predators and scavengers. When Selous returned to Cody in 1898 to hunt the North Fork of the Shoshone River, he noted the lack of predators and scavengers. It surprised Selous that his Wyoming hosts left game meat out, noting that any unattended carcass in Africa quickly attracted scavengers that left only the bones behind. "But in the solitudes of the Rocky Mountains… there were no vultures, wolves, or coyotes, but few bears or wolverines, and not even many foxes, lynxes, or martins," noted Selous.

Selous, an internationally recognized author of several hunting books, expressed his opinion of hunting in the Cody region in *Sport and Travel East and West*, published in 1900. "I can imagine no more perfect country in which to hunt than the Rocky Mountains must once have been when game was still plentiful which according to tradition were once so numerous," wrote Selous, "… the constant sight of which must have added such an indescribable charm to their wild and beautiful surroundings, have now disappeared for ever." We cannot verify if Buffalo Bill read Selous's book; however, he likely heard from many sport hunters inquiring about Selous's damning account of the region.

Selous did inform his readers that "the world-renowned Colonel William Cody has started a small township" near DeMaris Hot Springs, with mineral waters which proved "efficacious in cases of chronic rheumatism and syphilis." Selous predicted that "invalids will soon be resorting to them from all parts of the United States, if not from Europe." The two men narrowly missed meeting one another at the former's mining camp along Needle Creek, where Cody planned to also hunt. "Colonel Cody, who was then at Cody City, where he has large interests, but whom Davies expected shortly at his ranch," wrote Selous, "was bent on an outing in one of his old hunting-grounds, from which, however, most of the glory has now departed." Both Buffalo Bill and George W.T. Beck, cofounder of the town of Cody, viewed hunting as an essential economic resource for their developing community, more so

than a spring that cured syphilis. Selous's critique regarding the lack of wildlife now threatened to discourage sport hunters from visiting northwest Wyoming.

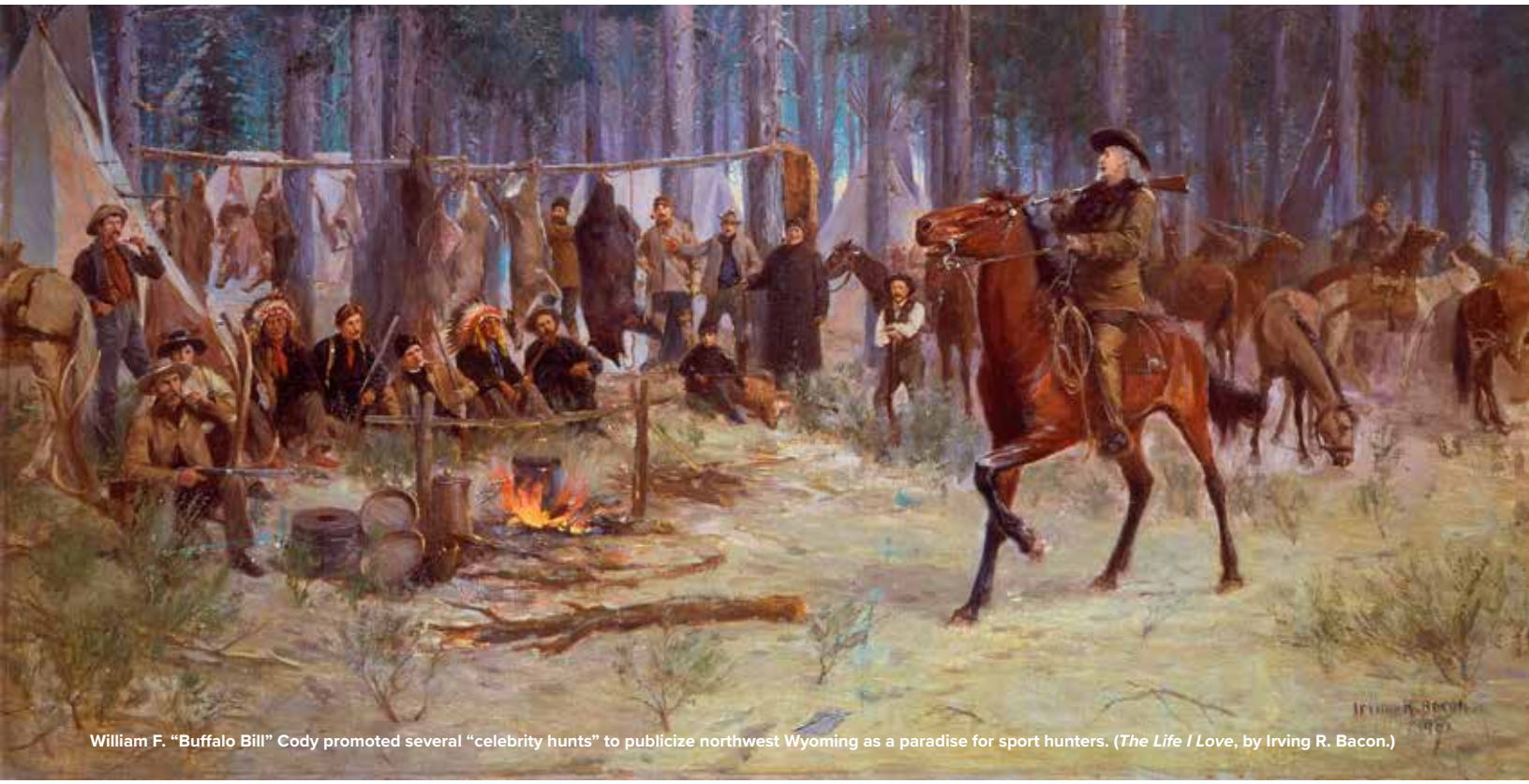
Both Beck and Cody took it upon themselves to promote the region as a good hunting ground. The two men advocated for more vigorous enforcement of game regulations in Wyoming, expressing their support of the Wyoming Game Protective Association organized by Greybull River ranchers Otto Franc, William D. Pickett, and A.A. Anderson. Like Roosevelt and Selous, these ranchers enjoyed the strenuous life afforded through ranching and hunting and sought to advance local wildlife conservation.

Buffalo Bill publicized these efforts in the Cody region and highlighted the area's hunting potential to a broader audience. In an article titled "Preserving the Game," published by weekly New York magazine *The Independent* on June 6, 1901, Buffalo Bill stressed the need to protect big game species throughout the American West. He praised stricter regulations and increased numbers of game wardens to ensure that "men caught violating the laws have been severely punished." Buffalo Bill followed with a call to action, "It's too late, now, to save the buffalo, but all others we can preserve.

The article countered Selous's complaint regarding decimated wildlife populations. Buffalo Bill proclaimed, "The influence which reduced the numbers and threatened the extinction of the game were inseparable from the advance of civilization, and this advance of civilization must continue… Nevertheless there is plenty of room and plenty of feed for the game among the mountains, and if matters continue as they are at present we may expect to enjoy good hunting for many a long year to come." To stress the bountiful big-game populations, Buffalo Bill noted the organization of hunting contests hosted by him and local hunters. Buffalo Bill himself participated in and promoted several "celebrity hunts," which included artist Frederic Remington and the Prince of Monaco. The international attention drawn by these hunting trips publicized northwest Wyoming as a paradise for sport hunters.

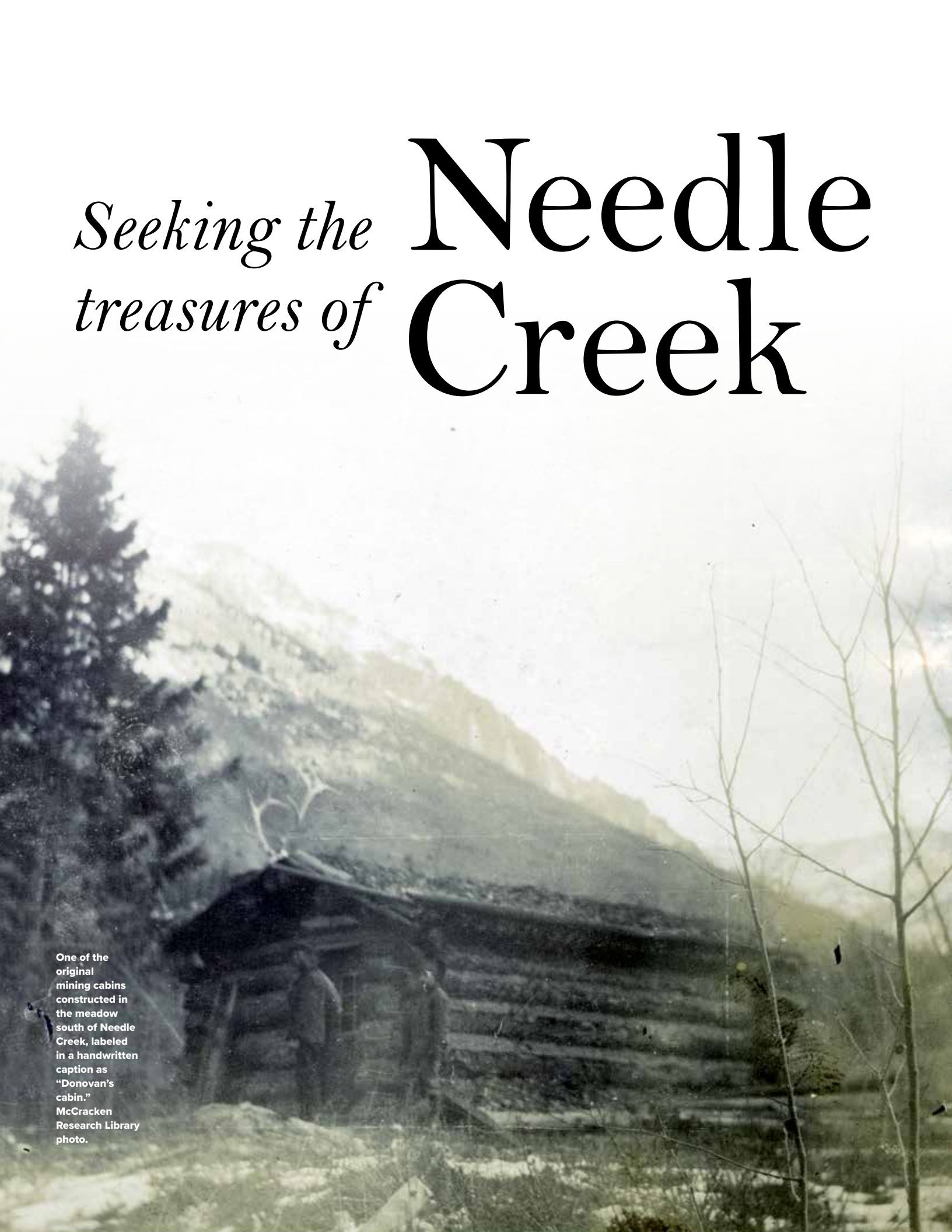
Frederick Courteney Selous returned to his prime hunting grounds in Africa. In 1909, he guided Theodore Roosevelt's African safari. At the age of 65, he was killed in combat in 1917 while fighting German troops in South Africa. Selous's characterization of northwest Wyoming as a poor hunting ground is challenging to imagine today. But his lousy Wyoming safari reveals a significant turning point in the history of wildlife conservation. Fortunately, fears of a wildlife wasteland pushed many toward advocating for increased wildlife protection. Buffalo Bill, George Beck, Theodore Roosevelt, and many other sport hunters supported the strict enforcement of Wyoming's game laws. That vision continues today, helping to maintain abundant wildlife populations in the Cody area and beyond. If Selous visited the region today, he would undoubtedly revoke his negative review.

Jeremy M. Johnston is the Hal and Naoma Tate Endowed Chair of Western History, the Ernest J. Goppert Curator of the Buffalo Bill Museum, and Managing Editor of the Papers of William F. Cody.



William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody promoted several "celebrity hunts" to publicize northwest Wyoming as a paradise for sport hunters. (*The Life I Love*, by Irving R. Bacon.)

Seeking the treasures of Needle Creek



One of the original mining cabins constructed in the meadow south of Needle Creek, labeled in a handwritten caption as "Donovan's cabin." McCracken Research Library photo.

BY BRIAN BEAUVAIS

At the base of a deep canyon carved by the South Fork of the Shoshone River sits a small collection of dilapidated cabins with a history dating back to mining operations funded by William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody, and even to earlier prospectors. Nearly 10 miles into the Washakie Wilderness and 60 miles southwest of Cody, Wyoming, the cabins can only be visited on foot or by horseback. Once the headquarters of an isolated mining camp along Needle Creek, a small tributary of the South Fork, the surrounding mineral deposits fed the financial hopes of wealthy capitalists and dingy prospectors alike. But despite wild talk of a guaranteed boom followed by wilder profits, the mines ultimately came to nothing, like so many others.

Prospectors first dug in the remote Absaroka Mountains during a period of intense exploration following the Montana Gold Rush of the 1860s. Many determined prospectors penetrated the few remaining remote sections of the Rocky Mountains in search of the last elusive pockets of mineral wealth. Other nearby mining districts that developed in northwest Wyoming during this same period included the Sunlight Mining District, roughly 40 miles north of the Needle Creek mines, and the Kirwin Mining District, located some 20 miles southeast of Needle Creek.

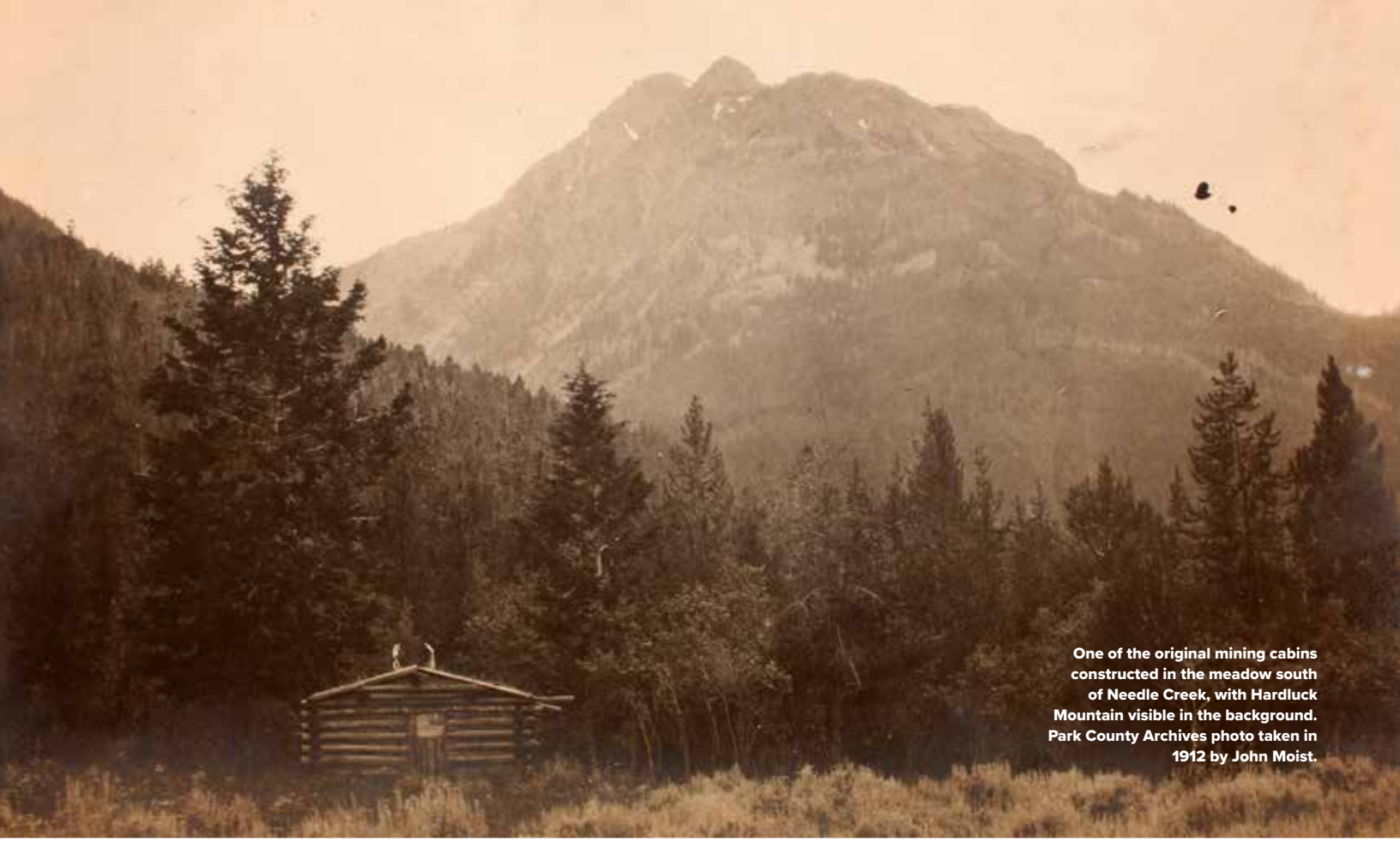
Minerals were reportedly first located along the South Fork of the Stinking Water River (since renamed the Shoshone River) in the late 1870s, but were initially passed over due to their remote location and low-grade ore. Positioned in a steep canyon near the mouth of Needle Creek, the site was extremely difficult to access and too remote to be economical.

One early prospector, R.B. Dunham, spent a month around the site in 1888, according to the *Livingston Enterprise*, of Livingston, Montana. Dunham was a busted Colorado miner who arrived in search of novel prospects. With the financial backing of John Conrad, a prosperous merchant and banker from Red Lodge, Montana, Dunham began the rudimentary task of painstakingly pulling crude copper- and silver-bearing ore out of the mountains above Needle Creek.

Indeed Dunham's claims shown even brighter when the Burlington Railroad began making noise about building a line up the South Fork to access Yellowstone National Park and beyond. In 1891, a party of railroad surveyors visited the Bighorn Basin and located a suitable course for a rail line up the South Fork of the Stinking Water River, passing directly through the prospects on Needle Creek. With the possibility of easy railroad transportation, what had initially seemed to many a second-rate deposit quickly transformed into a potentially profitable endeavor.

Dunham's initial find had come to nothing, but only two years later, the *Livingstone Enterprise* reported an "extraordinary strike" on the South Fork, as if Dunham hadn't already made the location. New sources claimed to have found

John Davies (right) with an unidentified man at the entrance of a mining tunnel at Needle Creek. Park County Archives photo taken in 1912 by John Moist.



One of the original mining cabins constructed in the meadow south of Needle Creek, with Hardluck Mountain visible in the background. Park County Archives photo taken in 1912 by John Moist.

"a ledge of galena [lead] ore sixty feet wide" and talked of "many men… flocking in to locate claims on the ledge." This latest strike was hot talk among mining men in the area, and soon the Red Lodge-Meeteetse stage was making extra runs into the Bighorn Basin, carrying prospectors lusting for quick claims.

Indeed, a veritable rush was on. "Ho! For Stinking Water. Let everyone get a shovel and pick and hie to the camp of promise" trumpeted the *Billings Weekly Gazette* in 1891. Noting the numerous teams of mules and miners daily setting off for the novel deposit, the newspaper observed: "The Stinking Water mining boom is upon us." The influx of prospectors to the area quickly brought about improvements. A great deal of work was done to blast out a better trail to the nearly inaccessible district. But despite trail enhancements, the trip always remained a dicey endeavor to even experienced backcountry travelers.

Activity around Needle Creek waxed and waned as miners awaited the arrival of a rail line. In September 1893, geologist Thomas A. Jaggar passed through the Needle Creek mining district while traveling with a geological expedition exploring the mountains east of Yellowstone National Park. Although Jaggar did not extensively document the particulars of the mining settlement, it is clear from his notes that miners were inhabiting the site and presumably working the mines. The previous summer, geologist Arnold Hague had noted finding recently deserted mining tunnels at the same site, suggesting mining activity had lately resumed.

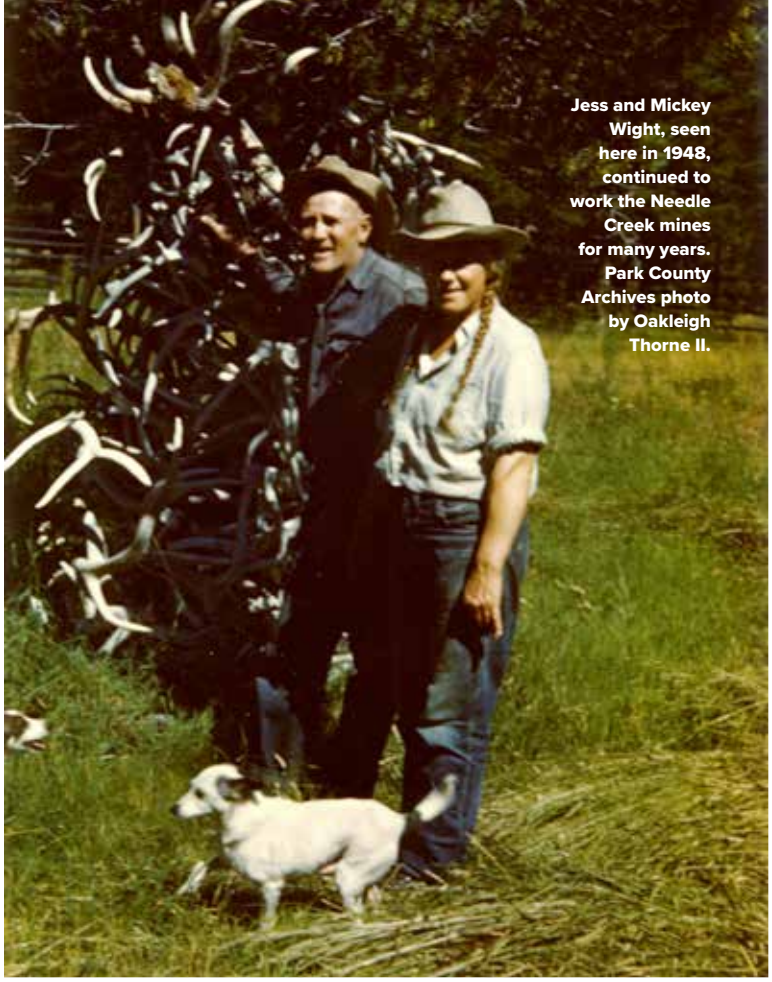
The reason for this renewed outbreak of mineral activity was undoubtedly the recent investment by a group of influential men looking toward numerous economic development schemes in the largely untapped Bighorn Basin. Buffalo Bill Cody, along with George Beck, Bronson Rumsey, Henry Gerrans, George Bleistein, and other business partners, mostly wealthy Easterners, were implementing a plan to irrigate a sizable portion of land around the Shoshone River, and survey a nearby townsite. After a few years of funding exploratory prospecting parties, Buffalo Bill and his tag-along group of investors formed the Shoshone Mining Company in 1896 and began working the previously explored deposits in earnest.

Although the Shoshone Mining Company eventually carried out enough work on the mines to secure their patent, they failed to recover sufficient high-grade ore to make the enterprise profitable. The remoteness and inaccessibility of the mines—more than 6 miles from the nearest road or homestead—did not help the situation. Nor did the nonappearance of the much-anticipated railroad line.

Remote as it was, Buffalo Bill's mining camp was not entirely hidden from the world. In the midst of multiple confluences, the mining camp at Needle Creek sat in a sheltered flat along the river. Newcomers found game plentiful, as the area served as a protective bottleneck for the seasonal elk migrations to and from the Thorofare region. Big game hunters and other backcountry travelers regularly encountered the settlement while on their trips to and from civilization.

In October of 1897 the famous English hunter Frederick Courteney Selous journeyed through the Needle Creek area while hunting on the upper South Fork. He noted the empty cabins when his party first began pitching camp in the adjacent meadow, but in a short time, Shoshone Mining Company supervisor John Davies turned up "to get one of the cabins ready for Colonel Cody, who was then at Cody City, where he has large interests, but whom Davies expected shortly at his ranch, bent on an outing in one of his old hunting-grounds."

Clearly the mining camp at Needle Creek served another purpose apart from mineral extraction. Perhaps this explains the outpost's seemingly inexplicable continued existence, despite never turning up any meaningful pay dirt. For some 20 years the Shoshone Mining Company intermittently continued its operations. In a later reference to the mining scheme, investor and local businessman George Beck recalled that "our mining camp was largely a second hunting center, and we probably got enough fun out of it to balance the ledger." By 1916 the work of the



Jess and Mickey Wight, seen here in 1948, continued to work the Needle Creek mines for many years. Park County Archives photo by Oakleigh Thorne II.

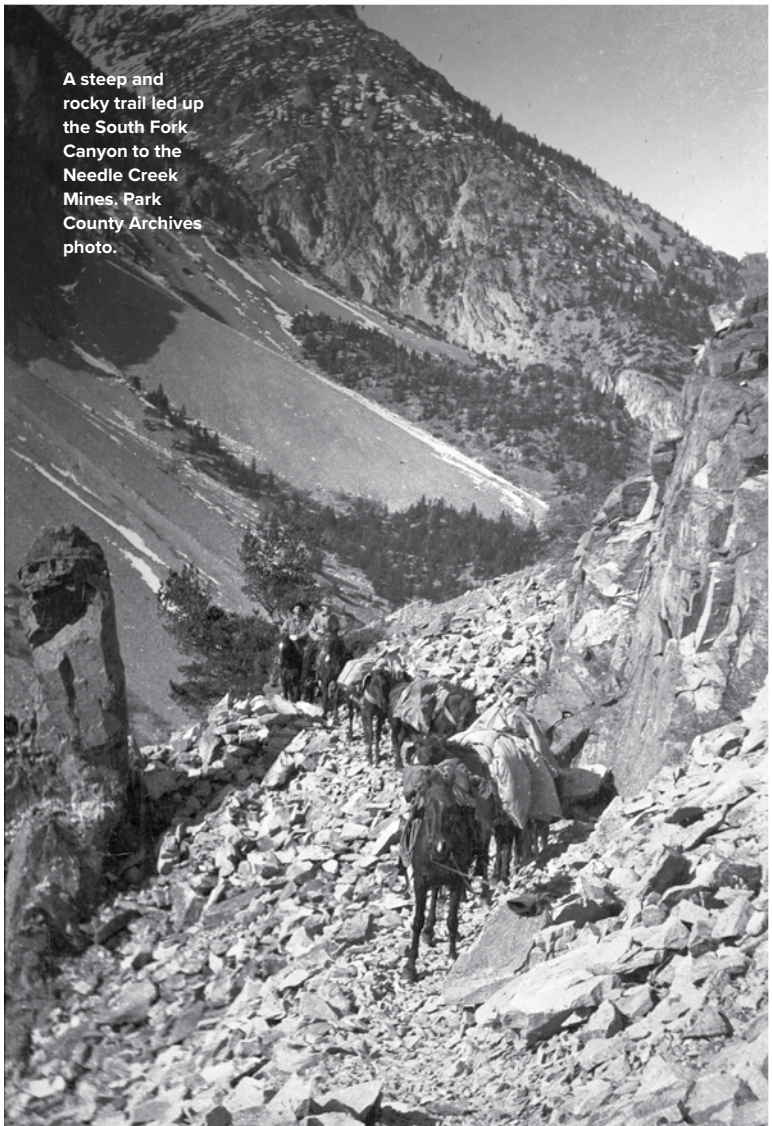
Shoshone Mining Company had forever concluded, after years of unprofitable operations.

In 1933, married prospectors Jess and Mickey Wight took up the abandoned mining claims above Needle Creek. They disassembled one of the original ramshackle mining cabins, hauled it a short way to a nearby meadow, and reassembled the structure. Thus, the old cabin formed the beginning of a wilderness camp that generations of backcountry travelers came to know and love. Any remains of the cabin structures associated with the original mining project and hunting lodge burned in a 1936 forest fire.

Mickey Wight sold the mining claims at Needle Creek to the Phelps Dodge Mining Company in the mid-1960s, although she continued to occupy the cabins during the warmer months, employed to cook for and provision visiting mining crews. Nearby deposits of silver and molybdenum (used in some alloy steels) were also located. But once again, the minerals at Needle Creek failed to kindle any meaningful development.

The mining camp at Needle Creek never proved profitable to investors, but its location deep in the heart of the Absaroka Mountains continues to remind passing hunters, dudes, and

William F. Cody (right) and Dr. David Frank "White Beaver" Powell (left) at one of the mines on Needle Creek. Buffalo Bill Center of the West photo circa 1900.



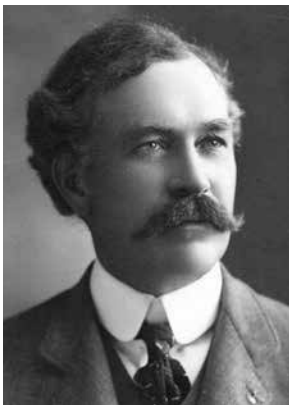
A steep and rocky trail led up the South Fork Canyon to the Needle Creek Mines. Park County Archives photo.

other backcountry travelers of those fleeting days of the Old West when the few remaining pockets of mineral wealth were being prospected, developed, and brought to serve the ends of encroaching civilization.

The history of mining in the American West is full of tales involving vast mineral deposits and mining camps ready to boom. History would prove a great deal of these reports included a fair amount of wild talk calculated to drum up interest among enthusiastic investors. It seems the mines on the South Fork were not out of the ordinary in this respect.

"From parties who have been at the Stinking Water mines we learn that that district can certainly be relied upon as a producer in the near future," an article in an 1893 edition of the *Red Lodge Picket* stated. "In fact, those returning from there are extremely loud in their praise of its wealth. These stories, however, must be taken with a big grain of salt. Every miner thinks his own mine the best in the world."

Brian Beauvais is the Curator of the Park County Archives in Cody, Wyoming, where he has worked since 2012. He enjoys hiking, hunting, skiing, and exploring the historic geography of Park County.



George Beck c. 1886.

Portrait of George Beck by Olive Fell.

George Beck c. 1940.

George Beck
DAMN LUCKY AMERICAN

In collaboration with the University of Nebraska Press, *The Papers of William F. Cody* project at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West publishes a scholarly series of annotated books previously published by Buffalo Bill and his contemporaries. The Center of the West's Jeremy Johnston is managing editor of the Papers, and curator of the Buffalo Bill Museum at the Center. Together with Director and Curator of the Cody Heritage Museum Lynn Houze, Johnston has edited George W.T. Beck's memoir and released it as *Beckoning Frontiers: The Memoir of a Wyoming Entrepreneur.*

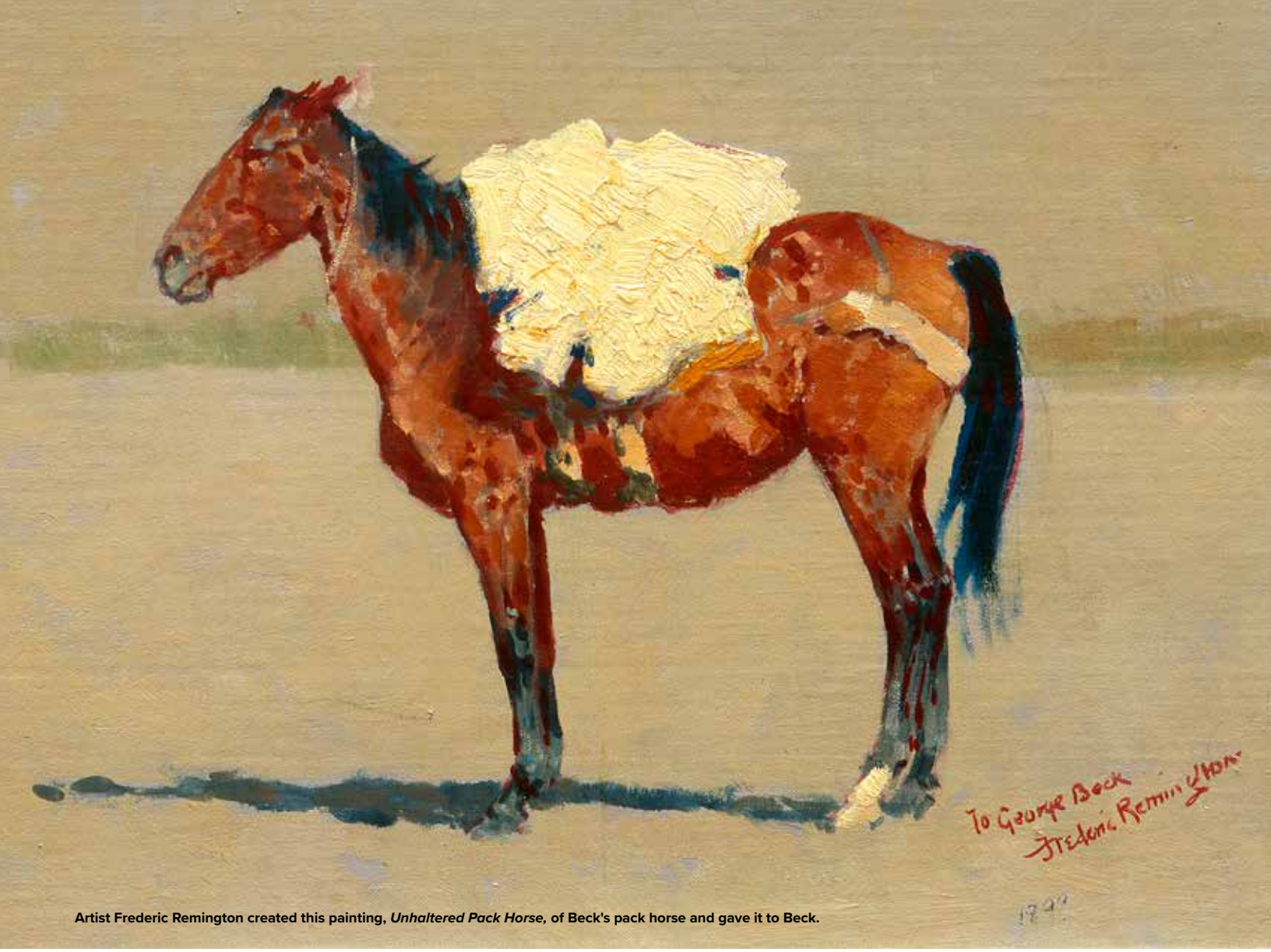
The memoir details how Beck, an experienced developer, scouted the area around Cody and shared news of its promise with others in Sheridan, Wyoming, including William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody. Beck teamed with banker Horace Alger to finance a vast land and irrigation company, and Buffalo Bill wanted to buy in.

A few excerpts from Beck's memoir presented here detail his efforts to establish an irrigation project in Wyoming's Bighorn Basin, as well as the town that became Cody, Wyoming.

With Horace Alger, who was cashier of the bank in Sheridan, I began to figure on building the canal I visualized. In the middle of the figuring, Colonel Cody, Buffalo Bill of the famous Buffalo Bill's Wild West, came to Sheridan. He had an interest in the Sheridan Inn, and his elder daughter Arta was the wife of my friend Horton Boal. Boal, of course, told his father-in-law of our summer's expedition and all about the country over to the west and what I was planning to do. Cody came to me and asked to be let in on it. Naturally, I told him that as Alger and I had been working on the plans together, I would have to consult him first.

Horace was quick to agree that by taking Cody in we would acquire probably the best-advertised name in the world. That alone, we reasoned, would be advantageous and we thereupon made Cody president of the company we organized. Alger was treasurer, and I was secretary-manager. However, no money was put up then, except the expenses I personally bore.

Through Buffalo Bill's connections, a group of investors joined the project: Nate Salsbury, Vice President of Buffalo Bill's Wild West, and a group of entrepreneurs from Buffalo, New York: George Bleistein, Henry Gerrans, and Bronson Rumsey, II. Construction soon began on the Cody Canal irrigation project. Beck's collaborative skills facilitated progress.



Artist Frederic Remington created this painting, *Unhaltered Pack Horse,* of Beck's pack horse and gave it to Beck.

Now we had a real crew of men, and saloonkeepers appeared on the scene to try to break in on the camp. I drove them off, in an effort to keep them away from the men as much as possible, for our nearest towns were in Montana—Red Lodge and Billings. It wasn't long before I realized that every payday I was losing a large number of my men, anyway. They'd head for one town or the other to spend their money, and then I'd have to send teams the hundred odd miles to haul out more men or get the same fellows back. So, I had to give up my fight on the saloonkeepers. I let them build near the camp on two promises: first, that their places should be kept quiet and, secondly, that there should be no robbery of the men. In the long run, the men were better off, of course, because they had some protection on the home ground.

Buffalo Bill visited the Bighorn Basin in the Fall of 1894 to observe the worker's progress and explore the region. Although their friendship would be tested by partnering on the Cody Canal project, both men enjoyed each other's company.

After staying around camp with us awhile, the colonel got restless and asked me to go with him down in the Greybull country. We took his new buggy and with one of his horses and one of mine set out south to visit Colonel Pickett at the Four Bear Ranch.

Crossing the Meeteetse Rim, we saw another fine herd of antelope. Cody had his pet Winchester with him and finally asked me to drive, explaining that he would like to get an antelope to take into Pickett. We hadn't gone far when a bunch of probably two hundred crossed the road a short distance in front of us. We were less than 150 feet from them when Cody jumped out of the buggy and emptied his magazine. He did not get one! I laughed so hard, I nearly fell out of the buggy. After all, this man was celebrated as one of the world's great shots, night after night demonstrating his marksmanship before packed audiences at the Wild West show. Now he climbed back beside me crestfallen. "Damn you, Beck," he said, "if you ever tell this on me I'll shoot you." I told him I didn't think I was in any danger. If he couldn't hit two hundred antelope right in front of him, he couldn't hit me.

Upon learning Buffalo Bill partnered with others to build a town straddling DeMaris Hot Springs, almost three miles west of Cody's eventual center, Beck decided to act and establish a town he deemed to be a better location for the Cody Canal settlers.

I drew a map and taking one of our engineers, Charles E. Hayden, I drove a stake in the ground. Today that spot is in about the exact center of the town of Cody, Wyoming. While Hayden and I were working, we became separated by a few hundred yards. Wishing to consult him I laid the map down, put a rock on it, and walked toward him. Just then a summer whirlwind came along, dislodged the stone, picked the map up, and started it heavenward. Hayden and I followed it as far as we could, but it kept going and we eventually decided our map was recorded in Abraham's Bosom. We drew another.

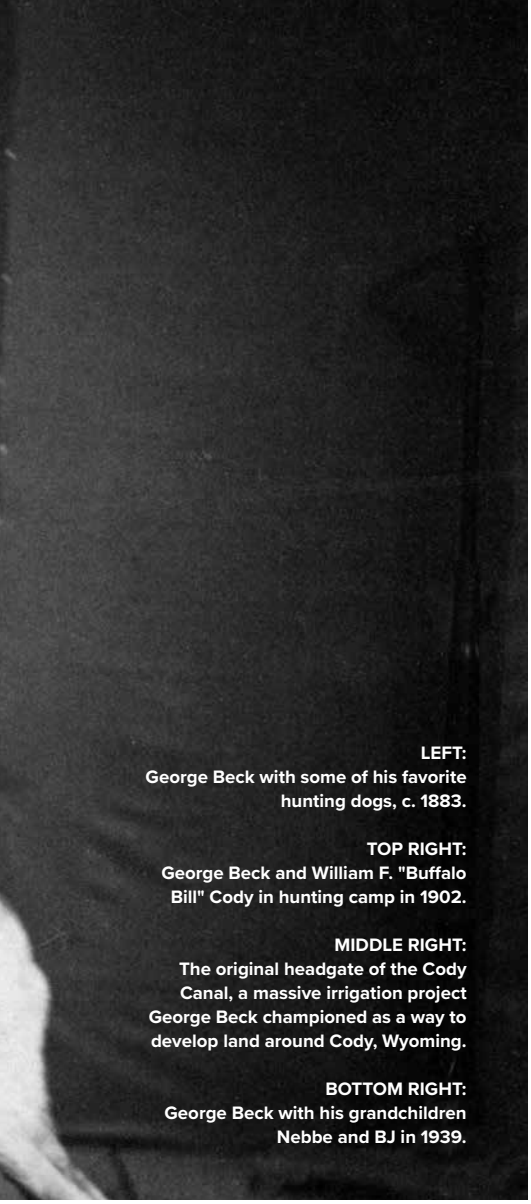
This one I designated as being of the town of Shoshoni, in Fremont County, Wyoming. Then I sent it down to be recorded in a more suitable place, Lander, Wyoming. But when we applied for a post office, I was notified by the postmaster general that there was a Shoshoni in Fremont County—the post office located at the Shoshoni Indian Reservation. We were told to get another name. I sent in three names—of which Cody was definitely not one.... Mr. Okie Snyder was Cody's secretary, and so Cody sent Snyder to Washington to interview the postmaster general.... It was not long after that before I received formal notification from Washington that we had a post office and that its name was Cody. That's how one town got to be named after one man. As it pleased Buffalo Bill tremendously and did the rest of us no harm, I let it go at that.

Despite Buffalo Bill's international fame and Beck's eastern connections, the Cody Canal project soon ran out of funds. Beck managed to save the day by selling the water bonds to family friend Phoebe Hearst, wife of mining magnate George Hearst. Despite Hearst's generosity, she received no future recognition, and the streets in the emerging town of Cody were named for the original (male) investors.

The outlook was grim, but I decided on one last try. I took the bonds and went to Washington. There I called upon Mrs. Phoebe Hearst, the widow of my old friend Senator Hearst of California. When I told her the trouble I was in, she quickly said, "Why, I'll take the bonds. Go back to my New York office and tell my manager there to give you the money immediately. If he refuses," she added, "have him long distance me. There is a private wire between the office and my house here."

Back in New York I went down to her office and met one of the maddest men I had seen in a long time. He stormed at me, "This is impossible. You can't raise money on government bonds, much less cash on a ditch in Wyoming." I said, "Well, you call Mrs. Hearst in Washington."

She confirmed her order, but he still protested, and finally, she had to demand that he comply with her wishes.... Out at the ditch again I paid up my men and contractors, carrying the canal on towards its present terminus near the back of the McCullough Peaks.



LEFT:
George Beck with some of his favorite hunting dogs, c. 1883.

TOP RIGHT:
George Beck and William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody in hunting camp in 1902.

MIDDLE RIGHT:
The original headgate of the Cody Canal, a massive irrigation project George Beck championed as a way to develop land around Cody, Wyoming.

BOTTOM RIGHT:
George Beck with his grandchildren Nebbe and BJ in 1939.

In the introduction of his memoir, Beck reflected on his overall life in the East and the American West.

I started life as what is so euphoniously known as "a southerner." In later years I also became, by adoption, "a westerner." And to this day those two classifications dog around after me. Out here in Wyoming, someone will explain to someone else that the old gentleman speaks the way he does because "he's a southerner." And back in Washington, they used to say on my visits there after I'd settled in Wyoming, "Great Scott, here comes that big westerner, buffalo coat and all." Perhaps one does take on the regional flavor or color of the particular adventures and excitements he has known. But I—and I should know—find in the sum total of the years one undeniable fact: I've been blessed with a succession of happy days. It's high time someone, if they have to go on classifying me, said, "There goes that damn lucky American, George Beck."

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Supporters MAKE PAPERS PROJECT POSSIBLE

Bob and Dine Dellenback speak in 2014 while receiving the "Spirit of the American West Award" from the Buffalo Bill Center of the West Board of Trustees.

BY ANNE MARIE SHRIVER

William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody's life was sprawling and expansive, leaving a complex and prodigious legacy. Fortunately, thanks to the generous support of a range of donors, a major research project is working to illuminate the many facets of Cody's life and times.

The *Papers of William F. Cody* is an archive of correspondence, business records, photos, film, audio recordings, and published writings centered around Buffalo Bill and his contemporaries. These primary resources offer readers glimpses of time through Cody's interactions with individuals ranging from statesmen and royalty to noted military and literary figures who sought his opinions on policy questions concerning the American West. The Papers has also published several works through the academic presses of the University of Nebraska and the University of Oklahoma, with many more in progress.

Buffalo Bill Center of the West Trustee and Buffalo Bill Museum Advisory Board Chair Naoma Tate has called the *Papers* one of the most "wonderful and important projects we have ever done." Tate's support for the project is rooted in memories of how her grandfather, Wilbur Morse, ran away from home to see Buffalo Bill's Wild West perform in Philadelphia in 1907.

Morse and two other boys hopped a train from Mt. Carmel, Pennsylvania, to Philadelphia, where they watched the show's parade and then went to the Buffalo Bill's Wild West tent. Then, in what had to feel almost like a dream, Cody himself appeared, pulling up a corner of the tent so the little boys could watch the show. Tate recalls sitting on the porch of her grandfather's home as a young girl, listening to stories of Buffalo Bill, who was a hero to Tate and her grandfather.

Like Tate, the late Bob and Dine Dellenback of Jackson, Wyoming, shared a passion for the stories of the American West. They loved all of it—the books, the art, and the material culture, as well as the changing interpretations of its history and cultures. The Dellenbacks had previously donated their Lewis and Clark book collection to the Center's McCracken Research Library and enthusiastically supported the *Papers* for many years.

The *Papers* has archived, organized, and posted more than 3,000 documents online, with more than 50,000 readers and researchers worldwide. Work by both emerging and established scholars and academics at every level has resulted in numerous published volumes, award-winning books, scholarly conferences, and more. Increased funding would enable hiring additional staff and pursuing further project goals.

The generous support of numerous individuals and institutions ensures the ongoing work on the *Papers* will further expand and inform the legacy of William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody.

MAJOR FUNDING AND SUPPORT PROVIDED FOR THE PAPERS OF WILIAM F. CODY BY:

The National Endowment for the Humanities, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the Wyoming Community Foundation, Wyoming Cultural Trust Fund through Wyoming State Parks & Cultural Resources, the Dellenback Family Foundation, Adrienne & John Mars, Naoma Tate & the Family of Hal Tate, Maggie & Dick Scarlett, William C. Garlow, The McMurry Foundation, Nancy-Carroll Draper Charitable Foundation, Rusty & Deborah Rokita.

LEARN MORE AT: *codyarchive.org and codystudies.org*

ESTATE GIFTS OFFER SEVERAL OPTIONS

A range of generous benefactors have donated many of the objects in the Buffalo Bill Center of the West's collections. And our annual budget relies on gifts of cash and securities to cover basic expenses and fund special exhibitions and programs.

Objects and dollars come from another source, too: bequests. Generous donors have willed us such treasures as paintings by Frederic Remington, a trove of early Wyoming Territory legal documents, a 1964 Holland & Holland shotgun, and even Annie Oakley's wig! Many other important pieces in our collections were given to us through donors' estates.

The Center has benefited from cash gifts from a diverse spectrum of estates.

A bequest to our endowment allows you to support the Center forever. Some donors choose specific bequest amounts, others choose to donate a percentage of their estate. Still others prefer to name the Center as a residuary beneficiary, after all their other specific bequests are fulfilled.

We are honored that people choose to help the Center this way. If you would like to include us in your estate plans, your financial and legal advisors can help you find what works best for your situation. Also, please consider the following:

- ✔ If you have assets on which taxes will be owed, such as retirement accounts or appreciated stocks, designate those for charity and save your heirs the taxes.
- ✔ Let's talk if you have an object you would like to bequeath us. We will make certain the Buffalo Bill Center of the West can to add it to our collections, or find out if you would be comfortable with us selling it.
- ✔ Finally, please let us know you have included us in your estate plans so we can show you our appreciation now!

For more information, visit *plannedgiving.centerofthewest.org* or contact us in the Development Office at *development@centerofthewest.org* or 307-578-4008.

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Joseph Henry Sharp's *Preparing for the Medicine Sweat.* Gift in memory of Charles Dean Cook.

Frederic Remington's *Our Cavalcade Presented a Much More Imposing Appearance Than Ever Before.* Gift of Willis McDonald IV Trust.

George Catlin's *Crow Chief*, ca.1850. Bequest of Joseph M. Roebling

IN THE NEWS

SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS

The Center of the West will host two special exhibitions this year, focusing on the 150th birthday of Yellowstone National Park and our sense of place in Wyoming and the West.

Yellowstone: For the Benefit and Enjoyment of the People
MARCH 19, 2022 – JANUARY 29, 2023

Thomas Mangelsen: A Life in the Wild
MAY 14 – JULY 31, 2022

Dreamcatcher ©2022 Thomas D. Mangelsen

WILLIAM WEISS REMEMBERED

The worlds of western art, history, and Native American culture lost a passionate advocate and generous benefactor in January with the passing of William D. "Bill" Weiss, who joined the Buffalo Bill Center of the West's Board of Trustees in 1972.

Weiss moved his family to Cody in 1976, and with his wife Robin helped establish the Patron's Ball that same year. It remains the Center's most beloved annual fundraiser and social event.

A third-generation lover and collector of western art, Weiss and his father were instrumental over many years in growing and diversifying the Whitney Western Art Museum, and he twice chaired its Advisory Board.

Bill and Robin helped assemble the elements of the Whitney's Frederic Remington studio, and made numerous and immeasurable gifts to the Center through the years. His generosity and leadership extended far beyond the Center, benefiting charitable organizations, schools, churches, and groups in Wyoming and beyond.

Friend and fellow Trustee Deborah Goppert Hofstedt described Weiss and his family as a cornerstone in the foundation of the Center of the West.

Weiss "weathered a storm of criticism to create a niche for contemporary western art," Hofstedt recalled. That move paid off, she said, as many of the contemporary works purchased, given, or championed by Weiss "are now old enough to have become historic, seminal pieces, and have greatly added to the value and prestige of the Whitney permanent collection."

MURCHISON TO CHAIR BOARD

The Buffalo Bill Center of the West Board of Trustees voted Feb. 4 to name Linda Spencer Murchison as Chair. Murchison, who was Vice Chair and joined the Board in 2014, had been serving as Interim Chair following the November resignation of previous Chair William Shiebler. She will serve the remainder of Shiebler's term, until September 2023.

"I'm honored and humbled to be stepping into this role as Chair," Murchison said. "I look forward to the opportunity to work with the board, advisory boards, staff, and local and national communities to help this wonderful institution continue to thrive and grow in the years ahead.

Murchison said that while it can be a challenging time for museums in a rapidly changing world, she is "very confident in the Center's capacity to be a strong and creative leader."

Murchison splits her time between Wilmington, North Carolina and Cody, Wyoming. She was formerly Chair of the Board of Trustees for the Wyoming Chapter of The Nature Conservancy.

SCHOLARSHIP UPDATES

The Buffalo Bill Center of the West supports research as integral to our mission of connecting people to the stories of the American West. Research contributes uniquely to various fields of study. Increasingly, our scholarship reexamines and revises existing narratives, reveals hidden histories, and meaningfully connects the past with the present and future. Based on the historical research being conducted by the Center and its partners, several recent publications include:

Texas Jack: America's First Cowboy Star. Matthew Kerns. Helena, MT: Two Dot, 2021. A book about John B. Omohundro, "Texas Jack," friend and early partner of Buffalo Bill Cody.

Buffalo Bill Cody: The Man who Shaped the Wild West Legend. Lew Freedman. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2020. A Cody resident, Freedman includes many local perspectives on William F. Cody in his book.

Frontiers of Boyhood: Imagining America, Past and Future. Martin Woodside. Norman, OK: OU Press, 2020. The William F. Cody Series on the History and Culture of the American West. A book offering new perspectives on William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody's influence on children and childhood.

Pioneers of Promotion: How Press Agents for Buffalo Bill, P.T. Barnum, and the World's Columbian Exposition Created Modern Marketing. Joe Dobrow. Norman, OK: OU Press, 2018. The William F. Cody Series on the History and Culture of the American West. A book examining how three charismatic individuals launched an industry that defines our national culture.

Buffalo Bill and the Birth of American Celebrity. Kellen Cutsforth. Helena, MT: Two Dot, 2021. A book that tells the tale of a visionary whose real-life experiences (and embellishments) created an entertainment phenomenon that became a worldwide sensation.

Dead Feminists: Historic Heroines in Living Color. Chandler O'Leary and Jessica Spring. Seattle, WA: Sasquatch Books, 2016. An illustrated national best-selling book showcasing feminist history with a vision for a better future.

In December 2021, the Senior Digital Editor of the *Papers of William F. Cody*, Douglas Seefeldt, *Papers* managing editor Jeremy Johnston, and others received The National Historical Publications and Records Commission planning grant for a project focusing on Lakota community members who traveled across Canada, the United States, and Europe as performers with Buffalo Bill's Wild West.

UPPER GEYSER BASIN *from* OLD FAITHFUL

During U.S. Geological Survey expeditions to northwestern Wyoming in 1871 and again in 1872, photographer William Henry Jackson captured on film for the first time many of the natural wonders of what would soon become Yellowstone National Park. Jackson's photos helped convince the public and Congress that the area deserved special protection. And 150 years ago on March 1, 1872, President Ulysses S. Grant signed the Yellowstone National Park Protection Act.

Photography was a cumbersome and difficult process at that time, made even more challenging in a remote and unforgiving landscape like Yellowstone. Jackson documented his best images in a book titled *Photographs of the Yellowstone National Park and Views of the Montana and Wyoming Territories.* A government publication issued by the Interior Department, the prodigious volume contained 41 albumen silver prints with detailed descriptions. The Buffalo Bill Center of the West has an original copy, a gift of Mr. & Mrs. William D. Weiss.

Jackson explained in other writings his process for capturing images like this one, described as "Plate 10. Upper Firehole Basin from the Crater of Old Faithful," showing what is now called the Upper Geyser Basin in Yellowstone.

Shot "on the Wyoming (1872) Survey, I used a whole plate, 6 ½ x 8 ½, camera," Jackson wrote. "The 300 lbs. of photography equipment for the field work included: Tripods, dark box, chemicals, water keg, and a day's supply of plates," he continued, "all loaded in brightly painted parfleches aboard my fat little mule with cropped ears, Hypo. Named for the dark room chemical hyposulphite of soda, as both were indispensable."

"Most of my pictures were stills at 5 seconds and upward," Jackson wrote of his exposure process. "When speed was no consideration I always stopped my lens down to get maximum depth and definition."

Jackson fought in the Civil War after enlisting in October 1862 as a 19-year-old private for the Union Army. He would go on to take more than 80,000 photos of the American West, and worked as a publisher and even as a technical advisor for the filming of *Gone with the Wind* in 1939. He died at age 99 in 1942 and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

William Henry Jackson near the Tetons while working as a member of the U. S. Geological Survey in 1872.

DETAILS

SHOT WITH

6 ½ X 8 ½ VIEW CAMERA

PROCESS

Collodion wet-plate glass negative

EXPOSURE

5 seconds and longer, low f-stop

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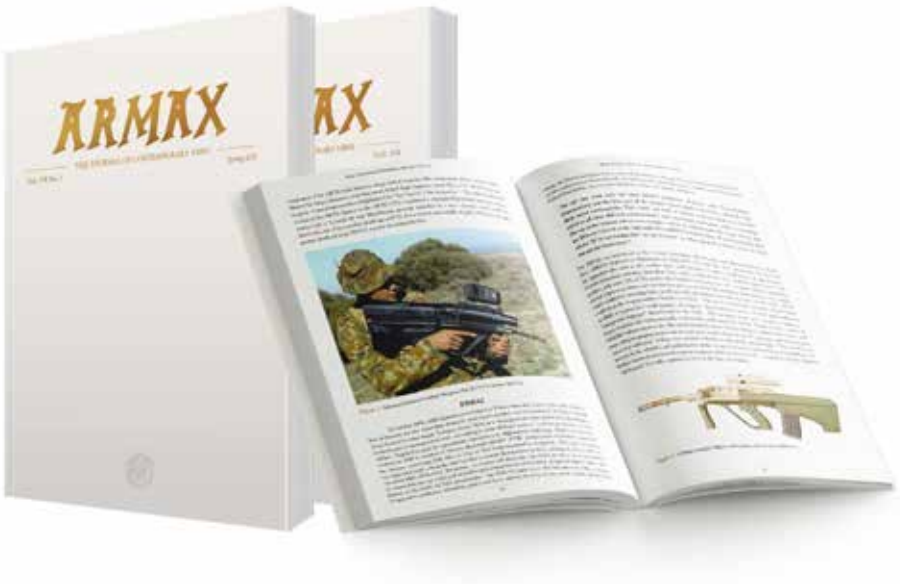

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