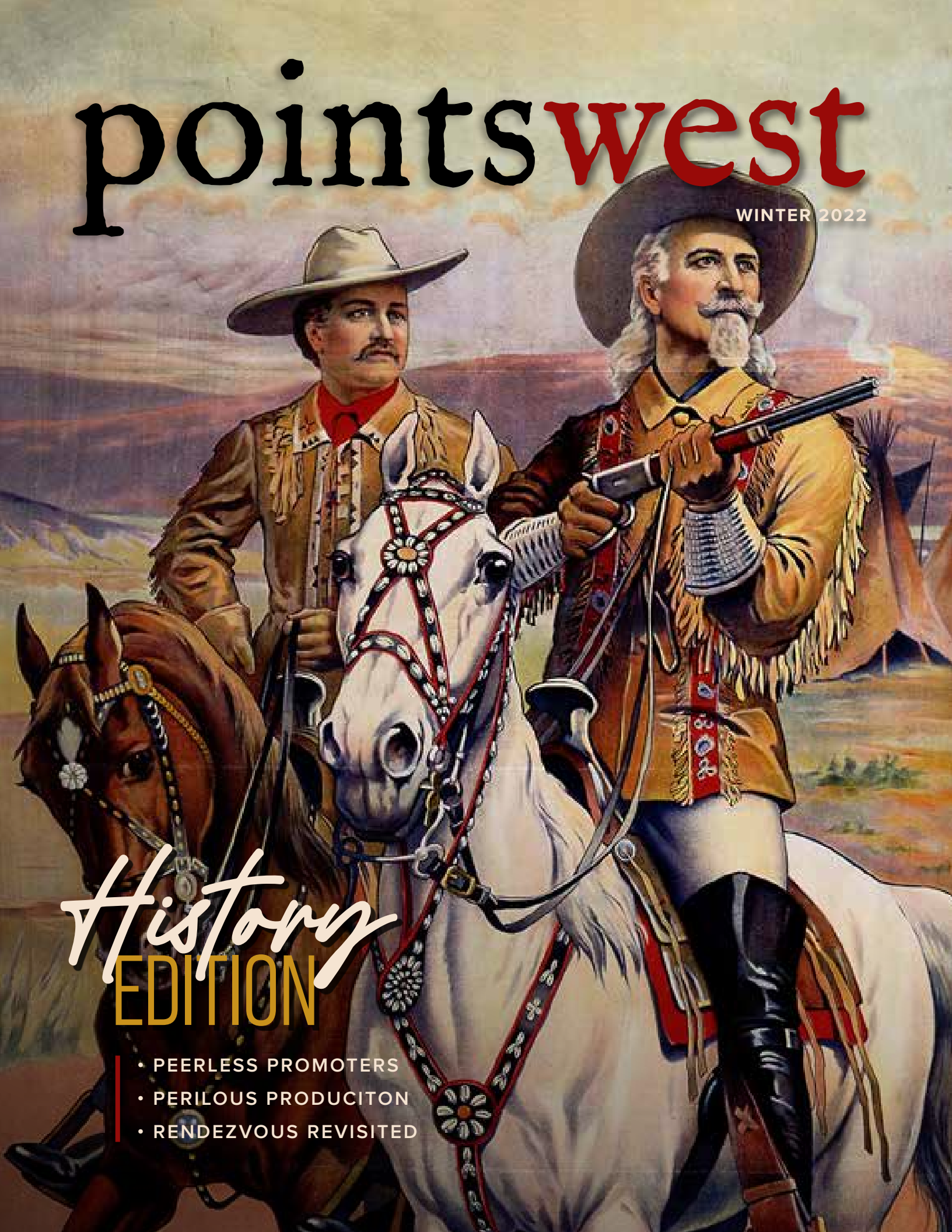


pointswest

WINTER 2022

History EDITION

- PEERLESS PROMOTERS
- PERILOUS PRODUCITON
- RENDEZVOUS REVISITED



THE CURATOR CHRONICLES

JEREMY M. JOHNSTON

Guest Editor

The year 2023 marks the 140th anniversary of the birth of an entertainment phenomenon known as Buffalo Bill's Wild West. In his study of Wild West shows, William F.



Cody biographer Don Russell revealed that more than 116 Wild West shows existed through the 19th and 20th centuries. Of these enterprises, Buffalo Bill's Wild West is one of the few remembered. Why was Buffalo Bill's Wild

West so successful?

Like many western settlers, Buffalo Bill performed different menial jobs to support his family. As a young man, he crossed the plains as a messenger, freighter, and Pony Express rider. His hunting skills earned him the name Buffalo Bill, and he became a renowned hunting guide. His scouting services during the Indian Wars drew national attention. However, the likelihood that William F. Cody would become an internationally renowned actor was slight.

Buffalo Bill's professional connections popularized these typical jobs. The rogue Ned Buntline produced the first dime novel starring Buffalo Bill as a frontier legend. Buntline also encouraged Cody to star on stage as himself. Later, John Burke soon assumed the role of Cody's stage manager and marketer. Working as a team, Buffalo Bill and his staff developed a unique form of entertainment that seamlessly mixed drama and authenticity.

Buffalo Bill's performances transformed buffalo hunters, scouts, and the American cowboy from common laborers into national heroes. The Wild West also glamorized the violent Indian Wars, instilling iconic myths such as the attack of the Deadwood Stagecoach and Cowboys vs. Indians.

Buffalo Bill was not the first, nor the last, to mythologize the American western experience. Alfred Jacob Miller's artwork romanticized fur trappers' dirty and dangerous life, creating the mythological Mountain Man. Although paintings and popular entertainment shifted the heroes and villains of westward expansion through the years, the fascination of mixing drama and history remains a powerful form of entertainment.

Be it through art, historical novels, stage plays, reenactments, or movies, the phrase "based on a true story" reminds us that entertainment greatly influences our view of the past, just as it did at the height of Buffalo Bill's career.

16

Rendezvous Revisited

**SPECIAL EXHIBITION
EXPLORES ALFRED JACOB
MILLER'S ART LIKE
NEVER BEFORE**



8

departments

- 4 BY THE NUMBERS**
Wild West at Ambrose Park
- 6 GOOD ENOUGH TO EAT**
Maraschino Punch
- 20 YEAR-END GIVING**
A Quick Guide
- 21 PATRONS BALL RETURNS**
Thanks to all who celebrated
- 22 IN THE NEWS**
Cody Culture Club
- 23 HOW I GOT THAT SHOT**
A Spirited Wild West Volley

ABOUT THE COVER |

"The Two Bills" A detail from a 1912 promotional poster for Buffalo Bill's Wild West depicts Major Gordon W. "Pawnee Bill" Lillie, left, and William F. Cody riding his favorite horse, Isham. In 1909, Cody and Lillie combined their rival productions and toured as Buffalo Bill's Wild West and Pawnee Bill's Great Far East, sometimes shortened to The Two Bills.

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.

©2022 Buffalo Bill Center of the West
720 Sheridan Ave., Cody, WY 82414
editor@centerofthewest.org | 307-587-4771

GUEST EDITOR | Jeremy M. Johnston
MANAGING EDITOR | Ruffin Prevost
DESIGNER | Desiree Pettet
COPY EDITOR | Nancy McClure

**BUFFALO BILL
CENTER
OF THE WEST**

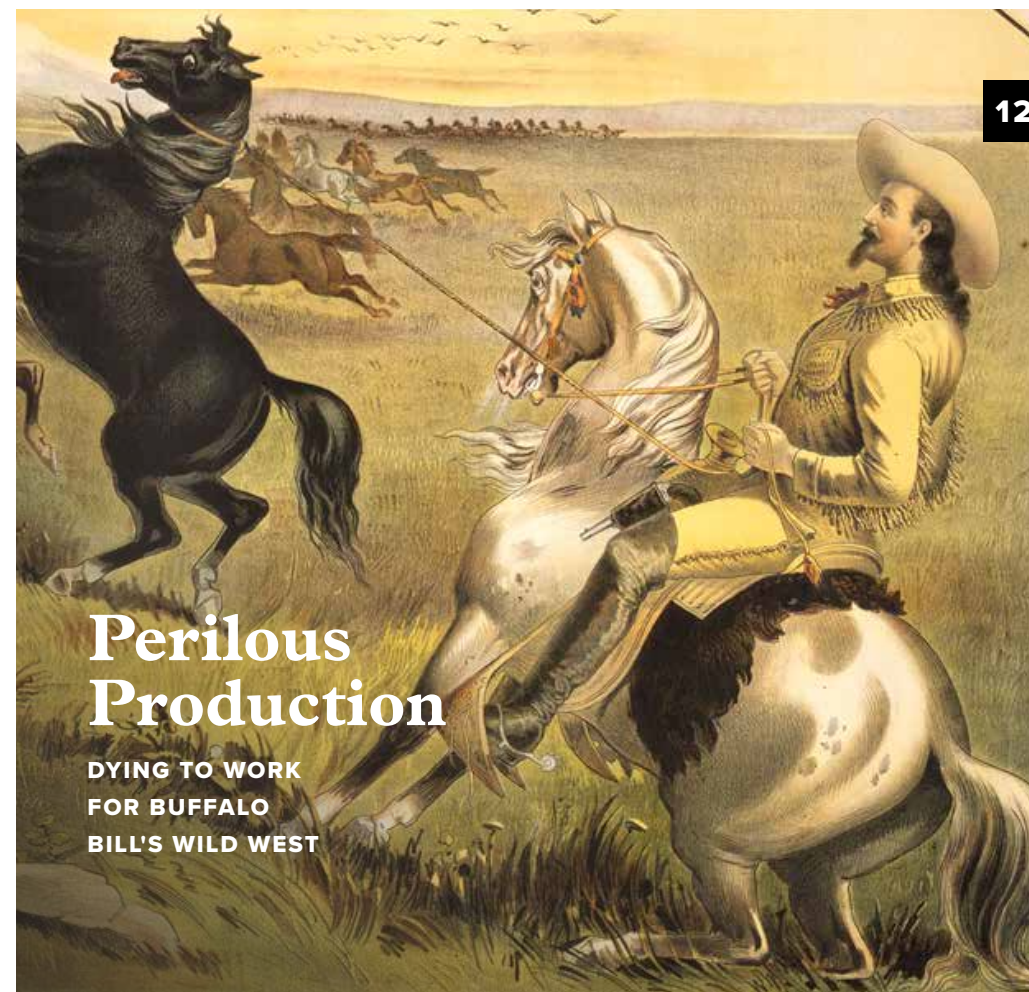


Smithsonian
Affiliate



Buntline & Burke

**BUFFALO BILL'S
PEERLESS PROMOTERS**



Perilous Production

**DYING TO WORK
FOR BUFFALO
BILL'S WILD WEST**

12

BY THE NUMBERS

3
Tons of Beef

1,000
Pounds Each of Veal,
Lamb, Pork, & Chicken

815
Gallons of Milk

6,840
Eggs

2,100
Loaves of Bread

10
Gallons of Maple Syrup

10
Tons of Ice

31
Barrels of Potatoes

500
Pies

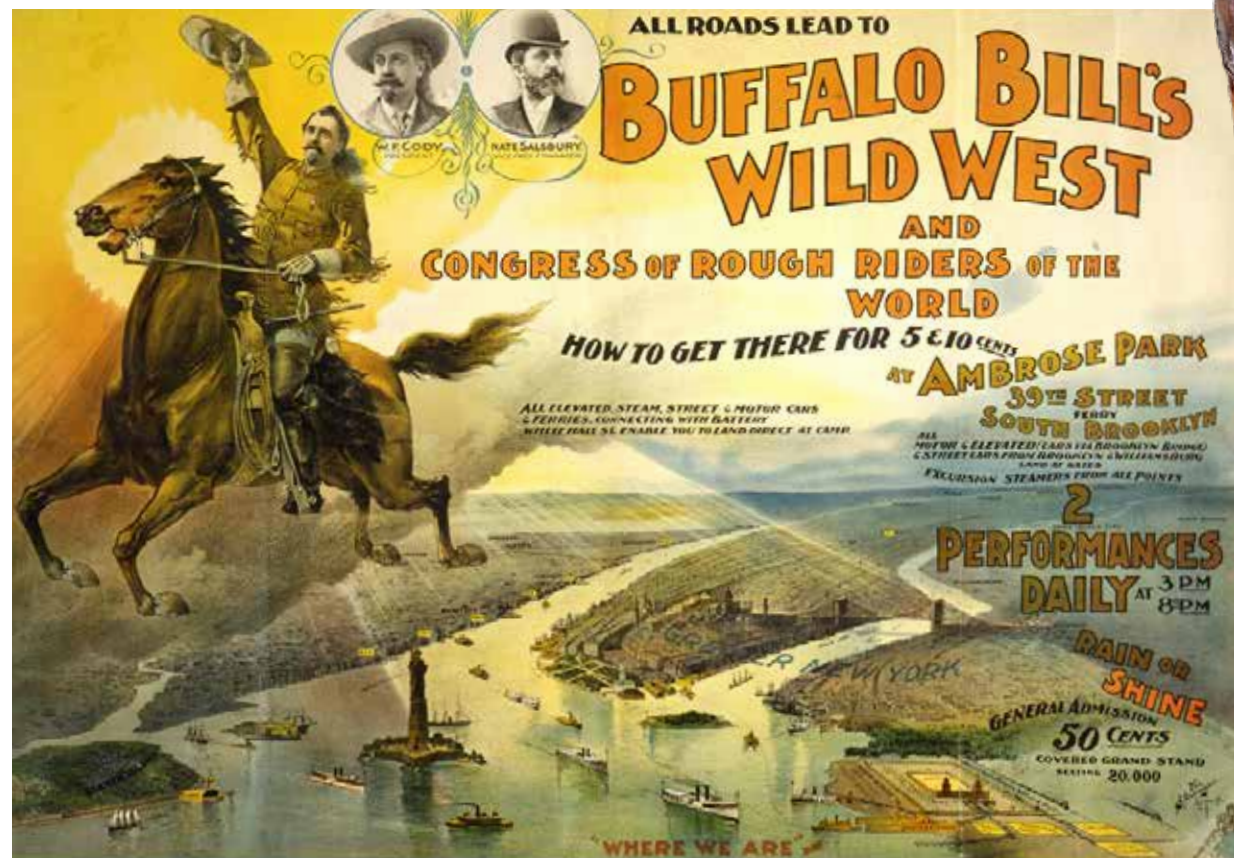
250
Heads of Lettuce

225
Lbs. of Coffee

15
Gallons of Ketchup

100
Pounds of Salt

THE WILD WEST AT AMBROSE PARK



In its early years, Buffalo Bill's Wild West often spent a full season in one place. The Wild West's successful Chicago season in 1893 led William F. Cody and his partner, Nate Salsbury, to spend the 1894 season at Ambrose Park in South Brooklyn, New York. However, expenses were high, and the show lost money.

In a letter Cody wrote to his brother-in-law, Al Goodman, the showman described the 1894 season as "the worst deal I have ever had in my life—for my expenses are \$4,000 a day. And I can't reduce them, without closing entirely. You can't possibly appreciate my situation—this is the tightest squeeze of my life. Don't mention it to anyone, but it's close papers this time. But I hope to struggle out of it some way."

One of the reasons for such high expenses was because of the immense size of the show, held at a site the *New York Tribune* described as "big enough for a Western metropolis." Feeding the Wild West's army of 700 employees was quite an undertaking. "They eat a lot, that army," the *Tribune* wrote.

Added to the sheer number was the diversity of the cast and crew, representing nearly a dozen nationalities. The Wild West's kitchen prepared three meals a day, offering what the *New York Times* called "a bill of fare suited to the tastes of all nations."

The *Times* offered an accounting, at left, of some of the foods consumed by Wild West employees in a given week.

ONE-OF-A-KIND Christmas

gifts



Made by local craftsman Michael Douglass from locally harvested (fallen) quaking aspen trees. The seat is covered with American bison hide.

\$1,499



720 Sheridan Ave., Cody • 800-533-3838
store.centerofthewest.org

Maraschino

INSTRUCTIONS

- Select as many large oranges as the number of guests require, and prepare them by giving each one a transverse cut, about half an inch from the top. The interior, and this sliced part also, are then nicely scooped out, and the pulp is pressed in a sieve, until the juice is all extracted.
- This is sweetened to taste and weakened with a little water, until a strong orangeade is made. Into this is finally poured a sufficient quantity of Maraschino to flavor the mixture agreeably, and the empty oranges are filled with it.
- The straws are then prettily tied to the tops by narrow ribbons drawn through two punctures. These ribbons must match the other decorations of the table, and harmonize as well with the color of the oranges themselves.
- When the cap is fitted again, they are ready for serving. They may be prevented from upsetting and spilling the contents by being put in paper cases upon small, decorated plates.

photo by Courtney McRae | holdingcourt.com



BY STEVE FRIESEN

General Nelson Miles was a lifelong friend with whom William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody served during the Indian Wars. Cody and Miles shared not just friendship, but confidence in each other. So it was natural that Cody was asked to be one of the speakers at a banquet in Miles’s honor.

On January 31, 1896, the banquet was held at the Chamberlin Hotel in Washington D.C. It was considered the finest hotel in the city and an oasis of fine dining. John Chamberlin, a noted hotelier, restaurateur, and gourmet, purchased a mansion which had belonged to a former New York governor and converted it into a hotel with a large banquet room.

The banquet for Nelson Miles was attended by Washington politicians, including Vice President Adlai Stevenson and a number of retired military men, most of whom were known to Cody. Chamberlin was re-

ferred to as “the Napoleon of epicures” and set a sumptuous table.

The dining table was decorated with red and white roses, while Indian headdresses, tomahawks, and a shield made of buffalo hide hung on the walls. The meal itself started at 8 p.m. with blue point oysters and crab bisque, accompanied by Spanish Oloroso sherry and Johannisberger Riesling Kabinett, a white wine from Germany.

Chicken croquettes with a cream and truffle sauce, relishes, potato croquettes, and saddle of mutton followed. The wine for that course was Mumm Extra Dry Champagne. Dishes prepared with terrapin, or turtles, were quite popular at the time and the next course included Terrapin a la Chamberlin, cold asparagus points, and marschino punch, a cold fruit drink.

The marschino (or “maraschino”) punch was undoubtedly one of the decorative highlights of the meal. It would have been served as a palate cleanser. Served in hollowed-out oranges, marschino punches were all

the rage at luncheons and dinner parties in the 1890s. With cleansed palates and unsated appetites, the guests turned to the main course, roast capon stuffed with truffles, accompanied by roasted potatoes.

This recipe for marschino punch was published in *The Tribune* in Scranton, Pennsylvania, in 1895. The Maraschino referred to in this recipe is not the juice from maraschino cherries commonly found today in supermarkets, but a colorless liqueur made from fermented Marasca cherries. It can still be found in liquor stores, often sold under the Luxardo brand name, following a formulation unchanged since 1821.



Steve Friesen served as director at the Buffalo Bill Museum and Grave near Denver, Colorado for 22 years before retiring. His book Galloping Gourmet: Dining with Buffalo Bill is set to be published by University of Nebraska Press.

Buntline & BURKE

Buffalo Bill's Peerless Promoters



BY RUFFIN PREVOST

William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody was an authentic and skilled frontier scout who accomplished an amazing range of impressive achievements that would contribute to his widespread fame and public acclaim. But without the efforts of two men, it’s unlikely he would have become the household name he remains, even more than a century after his death.

One of those men went by the name Major John M. “Arizona John” Burke, even though he never held such a rank, and had no special connection to Arizona. The other was a celebrity writer called Ned Buntline, which wasn’t his actual name, but a pseudonym drawn from nautical jargon.

Together, Buntline and Burke helped turn Buffalo Bill into one of the most famous people in the world, and in the process shaped enduring ideas, perceptions, and mythologies about the American West, while also ushering in modern methods of publicity and promotion

John Burke photographed William F. Cody as part of a press kit he would use to publicize the Wild West.

At left: Ned Buntline holds a rifle and John Burke poses in a pair of separate publicity photos.



that remain in widespread use today.

While most remember Buffalo Bill mainly for his Wild West production—which Burke tirelessly and skillfully promoted—that show probably wouldn’t have existed if Buntline hadn’t first elevated Cody’s profile in print and on stage.

“I absolutely think that he developed the popular culture of the American West,” author Julia Bricklin said of Buntline, who was born Edward Zane Carroll Judson in 1821 in Stamford, New York.

Buntline became a famous author and publisher of adventure tales, and was himself an irrepressible rogue whose amazing exploits Bricklin documented in her book, *The Notorious Life of Ned Buntline: A Tale of Murder, Betrayal, and the Creation of Buffalo Bill*.

“Going backwards, the whole reason people were so excited about Cody was because of Buntline’s previous works, and his recognition as an authority figure of that exotic West,” said Bricklin, who relied

on the McCracken Research Library in part for source materials about Buntline.

Buntline (a term used for a rope attached to the bottom of a square sail) served in the U.S. Navy, and later spent time in Florida during the Seminole Wars. He drew on those experiences to create a series of thrilling stories published in newspapers, dime novels, and various publications he started himself and with partners.

Despite being a heavy drinker and a prodigious philanderer, he was an amazingly productive, famous, and lucrative literary force, albeit never taken as seriously as was his longtime ambition.

Bricklin said she was drawn in by the details of Buntline’s personal life while researching him, and was “amazed by how crazy this guy was, keeping mistresses in four different towns at the same time, but still being able to write the kind of output he did while juggling a very ambitious program of alcohol” and other ventures.



John Burke, who promoted Buffalo Bill's Wild West, pioneered the use of branded and licensed merchandise to help boost William F. Cody's image. A wide range of products bore Cody's image, including playing cards, souvenir buttons, cigars and much more.

Buntline was “an exceptional listener and he had an exceptional memory,” she said. “And I think his time with Buffalo Bill was at the peak of his cerebral faculties, and he was probably as sober as he was ever going to be then.”

In fact, Buntline met Cody in Nebraska in 1869 while returning home from a temperance speaking tour in California.

Both men probably saw their meeting as mutually beneficial, with Buntline looking for stories from a rising military standout, and Cody seeking to boost his profile and that of his colleagues' efforts in the West.

Buntline spent time traveling with Cody, including to engagements on the East Coast aimed at sharing news of the military's exploits with influential players there.

Buntline wrote about Cody's adventures in a handful of popular dime novels, and eventually convinced him to star (reluctantly) in *Scouts of the Prairie*, a stage production written and conceived by Buntline that featured Cody and fellow cowboy and scout Texas Jack Omohundro playing themselves. What the show lacked in critical acclaim, it made up for with box office success.

Neither Buntline nor Cody could have imagined their production would play to sold-out houses up and down the East Coast, Bricklin said.

But ever one to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory, Buntline eventually “blew it like always,” Bricklin said, “because he just could not manage his alcohol or his greed.”

Cody and Buntline had a falling out in late 1872 but remained friendly as Cody's star continued to shine brighter, and Buntline's slowly faded.

Fortunately for Cody, Burke was then managing the career of dancer and actress Giuseppina Morlacchi, who co-starred in *Scouts of the Prairie* alongside Cody and Omohundro, whom she married in 1873.

Like Buntline, Burke had met Cody in 1869, and was immediately impressed by the dashing young hunter and scout, said Joe Dobrow, author of *Pioneers of Promotion: How Press Agents for Buffalo Bill, P. T. Barnum, and the World's Columbian Exposition Created Modern Marketing*.

While working to promote Morlacchi and her stage production with Cody, “Burke continued repeating and enhancing stories of Cody's legendary career, and not long after that, Cody decides to abandon the stage for the arena,” Dobrow said.

Burke became general manager and the first employee of the Wild West Company. He employed all the tricks he knew, along with many new ones, to create a frenzy of interest before the Wild West arrived at its host cities.

Burke pioneered the idea of celebrity endorsements, which were not then widely used. After Mark Twain saw the Wild West twice in one week in Elmira, New York, in 1884, Burke used a seemingly spontaneous thank-you letter from the famous author to publicize the show in hundreds of promotions, Dobrow said.

Burke also appears to have invented a precursor to what is now the press kit, Dobrow said, a revelation that dawned on him while researching the promoter in the McCracken.

“They had a little published packet that had all these stories about Buffalo Bill and his battles and so forth,” he said. “As I looked at it, I saw the pages were perforated.”

Dobrow said he came to realize that Burke, working on advance publicity for the Wild West, would roll into a city where the show was opening, and guarantee editors an exclusive story about Cody, tearing out one of the anecdotes from his perforated press kit.

Burke used the latest printing technology to churn out 7,000 posters or more for each show, “covering every vertical surface” in cities around a performance venue. He offered free show tickets in lieu of payment for laborers posting handbills, often using an iconic image of Cody's face against a bison with only the words: “I am Coming.”

Burke used the same poster in France, where he showed up weeks in advance to promote the show, having learned French before the trip.

In Germany, he put giant posters on horse-drawn wagons, creating what we now know as the mobile billboard, Dobrow said. “The Germans were not sure what to make of it all, because they had never seen such brash advertising techniques before.”

Burke regularly scanned newspapers for negative or critical cover-

age of Cody or the Wild West, and would mount aggressive responses, an early example of the kind of “reputation management” practiced by modern public relations firms.

He staged endless publicity stunts, roasting an ox on a spit before a press breakfast, or giving reporters a ride through downtown on the Cheyenne-to-Deadwood stagecoach, which was a central part of the show.

Product licensing was another innovative effort by Burke, with Parker Brothers launching a Wild West board game in 1898, and Buffalo Bill's image appearing on everything from buttons to cigars to trading cards.

“All of this was an extremely complex enterprise—hundreds of employees and animals—and would be a challenge to manage even today,” Dobrow said. “It's really remarkable given the limited resources and technology he had that Burke's efforts were so sophisticated.”

Burke's pioneering methods paid dividends for nearly 40 years, until he and Cody both died in 1917. His efforts succeeded in large part because, like Cody and Buntline, he was a larger-than-life persona, Dobrow said. But also because he was an excellent storyteller, and well-connected through personal relationships to the reporters and editors who covered the Wild West.

But just as important, Burke had a vision of how the exploitation of, and later, the closing of the frontier were compelling stories that captured imaginations around the world.

“I really believe that Burke understood the growing fixation and mythologizing of the American West,” Dobrow said. “He understood that Cody was sort of a symbol of the dying West and the new West, all at once.”

Bricklin sees Buntline as someone who was also enchanted by the West, and wanted to share its stories with the wider world, despite his often cynically opportunistic approach to storytelling.

“I think Buntline was making a sincere effort to record and share these amazing stories of a vanishing West,” she said.

“Throughout the history of the American West, many western characters, like William F. Cody, led tough lives and survived several heroic escapades,” said Jeremy Johnston, the Buffalo Bill Center of the West's Ernest J. Goppert Curator of the Buffalo Bill Museum. “Yet Buffalo Bill's professional connections to characters like Ned Buntline and John Burke transformed his real exploits and various careers into sensational dramatic narratives that made him an international sensation,” Johnston said.

“After people finished reading Buntline's dime novels and viewed all of Burke's stunning marketing material, it became nearly impossible to separate myth from reality regarding Buffalo Bill's legacy,” Johnston said. “Today's historians and biographers continue studying the multiple threads that weave this tapestry of myths and facts together, hoping to determine the most accurate historical truth. Thanks to the legacy of Buntline, Burke, and Buffalo Bill, separating the real west vs. the wild west will be an ongoing study.”



Ruffin Prevost is a freelance writer from Cody, Wyoming, and editor of Points West. He operates the Yellowstone Gate website and writes for Reuters News Agency.



E.Z.C. Judson (Ned Buntline), William F. Cody, Giuseppina Morlachi, and John B. "Texas Jack" Omohundro appear in a publicity photo for the stage production that launched Cody's career as a showman.



PERILOUS PRODUCTION

Posters and other promotional materials used to attract visitors to the Wild West often highlighted the excitement and danger associated with the show.

DYING TO WORK FOR BUFFALO BILL'S WILD WEST

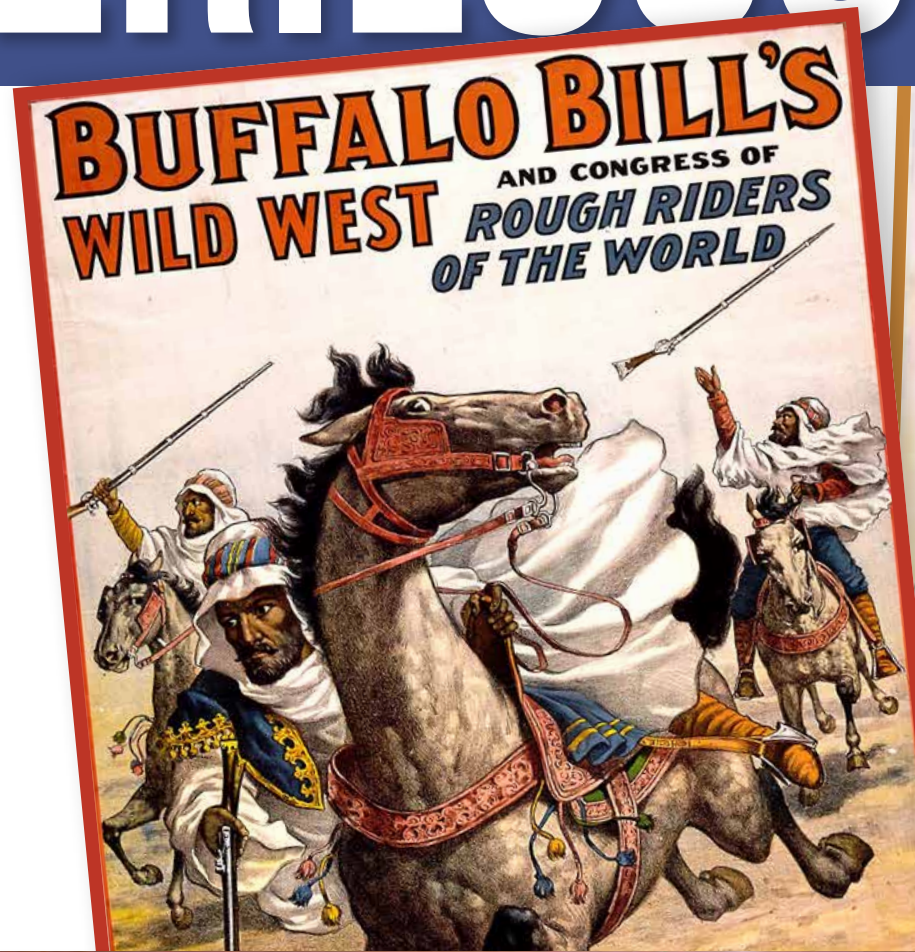
BY B. BYRON PRICE

In July 1883, William McCune, assistant general manager and superintendent of Buffalo Bill's Wild West, reported that since embarking on its inaugural tour in mid-May, the exhibition troupe had experienced two births and three deaths. Both births and two of the deaths were the same infant twins, born to unidentified Native American performers traveling with the company.

The unfortunate children had fallen ill and died on separate days, in Ohio, probably from pneumonia, shortly after birth. The name and cause of death of the other person in McCune's report remains a mystery, as do the identities of three of the four Native Americans and one Mexican vaquero who perished from unspecified causes during the first four months of the show's 1884 run.

The only specifically detailed fatality known from the latter group was 26-year-old Oscar Carey, a member of the company's Pawnee Indian contingent, and remembered as "one of the most daring riders of Buffalo Bill's troupe." He died from pneumonia during the outfit's six-day stand in Washington, D.C. He was buried in Congressional Cemetery.

Buffalo Bill's Wild West—a traveling production that included sharpshooters, trick riders, wild animals, horses, cowboys, and other spectacular presentations—was a complex affair with hundreds of cast and crew. The seven deaths endured in its first two years were pre-



cursors to at least 49 others during the exhibition's three decades of operation. The latter number includes performers, crew members, and administrative personnel whose passings were recorded in newspapers, diaries, business ledgers, and correspondence.

Although at least a few other deaths associated with William F. Cody's now famous enterprise may have gone unreported, the 56 fatalities examined here are representative of the many obvious and ever-present hazards involved in bringing a fast-paced outdoor exhibition of frontier life to the public in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

General Philip Sheridan, who was no stranger to danger, injury, and death, anticipated some of the risks involved in mounting the kind of open-air entertainment that Buffalo Bill imagined when the latter first broached the subject with him. "First thing you know," the clear-eyed Civil War veteran is said to have predicted, "some of these bucking broncos would buck into the audience and kill a couple of people. Or else the buffalo would stampede and there'd be all kinds of trouble."

Although Cody went ahead with his plans for a Wild West show, his friend's concerns proved prescient. Day or night, rain or shine, throughout its 30-year run, "all kinds of trouble," did visit Buffalo Bill's Wild West—some of it deadly. From the star of the show to the lowest roustabout in the outfit, to the thousands of spectators that packed the stands at performances throughout the U.S., Canada, and Europe, peril, injury, and death were an ever-present possibility at Cody's exhibition.

Deploying a traveling company that, on occasion, exceeded 700 people, along with 800 horses, a small herd of bison, and, at times, deer, elk, mules, and longhorn cattle as well, was no mean task. Nor was safely managing the transportation and manpower required to move, erect, perform, and dismantle the peripatetic exhibition on a tight schedule, in every kind of weather. All things considered, it is perhaps a

BUFFALO BILL'S WILD WEST AND PIONEER EXHIBITION



A REALISTIC REPRESENTATION OF THE HISTORIC BATTLE OF SUMMIT SPRINGS

Despite the risk involved in recreating battles, or other dramatic presentations, illness and disease caused the most deaths among Wild West employees.

wonder that the death toll among the exhibition's cast and crew, averaging between one and two fatalities a year, was not higher.

The loss of life during some seasons was worse than others. Although seven years of operation (1888, 1893, 1897, 1898, 1907, 1910, 1913) appear to have been fatality-free, at least four others (1884, 1890, 1899, 1900) registered five or more deaths. The 1890 season in Europe took the greatest toll, at eight.

The 37 deaths among Wild West performers between 1883 and 1913 represent 66 percent of the total number of known fatalities among the company. Seventeen losses within the crew added another 30 percent, with a single representative of management and one individual of unknown occupation comprising the rest.

This grim toll does not, of course, include any of the several spectators known to have died in accidents or of heart attacks or other health problems associated with their visits to the Wild

West. Nor do the figures discussed here consider the deaths of several children killed by accident while emulating Buffalo Bill and his troupe with loaded firearms and errant lassos.

The Wild West itself took great pains to control the use of weapons and ammunition among its cast and crew. Over three decades, only three employees are known to have died from gunshot wounds. One was accidental and the other two the result of lethal altercations.

Among all the causes of death that impacted Cody's company, illness and disease claimed the largest number of victims, about 39 percent of the total. Traveling more than 10,000 miles by rail annually during some years, and housed in sleeper cars between stops, the Wild West's cast and crew mixed with countless spectators in scores of communities, large and small. They contracted, and may have also spread, a variety of communicable, and often fatal diseases, including tuberculosis, typhoid, smallpox, and influenza.

Such virulent maladies were especially destructive during the troupe's 1890 European tour, which claimed four members of the Lakota tribe and Frank Richmond, the show's esteemed announcer, who died from the Russian flu in Barcelona, Spain.

Heart attacks also claimed several members of Cody's cast and crew, most dramatically, perhaps, Bryan E. Lynn, a British lancer in the company's Congress of Rough Riders, who died in the saddle and fell to the arena floor during a performance in Brooklyn, New York, in May of 1894.

Horses powered almost every phase of Cody's complex operation and were critical to the company's success. Their bites, kicks, and falls, however, also contributed to numerous injuries, and at least a few fatalities throughout the outfit. Wet weather, the varying quality of arena surfaces and the speed and vigor of horseback maneuvers accounted for most of the company's



SOME OF THESE BUCKING BRONCOS WOULD BUCK INTO THE AUDIENCE AND KILL A COUPLE OF PEOPLE. OR ELSE THE BUFFALO WOULD STAMPEDE AND THERE'D BE ALL KINDS OF TROUBLE.

— General Philip Sheridan

riding accidents, often rewarding even the most accomplished horsemen with concussions, broken bones, and other injuries.

Arena mishaps accounted for the deaths of at least four Indian horsemen, three Mexican vaqueros, and Major Frank North, who died a few months after being trampled by a wave of Pawnee horsemen after his saddle cinch broke during a Hartford, Connecticut, performance in August 1884.

Ironically perhaps, Cody's vaunted string of raucous horses did not send any cowboys to their graves during the popular "Cowboy Fun" segment of every performance, which included races and bucking-horse rides. The buckers' unpredictable antics, however, did result in a host of close calls and a plethora of injuries ranging from muscle strains to broken limbs to concussions, some of which probably shortened riders' careers and lives as well.

The only two deaths suffered by the troupe's cowboys, however, occurred in a hospital bed, rather than a saddle, and neither man probably died with his boots on. Grover Brennan, a top hand from Sheridan, Wyoming, succumbed to lung poisoning in New York in 1908, after extinguishing the flame of a lamp without turning off the gas before going to sleep. Just three weeks into the following season, Henry Beebe, another of Cody's expert bronco peelers, passed away in the same city, from complications associated with an infected toe after a horse stepped on his foot.

Over the years, even the pre-performance parades conducted by the company to help drum up business were occasionally fatal to participants and spectators. Sideshow musician Antonio Grancioso, died horribly in one such procession at Massillon, Ohio, when the driver of the bandwagon either lost control of his team or misjudged the height of a local bridge, crushing several players beneath its span.

On the road, the Wild West company spent



No Wild West cowboys died as a result of being thrown from a bucking horse. But one died from complications from an infected toe after a horse stepped on his foot.

far more time aboard railroads than horses and endured several fatal accidents as a consequence. At least nine individuals connected with the show perished in various collisions.

A single crash near Maywood, Illinois, on April 7, 1904, killed three Lakota tribesmen and injured perhaps 20 others, all of whom were making their way from South Dakota to join Cody's exhibition on the East Coast.

A spectacular wreck near Lexington, North Carolina, in 1901—the most consequential rail disaster in the Wild West's company's history—took most of its toll in horses rather than humans, killing more than 100, and causing William F. Cody to weep.

Deaths, whether animal or human, were keenly felt by members of the Wild West fam-

ily. Some of the deceased were interred in the communities where they died, while the bodies of others were shipped to their next of kin for burial. The company often paid funeral expenses. On more than one occasion, when a performance was at hand, the entire company attended the burial service of a comrade in their arena attire, so that the show, in the best traditions of the theater, might begin on time.



Byron Price was Director of what was then called the Buffalo Bill Historical Center from 1996-2001. He currently lives with his wife Jeannie in Norman, Oklahoma.

A RENDEZVOUS REVISITED

BY TESSA BAKER

Artist Alfred Jacob Miller created a number of sketches and other works, including the watercolor *Building the Fire*, during an 1837 expedition to the West.

SPECIAL EXHIBITION EXPLORES ALFRED JACOB MILLER'S ART LIKE NEVER BEFORE

Traveling deep into the Rocky Mountains, trappers, traders, and tribes transformed quiet valleys into bustling extravaganzas of exchange and revelry in the summers of the 1820s and 1830s. Featuring fur trading, tale telling, and merriment, the annual rendezvous attracted thousands from across the West.

But only one eyewitness captured the legendary scenes on canvas.

During an expedition in 1837, Alfred Jacob Miller became the first and only Euro-American artist to attend a Rocky Mountain rendezvous and provide a visual perspective on the rare gathering of mountain men and Indigenous Peoples.

"Miller's depictions show us this really brief moment in western American history where trade and intercultural relationships were actually really quite amicable and equal," said Karen Brooks McWhorter, the Buffalo Bill Center of the West's Collier-Read Director of Curatorial, Education, and Museum Services. "That quickly changed shortly thereafter."

The amicable and equal relationships varied between fur trade companies and Plains Indian nations. For example, the Blackfoot hated and fought the American fur companies. Yet the Blackfoot traded with the British fur companies. The Shoshone sided with the American fur companies in hopes of acquiring firearms to defend themselves against the Blackfoot, who received guns from the British. In many ways, the American fur trade was a violent trade war. Not to mention the spread of disease among indigenous people and their increased dependency on trade with American businesses.

The rendezvous started in 1825 and



Alfred Jacob Miller's watercolor, *Louis—Rocky Mountain Trapper*, is one of many iconic images he created that helped create the mythological limage of the mountain man.

ended by 1840. The one attended by Miller took place along a tributary of the Green River in what is now Wyoming.

"It's a brief period in the American West, but it's one worth appreciating through Miller's eyes," McWhorter said.

A special exhibition opening at the Center of the West on May 20, 2023, will give viewers the opportunity to see Miller's work as never before.

Featuring nearly five dozen works of art, the exhibition in the Anne & Charles Duncan Special Exhibition Gallery will focus on the connection between Miller and Sir William Drummond Stewart—the Scottish nobleman who hired Miller as the

artist for his 1837 expedition. Miller later traveled to Stewart's Murthly Castle in Scotland, completing many paintings there during the 1840s.

From intimately scaled watercolors to 10-foot-wide canvases, every piece in the Center's special exhibition relates to Miller's relationship with Stewart and the artist's time abroad.

"Never before has a critical mass of Miller's work depicted for his Scottish patron been brought together," McWhorter said.

A wealthy adventurer, Stewart played a crucial role in Miller's artwork. Not only did he fund the expedition that would change the course of the young artist's career, Stewart also influenced how Miller depicted the western scenes.

"I think that Stewart was very explicit in terms of the kinds of things he wanted Miller to paint," said Jim Hardee, editor of the *Rocky Mountain Fur Trade Journal*. "So we see a lot of hunting images, we see a lot of that frontier life interaction with Native Americans."

Miller's paintings served as a highlight reel—something of a "what I did this summer" scrapbook for Stewart to show off in Scotland, Hardee said. It's no accident that Stewart makes frequent appearances in the paintings on a white horse, often in the center, he added.

The Scottish aristocrat is like the "Where's Waldo?" in Miller's artwork, McWhorter joked, explaining that the artist painted his patron into many scenes, especially those he commissioned.

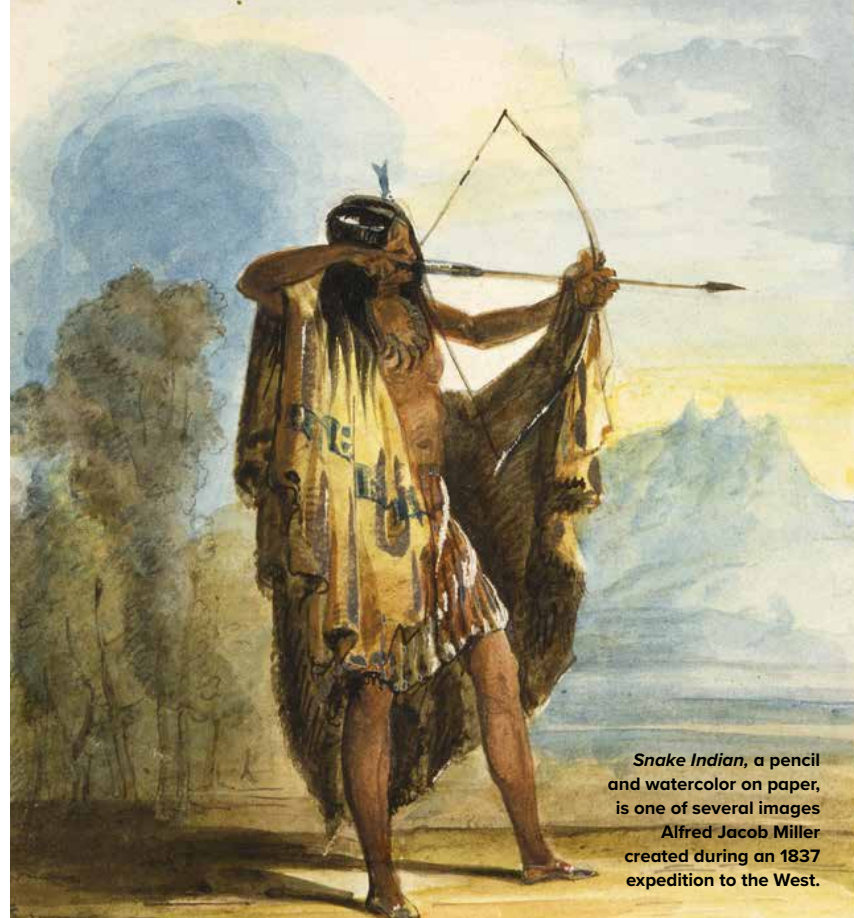
"Stewart did play a very active role in deciding what ultimately would grace the walls of his castle," she said.

“

Bravo for either Stewart or Miller coming up with the idea of, ‘Let’s get some guys to pose so we can record this.’

— JIM HARDEE

Editor of the *Rocky Mountain Fur Trade Journal*



Snake Indian, a pencil and watercolor on paper, is one of several images Alfred Jacob Miller created during an 1837 expedition to the West.



Our Camp, an oil painting on canvas by Alfred Jacob Miller, presents a peaceful and idyllic depiction of travelers making camp in a valley at the foot of a snow-capped mountain range.

Stewart’s influence—paired with Miller’s artistic training in Paris and Rome—led to romanticized portrayals of the West, mountain men, and others who roamed the Rocky Mountains.

MOUNTAIN MAN MYTH

Historians of the fur trade widely reference and rely on Miller’s work, McWhorter said, as the artist provided visual interpretations of western clothing, equipment, and everyday experiences in the 1830s.

“He does two paintings—one is sort of a study for the other—of trappers actually trapping, and they’re the only historical images we have of these guys plying their trade,” Hardee said.

Though likely posed, the pieces provide a rare glimpse of trappers doing what they went West to do.

“Bravo for either Stewart or Miller coming up with the idea of, ‘Let’s get some guys to pose so we can record this,’” Hardee said.

The expedition’s mundane moments were not generally the focus of Miller’s artwork made for Stewart’s Scottish estate.

“When you are thinking about a painting for your wall and celebrating your ad-

venture, you’re probably not going to pick a depiction of mucking out the camp or cleaning up breakfast or something like that,” McWhorter said. “It’s going to be the cavalcade—this parade scene—amid a beautiful landscape. There’s a lot of romanticization in the paintings created for Stewart; we need to think about the patron and Miller’s own inclinations.”

Literal romanticization can be seen in Stewart himself, as he had a blond buckskin suit tailor-made in London to wear on his western adventures.

“He had this suit made just to fit into his imagination of what mountain man life was like,” McWhorter said.

Stewart and Miller both contributed to the mythical image of the mountain man “that is still very powerful today,” said Jeremy Johnston, the Center’s Ernest J. Gopert Curator of the Buffalo Bill Museum.

“Common laborers like mountain men and cowboys get elevated to this American heroic status that we don’t see with, say, coal miners and oilfield workers,” Johnston said. “It’s people like Alfred Jacob Miller and Sir William Drummond Stewart who make those significant contributions to those mythical depictions—those romanti-

cized views of opening the West.”

In reality, mountain men were just trying to make a living. The fur trade was a large capitalist venture, with natural resources leaving the region to fulfill global demand, Johnston said. As trappers slogged away in the rugged terrain and bitter cold, investors in places like New York profited off their hard labor.

While a few mountain men like Jim Bridger tried to profit from their discoveries out West, “many of them didn’t make a fortune; many of them left the fur trade and went back to farming,” Johnston said.

Some trappers shifted from the initial economic motivation to a lifestyle motivation, Hardee said.

“And that’s where that ‘bigger than life’ kind of thing comes in,” he said. “When we think of how Hollywood has portrayed mountain men, I think Hollywood probably has done more damage to what the fur trade was really like than Alfred Jacob Miller ever did.”

‘A LOT TO LEARN’

From sketches to watercolors to oil paintings, Miller was “incredibly prolific,”

McWhorter said. He started as a portrait painter and created some scenes of his hometown of Baltimore and New Orleans, where he was living in 1837 when Stewart invited him on the adventure of a lifetime.

While Miller never returned to the Rocky Mountains, he continued to paint scenes from the West until his death in 1874.

His artwork continues to be appreciated in the region that captivated him, and beyond.

“When you look at a collection like this, there’s such a rich tapestry that when you start pulling on the threads, it just goes everywhere—so many connections, so many different interpretations that came out of that,” Johnston said. “From a historian’s perspective, it’s a great example of how one collection can really shape a lot of our interpretations of the past.”

Miller’s written notes about his images also provide important details.

“That gives us little bits and pieces of insight, cultural relations, material culture even—things that we might not have thought about if we didn’t read the notes and descriptions that he kept,” Hardee said.

As people view the Center’s special exhibition, McWhorter hopes they gain insight into what Wyoming was like in 1837, and

come away with a better appreciation for the appeal of the West in Europe at that time.

A complementary exhibition also opening in May 2023 will feature artwork by Tony Foster—a British artist whose depictions of the Green River watershed celebrate its cultural, historical, and ecological importance.

“We’ll have this exhibition of large-scale, contemporary watercolors looking at the Green, and then Miller’s story takes us all the way back to 1837 in the same area,” McWhorter said.

She also hopes people leave with a better understanding of the complexity of character of Stewart, Miller, and the subjects of his art.

The Center is partnering with the Eiteljorg Museum in Indianapolis to bring in another scholarly perspective on sexuality and gender as it relates to the story, McWhorter said.

“What we have to go on is context, the writings of Stewart and Miller, and also the paintings — looking at these anew, we hope to provide more insight into what we know to be really deep and close relationships among particular men in Stewart’s company,” she said.

Another major theme of the special exhibition is Miller’s depiction of Indigenous Peoples. He invoked stereotypes as a man of his time, McWhorter said, and these stereotypes are worthy of critical evaluation.

“But what kind of merit might those paintings have? What credible or useful information might they actually provide as it relates to Indigenous cultural heritage?” she asked. A particular focus will be on depictions of clothing and accoutrement worn by Native Peoples in Miller’s works, and these historical items’ connections to contemporary design and living traditions.

“There’s a lot to learn from Miller’s paintings,” McWhorter said, “but also, we need to appreciate him as a particular man working for a particular patron at a particular time. Understanding the context is key, and we hope to bring that history to life for our visitors.”



Tessa Baker is a freelance journalist and former editor of the Powell Tribune. She enjoys everyday adventures with her husband and two boys.

A QUICK GUIDE TO year-end giving

BY CAROLYN WILLIAMS

It's hard to believe another year is quickly coming to a close. Many people choose to make charitable gifts at the end of the year. December is by far our busiest month in terms of both the number of individual gifts and their total value, as it is for most other nonprofits.

IF THIS IS YOU, HERE ARE SOME THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND:

- As long as the envelope is postmarked December 31 or earlier, we can process your check as a 2022 gift. Please do not send cash through the mail.

- You can make your credit card gift online. We will need to process your card prior to the end of the year, so don't wait

too long—our office will close for the year at 3 p.m. on Friday, December 30. We will be closed on Saturday, December 31. You can also call and make a credit card gift over the phone. Please do not e-mail your credit card number, because e-mail is not a secure method of communication.

- Gifts of stock take a few days to process, so be sure to allow at least a week for your broker to transfer shares to us. The last week in December can be busy, with brokerage staff on holidays just like many others, so it's best to do it before mid-month.

- It may already be too late to direct your retirement fund's required minimum distribution (RMD) to charity for this year. You can contact the custodian to see if it's possible to make it happen by December

31, if you haven't already received it. (Remember, you may owe taxes on your RMD, but we won't.)

- Donations of objects take a long time to process. Appraisals need to be done, and if you want to be sure it is accessioned into our collections, curators need to review it well in advance to determine if it would fit well with our acquisition goals and museum mission. If you are reading this, best to get started now on such a gift for 2023.

If you have questions on how to best make a year-end gift, give us a call at 307-578-4008. But don't wait too long.

As always, thank you for including the Buffalo Bill Center of the West in your philanthropy. *We appreciate your support!*

THE PATRONS Ball RETURNS

All of us at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West were thrilled to once again host the Patrons Ball on September 24, after having to cancel the signature gala in 2020 and 2021 due to concerns related to COVID.

Friends old and new greeted each other with big smiles, ample evidence that we weren't the only ones excited to be back. We all felt the positive "vibe" from cocktail hour through the vigorous dancing after dinner.

A big thank you to all who came out and celebrated as part of the Buffalo Bill Center of the West family. Don't miss next year's ball: Saturday, September 23, 2023. Help make the fun!

Our sincere gratitude to all 2022 Patrons Ball sponsors:

THE SHOWMAN

- Naoma Tate & the Family of Hal Tate

SCOUT

- Caryl & Roy Cline
- Hirtle Callaghan & Co.
- Maggie & Dick Scarlett

BUFFALO BILL

- Carlene Lebous & Harris Haston
- Carol & Jim Linton
- Rusty & Deborah Rokita

PAHASKA

- Bill & Mary Anne Dings

ANNIE OAKLEY

- Eide Bailly, LLP
- Horse Creek Cattle Company / Dave Berry & Anne Hanson
- John Housel
- Christy Messnick & Larry Maynard II
- Mooring Consulting Group
- Nick & Yulia Piazza



Cody Culture Club

The Cody Culture club celebrates the unique culture of Cody, Wyoming. Programs are \$20 and include insightful presentations and discussions, with appetizers and cash bar, from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. on these dates:

JANUARY 12: *Valley Ranch and the Yellowstone Backcountry* by Brian Beauvais, at the Holiday Inn.

FEBRUARY 9: *Buffalo Bill, Butteri, and the 1890 Bucking Contest in Rome* by Renee Lagreid, at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West.

MARCH 9: *History of Cassie's* by Mel Singer and Robyn Cutter, at Cassie's Supper Club.

APRIL 13: *Living Land: Insights on Memory, Society, and Sacred Space* by Gordon Ambrosino, at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West.

New Plains Indian Museum Curator

The Plains Indian Museum welcomed new curator Gordon Ambrosino in September. His research centers on the agency of art in constructing place-based histories at specific times, and across time.

Informed by his prior and current repatriation consultations with Native cultural leaders through NAGPRA, his work more specifically focuses upon re-establishing the inextricable connections between museum collections, past and present people, and the land to illustrate the multiple ways in which art links identities to specific places.

Ambrosino has been developing a co-curated museum exhibition with cultural leaders from the tribes of the Bears Ears Intertribal Coalition that is scheduled to open at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County in 2025.

These projects lay the foundation for his curatorial work at the Plains Indian Museum where he is actively consulting with tribes from both the United States and Canada, developing novel and compelling exhibitions,

and conducting research that integrates his interests in mobile collections objects and landscapes.



Subscribe to Armax

Armax is the peak international publication promoting the scholarship of contemporary arms. By subscribing, you can directly support academically rigorous research examining contemporary arms, promote the field of arms and munitions scholarship, and provide opportunities for early-career researchers.

Keep abreast of the latest research by subscribing to Armax, or submit your original manuscripts at: armaxjournal.org.

Upcoming Events

VIRTUAL FAMILY TRIVIA NIGHT

Show what you know about the American West and win great prizes just in time for the holidays! Trivia runs 6:30 – 8 p.m. on **December 14**. Admission is \$5/family and you can register and buy tickets at tickets.centerofthewest.org.

LOCAL LORE WITH BOB RICHARD

Cody native Bob Richard continues his popular free local history lecture series with a look at Sunlight and Crandall Country, **December 15** at noon in the Coe Auditorium.

VIP EXCLUSIVE FIREARMS TOUR

Cody Firearms Museum curator Danny Michael hosts Christmas with Winchester, an exclusive, VIP tour. Tickets are \$60, or \$55 for members and tours run 6 – 8 p.m. **December 15 & 17**.

NORTHWEST COLLEGE DAY

Don't miss this special opportunity

for Northwest College alumni, staff, and students to immerse themselves in the Center's museums, meet the curators, discuss internship opportunities, and have lunch, 11 a.m. – 2 p.m., **January 17**.

WINTERFEST FAMILY FUN DAY

Enjoy dinner and fun activities at our Winterfest event. Admission is \$20/family, free for members. No pre-registration is required for this event running 3 – 7 p.m., **January 20**.

REMEMBERING JIM NIELSON

Buffalo Bill Center of the West staff members and members of the Board of Trustees were deeply saddened upon learning of the death of Jim Nielson, a beloved benefactor and Trustee. He was an incredible friend to the Center and the Cody and Park County community.

"Jim Nielson was a kind and caring individual, and a foundational pillar of his community for decades," said Rebecca West, Executive Director of the the Center of the West.



"When he supported a project or an idea, he would see it through with his determined, quiet-but-firm approach," West said. "You never had to

guess what Jim wanted or was thinking—he was a great communicator. It has been an honor working with Jim, and especially rewarding to share laughs, memories, and to watch him enjoy life with his wife Anne and his family."

Nielson was among the Center's longest-serving Trustees, starting in 1973 and serving for an amazing 49 years. Along with his wife, Anne Young, Jim had a longstanding desire to share the Center's collections and expertise far and wide. This included sponsoring numerous exhibitions and programs, including: *Invisible Boundaries: Exploring Yellowstone's Great Animal Migrations*; *Albert Bierstadt: Witness to a Changing West*; the *Peter Hassrick Public Programs* fund; and the upcoming *Alfred Jacob Miller: Revisiting the Rendezvous in Scotland and Today*.



A Spirited Wild West Volley

BY MACK FROST

The performers and crew who toured with Buffalo Bill's Wild West were among the best around at their chosen professions. But they didn't spend every minute working. Between shows and during setting up and packing out, there was always a little downtime for a bit of fun.

Photographer John C. Hemment captured just such a moment when two Indigenous performers squared off in a table tennis match, with a rapt group of spectators cheering them on.

Hement was primarily a "turf" photographer based in New York. He covered all aspects of horse racing, with a special interest in developing the "photo finish" process to determine which racehorse crossed the finish line first. He conducted many experiments using different cameras, lenses, and film to develop his process.

He was also a photojournalist who in 1898 covered most of the Spanish-American war in Cuba, following the sinking of the battleship *Maine*. He was hired by the United States government and several newspapers to photograph the wreckage of the *Maine*.

It's not known for sure how he came to photograph the Wild West, but he may have been hired by the production to document the performers and logistics of the popular show. Or, he may also have just been interested in the Wild West as a unique journalism subject.

There are several versions of this photo showing two Native American performers playing table tennis on an impromptu surface in the arena of the show. The competitor on the left with his leg up in the air is Iron Tail. A dozen men have gathered to watch the competition, including cowboys, Cossacks, and other Native Americans.

The cowboy in the front row on the right

with his hand up is Andy Belknap, and to his right is head cowboy Joe Esquivel. Another man can be seen in the center clutching some banknotes, possibly awaiting the outcome of a wager on the match. The ball is blurry, but visible over the middle of the net, in the foreground above the shoulder of a Cossack spectator.

The photo was probably taken in 1902, as there is another portrait of Iron Tail signed by Hemment in 1902 in the William F. Cody collection.



Mack Frost is a lifelong Cody, Wyoming, resident who works as a digital technician in the McCracken Research Library at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West. He displays his photography at Open Range Images in downtown Cody.

**BUFFALO BILL
CENTER
OF THE WEST**

720 Sheridan Avenue
Cody, Wyoming 82414

Non-profit Org.
US POSTAGE PAID
Denver, CO



Bear Breath & Snowflakes

BY CAROL HAGAN

\$1,620

pointswest
MARKET

720 SHERIDAN AVE • CODY, WY • 800.533.3838

STORE.CENTEROFTHEWEST.ORG

Carol Hagan

STUDIOS