1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Scout's Rest Ranch Headquarters

Other Name/Site Number: Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 2921 Scouts Rest Ranch Road Not for publication:

City/Town: North Platte Vicinity:

State: Nebraska County: Lincoln Code: 111 Zip Code: 69101

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property		Category of Property	
Private:	___	Building(s):	___
Public-Local:	___	District:	_X_
Public-State:	_X_	Site:	___
Public-Federal:	___	Structure:	___
		Object:	___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
5	1	buildings
1	0	sites
2	7	structures
0	0	objects
8	8	Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 4

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing:

DRAFT

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ____ nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ Entered in the National Register
___ Determined eligible for the National Register
___ Determined not eligible for the National Register
___ Removed from the National Register
___ Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic:	Domestic Agriculture/Subsistence	Sub:	single dwelling animal facility
Current:	Landscape Recreation and Culture	Sub:	park museum

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION:

LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate
LATE VICTORIAN: Second Empire
LATE VICTORIAN: Stick/Eastlake

MATERIALS:

Foundation:	Stone
Walls:	Wood
Roof:	Wood
Other:	Earth; glass (windows); concrete; asphalt

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

Scout's Rest Ranch, which once stretched across 4,000 acres of Nebraska prairie, was the primary home of frontiersman and showman William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody. The site is an historic ranch headquarters operated today by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission as the twenty-five acre Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park. The proposed Scout's Rest Ranch Headquarters National Historic Landmark (NHL) encompasses the 8.25 acres of the historical park. Within the proposed boundary are eight contributing resources—historic buildings, structures and the overall site—that date to the period of significance, which extends from 1886 with the building of the two-story, Second Empire style home where Cody lived, to 1913, the year he sold the ranch. The buildings, structures, and sites of the proposed NHL contain a high degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

The landscape surrounding Scout's Rest Ranch is typical of a rural high plains setting. The agricultural fields to the north and west make for a wide view and flat horizon, similar in appearance to the historic view shed, although there are modern developments to the south and east. From the side porch of the house, the main view is of Scout Creek, the headquarters area's manicured lawns, the barn and related structures, and a scattering of large trees and shrubbery. The scenery is broadly similar to that which Cody and others would have seen once landscaping was completed in the 1880s, and thus the site retains the feeling and association of a late nineteenth- to early twentieth-century ranch.

Historic Physical Appearance

In 1878, William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody began purchasing land northwest of North Platte, Nebraska, and, over the next dozen years or so, amassed the 4,000 acres that became Scout's Rest Ranch. The North Platte River skirted the property on the northeast, and on the south the land stretched nearly to the Union Pacific Railroad tracks. A small creek, fed by a spring, flowed west to southeast nearly through the center of the ranch, dividing it into two parts. On his land, Cody raised purebred cattle and thoroughbred horses and grew alfalfa, corn, and oats.

"The waters of the great Platte flow through no prettier or more natural stock ranch," The *Omaha Herald* reported in December 1885. Nutritious buffalo grass fattened the cattle in summer and wild prairie grass grew in abundance. The *Herald* noted Cody's herd of 181 thoroughbreds, "some of the best ever brought out west," and his 125 Hereford, Shorthorns, Polled Angus cattle "and other high grades." It also mentioned the "ranch buildings" he had constructed three miles from the city.[1]

A two-story, nine-room Victorian house, built for $3,900, was completed in October 1886, with an icehouse and cob house completed nearby at about the same time. In 1887, Cody built a large horse barn and, in 1891, a barn for livestock (it burned down in 1904). Sometime in the 1880s, Cody and his brother-in-law Al Goodman created a diversion pond by damming Scout Creek, which ran through the property. In 1893-94, at a cost of $10,000, Cody and neighboring rancher Isaac Dillon constructed the twelve-mile Dillon and Cody Canal from the North Platte River to irrigate their pastures and fields. Cody and his ranch managers transformed the prairie into a productive, flourishing landscape and constructed bridges, planted cottonwood and box-elder trees, and established lawns.[2] In 1908-09, a springhouse/cellar was constructed, and Cody's daughter and son-in-law, Irma

[1] *Omaha Herald*, December 6, 1885, quoted in Nellie Snyder Yost, *Buffalo Bill, His Family, Friends, Fame, Failures, and Fortunes* (Chicago: Sage Books, 1979), 154–155. It is not known whether any of these early ranch buildings survived; if they did, they are no longer at the site.

[2] Yost, *Buffalo Bill*, 163, 200, 211–212, 222, 229–235, 258–259, 320–321; Jeff Barnes, *The Great Plains Guide to Buffalo Bill: Forts, Fights & Other Sites* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2014), 142; Louis S. Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America: William Cody and the Wild West Show* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2005), 232; Robert A. Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody: The Man Behind the*

and Fred Garlow, put a two-story addition on the back of the ranch house, creating a new kitchen and four upstairs rooms for the hired hands. They also modernized the house with electric lights, indoor plumbing, and a furnace.[3]

Cody began calling his ranch *Scout's Rest* in 1886, the same year the Victorian, Second Empire style house was completed. It was a befitting name because Cody valued his career as a civilian scout and saw the ranch as a retreat that would be the perfect place to rest and ultimately to retire. He was one of the first ranchers in western Nebraska to improve his herds with blooded cattle instead of longhorns, creating a quality stock so high that farmers and ranchers from across the region came to his stock sales. Operating the ranch required about thirty hired hands; in peak seasons the number increased to between fifty and sixty.

In 1913, when Buffalo Bill's Wild West went bankrupt, Cody was forced to sell Scout's Rest Ranch to pay debts. In 1927, rancher Henry Kuhlman purchased part of the property, including the ranch headquarters. His family lived in the ranch house for many years until moving into a modern house west of the property. In 1961, Kuhlman sold a twenty-five acre parcel containing the historic structures to the State of Nebraska for $75,000. During the 1960s, the state restored the historic buildings and turned the site into Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park, which opened to the public in 1965. The state constructed visitor and maintenance facilities, including two parking lots, a picnic area, comfort station, and maintenance shop, as well as a caretaker residence. The state moved another shop and residence onto the property and also relocated to the ranch a sod-roofed log cabin that originally stood on Cody's Dismal River ranch, sixty-five miles from North Platte.[4]

Present Physical Appearance

The proposed Scout's Rest Ranch Headquarters NHL encompasses 8.25 acres in the shape of a square in the southwest corner of Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park. Scout Creek bisects the nominated area from west to southeast, dividing the resources into three clusters: a domestic cluster, working area cluster, and water-related cluster. The ranch house (1886) and, just to its west, three small outbuildings—the cob house (ca. 1880s), the icehouse (ca. 1880s), and the springhouse/cellar (1908-09)—dominate the domestic cluster, which is south of Scout Creek. The working area cluster sits north of Scout Creek and includes the barn (1887), a reconstructed corral and windmill (1960s), and a comfort station (1960s). Except for the mid twentieth-century comfort station, the working area corresponds to land uses at historic agricultural and ranching sites. The water-related-cluster of structures and features centers on Scout Creek. Three concrete bridges (1960s) and one wooden footbridge (1960s) span the creek along its length through the nominated parcel, and a reconstructed, concrete dam (1960s) on the creek forms a diversion pond (1880s) north of the ranch house. Throughout the

---

Legend (New York: J. Wiley, 2000), 319–20, 225, 364, 379; Don Russell, *The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960), 422–23; "Buffalo Bill's Home Life," Omaha *Sunday World-Herald*, March 20, 1892, vol. 27, no. 14; Cody to Al Goodman, July 7, 1887, August 25, 1891, June 16, 1895, quoted in Stella Foote, *Letters from 'Buffalo Bill'* (El Segundo, CA: Upton & Sons, 1990), 27, 55, 68–69, 80–81; Ira L. Bare and Will H. McDonald, eds., *An Illustrated History of Lincoln County, Nebraska and Her People…*, vol. II (Chicago: American Historical Society, 1920), 29–30.

[3] Yost, *Buffalo Bill*, , 98, 153–155, 162–63, 167–71, 184, 211–12, 220, 222, 227–29, 232–36, 258–59, 298; Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 232, 345, 417–418, 501; Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody*, 289–290, 297, 319–320, 359, 379; Russell, *The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill*, 422–425; Foote, *Letters*, 35, 38; "Buffalo Bill's Home Life," 14; Jason Tonsfeldt, Superintendent, Buffalo Bill Historical Park, conversation with Hannah Braun, Research Associate, Public Lands History Center, June 10, 2015. Yost writes that when the contractor built the new ranch house in 1886, he moved the original house where the Goodmans had lived. Yost does not say what the house looked like, where it was located, or where it was moved.

[4] Yost, *Buffalo Bill*, 380, 421–22; Tonsfeldt to Braun, September 10, 2014, June 10, 2015; James Denney, "Birthday Greetings for Buffalo Bill's Home," Omaha *Sunday World-Herald Magazine of the Midlands*, May 18, 1986; Tom Allen, "There Is No Rest at Scouts Rest These Days," Omaha *Sunday World-Herald*, December 6, 1964; "Cody's 'Wild West' Home May Be Preserved," Omaha *Sunday World-Herald Magazine*, September 4, 1960, 75–76.

property are cottonwood and box-elder trees, some planted by Cody, and lawns, which are remnants of Cody's landscaping (1880s). Modern asphalt roads and concrete paths (1960s) provide maintenance and visitor access.

Scout's Rest Ranch was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on January 30, 1978, as nationally significant for agriculture and farming and for its association with theater through Buffalo Bill's Wild West. It also was listed for its association with William F. Cody. The nomination covered a 6.93-acre boundary encompassing the ranch house, barn, cob house, icehouse, and springhouse/cellar (the latter deemed noncontributing) and did not include other structures or landscape features, including bridges, the creek, the pond, dam, and trees.[5] The enlarged NHL boundary reflects the incorporation of these landscape features, some designed by Cody and all contributing to the history of Scout's Rest Ranch.

The proposed Scout's Rest Ranch Headquarters NHL contains sixteen resources. Of these, the eight contributing resources are: the ranch house, cob house, icehouse, springhouse/cellar, barn, windmill, Scout Creek irrigation system, and landscaped lawns. The boundary encompasses eight noncontributing resources, including the reconstruction of a historic structure (the corral) and the modern visitor buildings and structures (comfort station, parking lot, bridges, and roads and paths). Outside the nominated area is the remainder of the historical park, which includes two maintenance shops, two caretakers' residences, the reconstructed Dismal River log cabin, a picnic area, and a modern parking lot on the south of the property, along Scouts Rest Ranch Road. Resources outside the nominated area date from outside the period of significance or do not possess sufficient integrity for inclusion in the NHL district.

Resources at Scout's Rest Ranch

Map Number	***Resource Name***	***Date(s)***	***Contributing/Noncontributing***
1	Ranch House	1886/1909	Contributing Building
2	Cob House	ca. 1880s	Contributing Building
3	Icehouse	ca. 1880s	Contributing Building
4	Springhouse/Cellar	1908-1909	Contributing Building
5	Comfort Station	ca. 1960s	Noncontributing Building
6	Barn	1887	Contributing Building
7	Corral	ca. 1960s	Noncontributing Structure
8	Windmill	ca. 1880s	Contributing Structure
9	Scout Creek Irrigation System	ca. 1880s/1960s	Contributing Structure
10	West End Pond Bridge	ca. 1960s	Noncontributing Structure
11	Dam Bridge	ca. 1960s	Noncontributing Structure
12	Concrete/Earthen Footbridge	ca. 1960s	Noncontributing Structure
13	Wooden Arch Footbridge	ca. 1960s	Noncontributing Structure
14	Landscaped Lawns	ca. 1880s	Contributing Site
15	Parking Lot	ca. 1960s	Noncontributing Structure
16	Roads and Paths	ca. 1960s	Noncontributing Structure

[5] National Register of Historic Places, Scout's Rest Ranch, North Platte, Lincoln County, Nebraska, National Register #78001705.

1) Ranch House, 1886, with addition in 1909 (contributing building)

In 1886, Cody hired North Platte contractor Patrick Walsh to build a two-story, nine-room house for $3,900. The price included paint, plaster, and materials, and a foundation of buff-colored stone hauled by rail from Colorado. Cody left details of the house's construction and furnishings to his sister, Julia Cody Goodman, who managed the ranch with her husband, Al Goodman. Cody specified that the front porch should be ten feet wide because he wanted space for outdoor entertaining. He also requested numerous closets and an upstairs parlor and bedroom suite for himself. Cody ordered fashionable "Royal Wilton" carpets and furniture from Dewey & Stone in Omaha. After it was furnished and carpeted, the house's final cost came to $6,000. The house became Cody's primary home when he was not touring with Buffalo Bill's Wild West. It was also home to his ranch manager, the manager's family, foreman, and hired hands. When Fred and Irma Cody Garlow (Cody's daughter and son-in-law) became ranch managers in 1908, they decided the house was too small for their family and employees. In 1909, the Garlows constructed a two-story addition on the back of the house, creating a new kitchen and four upstairs rooms for the hired hands. They also modernized the home with electric lights, indoor plumbing, and a furnace.[6]

The ranch house is an irregularly massed, two-story frame structure with a stone foundation in the Second Empire style with millwork that was presumably fabricated for the Codys in a local sash, door, and blind factory. As was typical of the period, the house has paired scrolled brackets and a two-story bay window normally associated with the Italianate style. Defining Second Empire features include irregular massing, scalloped mansard roof with round-edged, wood shingles, and large dormers, roof cresting and spires, and a three-story tower. Ornamental millwork that is characteristic of local vernacular sources includes the patterns used for the porch spindle work and dormer roofs, as well as the scalloped trim motif used for the tower cresting and the vertical siding on the bay window, dormers, and friezes. In keeping with its historic color scheme, the house is white with green trim and green window shutters. Most of the windows are single hung one over one. Some of the first-story windows have decorative molding and many on the second story are dormers in the mansard. The building has two, brick chimneys in the original portion of the house and one in the addition. Defining features on the south-facing façade include a recessed porch with spindle work and brackets, a main entry with stained glass transom and sidelights, and a second-story porch accessed from the tower. Other defining features include the two-story bay window at the corner of the south and east elevations and a small side porch with spindle work and brackets on the east elevation. The two-story 1909 addition on the back of the house is box-shaped with a flat roof and few decorative elements aside from window shutters, and scalloped second-story siding to imitate the mansard roof on the original portion of the house.[7]

The house's interior retains the 1909 remodeled room demarcations. Off the central hall is the den on the right, the parlor on the left, and a central staircase leading to the second floor. Down the hall is the dining room. To the left of the dining room is the manager's bedroom, occupied between 1908 and 1913 by Irma and Fred Garlow. Next to this room is the mudroom, now used as an office. From the dining room, a hall leads to the original kitchen on the left, used after 1909 as the employee dining room. At the end of the hall is the 1909 kitchen, now used as a gift shop. On the second story are five rooms in the original portion of the house and four in the addition. The front room on the left is Louisa Cody's bedroom with Irma Garlow's jam room and the nursery across the hall. Another hall leads to the tower stairway. William F. Cody's bedroom and a connected parlor are across the hall. The hallway continues into the addition, where a diagonal passage connects three hired hands' rooms that now house exhibits. A large fourth room was the ranch hands' bunkroom and is now a

[6] National Register of Historic Places, Scout's Rest Ranch; Yost, *Buffalo Bill*, 170–71, 220, 346, 355–56, 358; Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody*, 297, 414; Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 232; William F. Cody to Julia Cody Goodman, February 14, July 24, 1886, and Cody to Al and Julia Goodman, September 16, 1886, in Foote, *Letters*, 36, 38–39, 41.

[7] National Register of Historic Places, Scout's Rest Ranch.

theater. A servants' staircase leads down to a side door off the kitchen. Original Cody family furniture and heirlooms and other period pieces furnish the house. Doors with stained glass windows and decorative molding and paneling are original to the home.[8]

Since the 1909 addition and remodeling, the house has had no major alterations. From 1962 to 1964, the State of Nebraska restored the house: whenever possible, crews cleaned, painted, and reused siding, shingles, railings, and decorative details. Due to deterioration, workers had to replace some exterior woodwork and decorative features with in-kind materials and install structural supports. Crews stripped the interior walls and ceilings and added fresh lath, plaster, and paint. In the process, a portion of the original wallpaper, designed by Cody and printed in Germany, was uncovered. A reproduction of the original pattern covers the dining room walls. It shows scenes from Buffalo Bill's Wild West, as well as those from Cody's buffalo hunting and scouting days. The carpeting also is a reproduction of the original "Royal Wilton" pattern. After Cody sold the ranch, later owners removed the window shutters. In 1999, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission installed in-kind shutter replacements to match the house's appearance at the time of Cody's ownership. Historic photos show a wooden boardwalk running from the front door to a gate and a semi-circular, white picket fence enclosing a lawn and the three outbuildings. Later owners removed the boardwalk and fence. When the State of Nebraska restored the house in the 1960s, workers laid a concrete path along the former location of the boardwalk and built a square shaped picket fence. In 2011, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission removed the fence when it constructed temporary berms to protect the house from flooding along the North Platte River. In June 2015, workers installed new, in-kind roof shingles and returned the chimneys, which the state had modified during the 1960s restoration, to their historical appearance. With the compatible restorations and lack of alterations, the ranch house retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.[9]

2) Cob House, ca. 1880s (contributing building)

The date of construction for the cob house is unknown, but it appears in historic photographs of the ranch from the late 1880s. Cody likely constructed it and the icehouse soon after the ranch house. The building is a small, square, one-story frame structure that stored corncobs for fire kindling. Its wood-shingled gable roof has white wooden finials at the gable peaks. The building is painted red with white battens to match the icehouse and barn. There is a white door on the east elevation and a latching red board and batten door on the west. The south elevation has one, fixed, four-pane window and the north has three. The west elevation has two covered white wooden chutes that empty into a bin in the interior. The cob house has no known alterations and retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.[10]

3) Icehouse, ca. 1880s (contributing building)

The date of construction for the icehouse is unknown, but it appears in historic photographs of the ranch from the late 1880s. Cody likely constructed it and the cob house soon after the ranch house and used it to store blocks of ice cut from the pond. It is a small, square, one-story frame structure with a wood-shingled hip roof and a white ventilator cupola. It has two latching board and batten doors, a white one on the south elevation and a red one on the east. It is painted red with white battens to match the cob house and barn. The icehouse has no

[8] Tonsfeldt, conversation with Braun, June 10, 2015; Yost, *Buffalo Bill*, 356–358, 422; Denney, "Birthday Greetings for Buffalo Bill's Home"; James Denney, "How Buffalo Bill's Place Takes Shape," *Sunday World-Herald Magazine*, October 13, 1963, 124–125; "Ready-Made Western Hero: Buffalo Bill's Ranch to Open This Summer," Omaha *Sunday World-Herald*, May 2, 1965, 153–154.

[9] National Register of Historic Places, Scout's Rest Ranch; Tonsfeldt, conversation with Braun, June 10, 2015; "Birthday Greetings for Buffalo Bill's Home"; Tom Allen, "Search for Shutters Caps Cody House Restoration," Omaha *Sunday World-Herald Midlands News*, February 7, 1999; "Shutters to add authenticity to Cody house," *The North Platte Telegraph*, March 3, 1999; Denney, "How Buffalo Bill's Place Takes Shape," 124–125; "Ready-Made Western Hero: Buffalo Bill's Ranch to Open This Summer," 153–154.

[10] National Register of Historic Places, Scout's Rest Ranch.

known alterations and retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.[11]

4) Springhouse/Cellar, 1908–1909 (contributing building)
The 1978 National Register of Historic Places nomination lists the springhouse/cellar as noncontributing because the writer assumed it dated to after Cody sold the ranch. However, historic photographs show it under construction in 1908-1909 during the Garlows' management. The springhouse/cellar is a one-story, half-subterranean structure. It has a wood-shingled gable roof with enclosed rafters and eaves painted white. The ridgeline has a square, white air vent in the center and white, wooden finials at each end. The exterior walls are mortared. The interior has a concrete floor, plaster ceiling, and red brick-lined walls. The west elevation has a fixed, single pane window. It has an east-facing, slanted, bulkhead entry with concrete steps. The double doors are painted white. The springhouse/cellar has no known alterations and retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.[12]

5) Comfort Station, ca. 1960s (noncontributing building)
The State of Nebraska constructed this building during its restoration of Scout's Rest Ranch in the 1960s. It is a rectangular, one-story frame structure with an asphalt-shingled gable roof. A small rectangular ventilation cupola sits on the middle of the roof. There are two doors on the south elevation and one on the north. Both elevations have a row of five, fixed, single-pane windows under the eave. The building is painted red with decorative white battens to match the historic outbuildings. It was constructed outside the period of significance.

6) Horse Barn, 1887 (contributing building)
In October 1887, Cody constructed this large, two-story horse barn, which measures 148 feet by seventy feet by forty feet. Workers used seven railcar loads of lumber to build the barn, which had room to stable eighty horses. Cody had the ranch's name painted across the south side of the roof in four-foot-tall white letters so that passengers on the Union Pacific Railroad a mile to the south could see it. In 1891, he constructed an even larger building that he called the T barn. In March 1904, this barn burned to the ground during a prairie fire that damaged or destroyed other outbuildings and farm equipment and burned 400 tons of hay.[13]

The horse barn is a large, rectangular frame structure with a wood-shingled gambrel roof housing horse stalls with a hay loft above. A one-story lean-to with a wood-shingled shed roof runs along the north elevation. In keeping with its historical appearance, the barn is painted red with white battens. Across the south side of the roof "SCOUT'S REST RANCH" is written in large, white lettering. Along the roof ridge are three ventilator cupolas, each with a metal weather vane. "COL. W. F. CODY" and "1887" are written in white lettering on the south side of the center cupola. Other decorative details include seventy-three exposed rafter ends on each side of the roof, carved into the shape of gunstocks. The west and east elevations have white brackets at the eaves. Under the gable peak on the west and east elevations is a white pendant in the shape of an inverted ace of spades with a center hole. The barn has several small windows on all four elevations on the first story and a few in the gable ends on the second story. Some are fixed, four-pane windows and others are six-over-six, single-hung windows. There are red board and batten sliding doors on all elevations and on both stories. The large double doors on the west and east elevations have decorative, white porthole openings in the upper centers and red horseshoes in the top corners. The south elevation has a paneled door with a red sign above it reading

[11] Ibid.; and "Cody's 'Wild West' Home May Be Preserved," 76.
[12] National Register of Historic Places, Scout's Rest Ranch.
[13] Ibid.; and Yost, *Buffalo Bill*, 200, 211–212, 231–232, 320–321; Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 232; Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody*, 319–320, 364; "Buffalo Bill's Home Life," 14; Cody to Al Goodman, Nottingham, England, August 25, 1891, in Foote, *Letters*, 68; Bare and McDonald, eds., *An Illustrated History of Lincoln County, Nebraska*, 241.

"OFFICE" in white lettering. Above the largest sliding door on the south elevation is a red sign with white lettering reading "NO SMOKING AROUND CORRALLS [*sic*]." The first story of the barn's interior has white walls and ceiling. Occupying much of the space are original white, wooden horse stalls with bronze-painted finials. On the walls above the stalls, Cody tacked original Buffalo Bill's Wild West show posters, and many remain, although they are deteriorating. The first floor also includes saddle and tack storage, a blacksmith room, and space for wagons and carriages. The barn's hay loft is open with exposed rafters and a wooden floor. Along the south side are tall, wooden chutes with openings near the top for pitching hay. Below, the chutes open over grain bins in each horse stall.[14]

Historic photos and descriptions of the barn indicate that it has the same interior and exterior appearance, detailing, and paint colors as it did at the time of Cody's ownership. The lettering on the roof and cupola and the office and no smoking signs are historic. Other than maintenance in the 1960s, the barn has no known alterations since the period of significance. In the 1960s, the State of Nebraska replaced deteriorated wood shingles and siding with new, in-kind shingles, painted the barn, and added interior posts for additional stability. In 2003, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission removed the original 1887 batten strips that had deteriorated and no longer held paint. In 2005, the Commission repainted the barn, applied shingle preservative, and nailed on new, in-kind white batten strips. With the compatible restorations and lack of alterations, the barn retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.[15]

7) Corral, ca. 1960s (noncontributing structure)
Extending along the east end of the barn and encompassing the windmill is a 1960s reconstruction of one of the many corrals that once fenced portions of the ranch. It is made of vertical posts connected by three horizontal planks and painted white.[16] The corral was constructed outside the period of significance, and while there was a fence creating a corral adjoining the barn in Cody's time, the exact layout and appearance of the corral during the period of significance are unknown.

8) Windmill, ca. 1880s (contributing structure)
The windmill, located roughly 120 feet west of the barn, has a reconstructed tower with original head and blades from the ranch's historic windmill. The precise date of construction for the windmill is unknown, but it appears in historic photographs of the ranch from the late 1880s. In the 1960s, the State of Nebraska constructed the white, wooden, plank tower that now supports the head. The head, blades, and tail fin are painted white with red tips. Black lettering on the tail fin reads "ECLIPSE" and "FAIRBANKS MORSE & Co. CHICAGO, ILL." Other than paint re-touching, there are no known alterations to the windmill's head.[17] The windmill thus retains integrity of location, setting, materials, feeling, and association.

9) Scout Creek Irrigation System, ca. 1880s/1960s (contributing structure)
Scout Creek is a natural, spring-fed stream originating northwest of the ranch headquarters and flowing through much of Cody's ranch land. The creek irrigates the lawns, trees, and bushes that create the informal landscaping around the buildings. The creek's only known alteration was its damming by Cody and his ranch manager to form the oblong, man-made diversion pond in the 1880s. Changes in the creek's flow over the years have modified its size. After Cody sold the ranch, other owners removed the diversion dam, and the pond shrank. In the 1960s, the state reconstructed the dam, and the pond refilled. The diversion dam is a low, concrete block structure with an inverted V spillway located at the east end of the diversion pond. The dam is a reconstruction

[14] National Register of Historic Places, Scout's Rest Ranch; Barnes, *The Great Plains Guide to Buffalo Bill*, 142.
[15] National Register of Historic Places, Scout's Rest Ranch; Yost, *Buffalo Bill*, 231–232; Cody to Al Goodman, August 25, 1891, in Foote, *Letters*, 68–69; "A fresh coat of paint," *The North Platte Telegraph*, June 29, 2005; Denney, "How Buffalo Bill's Place Takes Shape," 124–125; "Ready-Made Western Hero: Buffalo Bill's Ranch to Open This Summer," 153–154.
[16] Tonsfeldt, conversation with Braun, June 10, 2015.
[17] Ibid.; and "Ready-Made Western Hero: Buffalo Bill's Ranch to Open This Summer," 153–154.

of the original dam that Cody and his ranch manager built to create the pond. It likely dates to the 1960s when the State of Nebraska restored the ranch. Despite the replacement of the dam outside the period of significance, the irrigation system connecting Scout Creek, the diversion pond, and the dam retains overall integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association. Because of its importance to the historic appearance of Scout's Rest Ranch, the Scout Creek irrigation system is a contributing resource to the ranch headquarters.[18]

10) West End Pond Bridge, ca. 1960s (noncontributing structure)
This concrete and iron bridge crosses Scout Creek upstream from the diversion pond. It is located on the road along the property's west boundary. The bridge has concrete bases, iron beams, a concrete surface, and iron railing on both sides. The State of Nebraska likely constructed the bridge in the 1960s because it does not appear in photos of the ranch prior to state ownership. It is possible that it's a reconstruction of a historic bridge, but it is noncontributing to the ranch headquarters because it was built outside the period of significance.[19]

11) Dam Bridge, ca. 1960s (noncontributing structure)
This concrete and iron bridge crosses Scout Creek below the diversion dam and connects the road from the house to the barn. The bridge has concrete bases, iron beams, a concrete surface, and iron railing on both sides. The State of Nebraska likely constructed the bridge in the 1960s because it does not appear in photos of the ranch prior to state ownership.[20] The bridge was constructed outside the period of significance.

12) Concrete and Earthen Footbridge, ca. 1960s (noncontributing structure)
This concrete slab bridge has an earthen surface and white, wood railing on both sides. It crosses Scout Creek between the dam and the wooden footbridge but does not have a connecting path. The State of Nebraska likely constructed the bridge in the 1960s because it does not appear in photos of the ranch prior to state ownership.[21] The footbridge was constructed outside the period of significance.

13) Wooden Arch Footbridge, ca. 1960s (noncontributing structure)
This arched, wooden footbridge crosses Scout Creek via a path in the southeast corner of the nominated ranch boundary. Its central wooden supports rest on concrete pylons in the creek. The bridge is painted red to match the other ranch buildings. On both sides, raised, white, wooden letters spell out "SCOUT'S REST RANCH." The footbridge is a State of Nebraska reconstruction of a similar bridge present during the period of significance.[22]

14) Landscaped Lawns, ca. 1880s (contributing site)
As part of the designed landscape at the ranch headquarters, Cody maintained and cultivated lawns around the buildings. Cody and his ranch manager planted cottonwoods and box-elders to provide shade and seclusion for the ranch buildings. Some of the trees that Cody planted have died, but many still stand. Although the lawns have grown and been variously maintained over the decades, they and the trees are important to the overall historic landscape appearance of the ranch headquarters, and thus are contributing features.[23]

15) Parking Lot, ca. 1960s (noncontributing structure)
In the 1960s, the State of Nebraska constructed this parking lot along Scouts Rest Ranch Road to provide visitor parking and access to the historic park. Built outside the period of significance, it is noncontributing.

---

[18] Yost, *Buffalo Bill*, 163; "Cody's 'Wild West' Home May Be Preserved," 75–76.
[19] Tonsfeldt, conversation with Braun, June 10, 2015.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.; and Yost, *Buffalo Bill*, 163, 222; Denney, "How Buffalo Bill's Place Takes Shape," 124–125.

16) Roads and Paths, ca. 1960s (noncontributing structures)
In the 1960s, the State of Nebraska constructed asphalt roads and concrete paths that bisect the historical park. One road leads from the parking lot along the east side of the ranch house with a fork leading to the three outbuildings. The main fork continues over the dam bridge and splits in a Y with the west arm leading to the comfort station and the east arm to the barn. Another road runs in front of the barn and north to the property line. A third road runs along the park's western boundary. One path runs south from the house's front steps, following the same footprint as a wooden boardwalk that once ran from the house to a picket fence gate. A second path runs along the front of the house, connects to the parking lot and continues over the wooden footbridge. The roads and paths serve as transportation and visitor use corridors. They likely follow the historic use corridors during the ranch's period of significance, but their exact routes during Cody's time are unknown. Built outside the period of significance, they are noncontributing.

Integrity

The eight historic buildings, structures, and sites comprising the Scout's Rest Ranch Headquarters area have had few changes other than restorative work since the period of significance. In the 1960s, the State of Nebraska restored the historic buildings, structures, and sites to their appearances during Cody's ownership, reusing original materials when possible and replacing deteriorated features with compatible materials. The five historic buildings retain their character-defining features from the time of Cody's ownership, and the state has preserved the landscape features of the irrigation system, trees, and lawns as far as possible to their historic appearance. The eight noncontributing buildings and small structures are modern additions and reconstructions of historic structures. Modern developments include Scouts Rest Ranch Road and the Nebraskaland Wild West Arena to the south of the property. The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission utilizes open space east of the park as the Buffalo Bill State Recreation Area. Private farm and ranch land borders the park on the north and west. Overall, the ranch headquarters landscape, buildings, structures, and natural features retain a similar appearance to the time of Cody's ownership. The ranch headquarters has high integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
Nationally: X Statewide: Locally: __

Applicable National Register Criteria:	A X B X C D
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):	A_B_C_D_E_F_G
NHL Criteria:	1 and 2
NHL Criteria Exceptions:	n/a
NHL Theme(s):	II. Creating Social Institutions and Movements 4. recreational activities III. Expressing Cultural Values 2. visual and performing arts 6. popular and traditional culture
Areas of Significance:	Agriculture, Entertainment/Recreation, Performing Arts
Period(s) of Significance:	1886–1913
Significant Dates:	1886, 1909, 1913
Significant Person(s):	William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody
Cultural Affiliation:	n/a
Architect/Builder:	Patrick Walsh
Historic Contexts:	XXXIV. Recreation B. Spectator Pastimes/Wild West Show Movement

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

Scout's Rest Ranch was the primary home of William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody, the frontiersman turned showman who created the Wild West entertainment movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Not only was Cody's Wild West the first (1883), it also was the longest-lasting, most famous and financially successful Wild West show, and arguably the greatest of the Wild West movement. So compelling and engaging was Buffalo Bill's Wild West that it inspired more than 100 imitator shows before the Wild West movement faded in the 1930s. In addition to its own great popularity, the Wild West movement also spawned modern rodeo, which emerged in the 1920s and owed many of its acts to Wild West shows. So, too, the motion picture industry, which followed the Wild West movement, incorporated many Wild West show themes into its western films.

As Cody's primary home from 1886 to 1913, Scout's Rest Ranch Headquarters NHL is nationally significant under NHL Criteria 1 and 2 for its associations with the Wild West show movement, and its creator, William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody. Although Cody spent most of the year traveling with Buffalo Bill's Wild West, at the end of the show season he returned to Scout's Rest Ranch or to his Wyoming ranch. At Scout's Rest Ranch, he not only rested, but also conducted Wild West business, including purchasing and training horses and signing contracts for new performers. He allowed performers to rehearse on the ranch grounds and often stabled show horses at Scout's Rest over the winter.

Buffalo Bill's Wild West and its imitators reenacted and memorialized the epic story of westward expansion and the American frontier for both American and international audiences. The movement influenced—and continues to influence—how the entertainment industry, mass media, and popular culture present the history of the American West. Buffalo Bill's Wild West thrilled audiences across America and Europe for thirty years, playing to masses of people in a time before radio and television, when the arrival in town of an outdoor show was big news for rural and urban dwellers alike. By Buffalo Bill's time, entertainment was big business, and enthusiasm for spectacles, circuses, and outdoor amusements had reached its height.[24]

Appearing as it did at a time when America was transitioning from its frontier past, Buffalo Bill's Wild West resonated with a nation nostalgic for the vanishing frontier with its promise of free land. At the same time, Americans felt anxious about a future of urbanization and industrialization. As historian L. G. Moses explains, Americans looked to the West for national myths and legends and found them in the optimistic and exhilarating arena at Buffalo Bill's Wild West.[25] As the Wild West inter-mixed buffalo, elk, and real Indians with glowing electric lights and brilliantly colored publicity, it "represented the coming together of the old and the new, nature and culture, the past and the future."[26] At the center stood Buffalo Bill himself, who "straddled the yawning chasms between worlds." In so doing, historian Louis Warren writes, he "rose to greater heights of fame than any American could have dreamed. He became the nation's brightest star." For generations of Americans, Warren writes, "Buffalo Bill defined the meaning of American history and American identity."[27] He was an authentic frontiersman—an Army scout, Indian fighter and professional buffalo hunter—who incorporated his past exploits into dramatic spectacles that played out in the Wild West arena. Buffalo Bill's Wild West became a lens, blurred by invention though it was, through which Americans interpreted "Manifest Destiny" in the settlement of the American West.

---

[24] Paul Reddin, *Wild West Shows* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 61.
[25] L. G. Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Image of American Indians, 1883–1933* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), 12.
[26] Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, x.
[27] Ibid., xi.

Scout Turned Showman: William F. Cody's Early Life

William Frederick Cody was born on February 26, 1846, on a homestead a few miles outside of Le Claire, Iowa, but moved with his family in 1854 to the Salt Creek Valley of Kansas Territory, where Cody's father, Isaac, became embroiled in Free State politics and died in 1857, when his son was eleven years old. A year later, young Will Cody went to work as an ox-team driver for a neighbor and soon after as a messenger boy for the freighting firm of Majors and Russell (later, Russell, Majors and Waddell). Sometime in 1858, he also worked as a horse drover for a wagon train to Fort Laramie and in 1860 hired himself out as a teamster, driving a wagon to Denver.[28] After the Civil War broke out, Cody, in the fall of 1862, joined the pro-Union, Red-Legged Scouts, an informal militia named for the red garters they wore, and dedicated to the ruthless defense of Kansas from secessionists. In 1864, at the age of 18, Cody enlisted as a private in the Seventh Kansas Volunteer Cavalry. While stationed at St. Louis, he met Louisa Frederici, whom he said he "adored above any young lady I had ever seen,"[29] and they wed on March 6, 1866. Their separations would be long and frequent and, over the years, the marriage fraught with difficulties.[30]

Like so many others, Louisa must have found Cody a charming fellow. He stood about six feet tall with a wiry build, "straight and erect as an arrow."[31] With mustache and goatee, and his long hair hanging in ringlets over his shoulders, he was strikingly handsome. He was well-mannered and "always ready to talk well and earnestly on any subject of interest."[32] The day Gen. Henry Eugene Davies met Cody, Cody made a striking figure, dressed in light buckskins trimmed with fringe. He wore a crimson shirt handsomely ornamented under an open jacket and a broad sombrero on his head. As he galloped toward Davies on a snowy white horse, "he realized to perfection," Davies said, "the bold hunter and gallant sportsman of the plains."[33]

During 1867-68, Cody hunted buffalo for Kansas Pacific Railroad work crews, killing so many animals that he earned the moniker "Buffalo Bill," which he used for the rest of his life.[34] His exploits and willingness to make long rides through dangerous territory came to the attention of Lt. Gen. Philip H. Sheridan, who employed Cody as hunter, guide, and civilian scout for the US Army. During the Indian campaign of 1868-69, Cody guided troops from Fort Lyon, in eastern Colorado, to the North Canadian River in western Oklahoma, hunted and killed scores of buffalo to provide fresh meat for the soldiers. His frontier skills and marksmanship were rewarded in 1868 when he was promoted to Chief of Scouts for the US Fifth Cavalry, a position he held until 1872, the same year he was presented the Congressional Medal of Honor.[35] Although he never was officially *in* the Army, he came to be called Colonel Cody after the governor of Nebraska bestowed the title, at Cody's request, as an honorary appointment.[36] As a scout, Cody saw combat often. He participated in more than a dozen Indian skirmishes, including one in northwest Nebraska on July 17, 1876, when he killed the Cheyenne sub-chief Yellow Hair (Heova'ehe) just weeks after the death of Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer at the Battle

---

[28] Barnes, *Great Plains Guide*, 2, 4–6; Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 8–9, 13, 16–18; Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 4–9, 25; Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody*, 12–15, 21, 23; Joy S. Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West: Celebrity, Memory, and Popular History* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), 11; "Buffalo Bill Cody History," Scott County, Iowa, accessed October 26, 2015, www.scottcountyiowa.com/conservation/buffalo-bill-cody-homestead/buffalo-bill-history.

[29] Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 73.

[30] Ibid., 55–56, 61, 72, 77; and Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 16–24, 45; Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody*, 52–60; Barnes, *Great Plains Guide*, 29–30.

[31] Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 171, 478.

[32] Ibid., 171–72, 176, 183, 199.

[33] Davies quoted in Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 171.

[34] Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 53; Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 89–90; Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody*, 79–83, 97–99.

[35] Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 82–83, 86–88, 115, states that the Congressional Medal of Honor was awarded for a small skirmish in which Cody participated. The honor was stripped many years later on grounds that he had been a civilian scout. The honor was restored in 1989.

[36] Ibid., 86.

of the Little Bighorn.[37] Maj. Gen. Eugene A. Carr, who commanded the expedition, praised Cody for his "extra-ordinary good services as a trailer and fighter" and also lauded his marksmanship, which he considered "very conspicuous."[38]

His skill as a scout also served Cody well as a guide for hunting parties. By the early 1870s, his tracking knowledge, storytelling and natural showmanship ensured that his guiding services were always in high demand. In January 1872, he guided the Grand Duke Alexis, sixth child of Russian Emperor Alexander II, on a grand buffalo hunt. Generals Sheridan and Custer also went along on the five-day hunt along the North Platte River, where the entourage rendezvoused with Chief Spotted Tail of the Brule Sioux near Chimney Rock. By the end of the second day, Cody had located a small herd of buffalo, and the Grand Duke had shot his first bison.[39]

The buffalo hunt was featured in *Frank Leslie's* weekly magazine and the columns of many newspapers.[40] Cody later incorporated a buffalo hunt, led by himself, into nearly every performance of Buffalo Bill's Wild West. He also recreated, first on the stage and then in the Wild West arena, the killing of Yellow Hair (changed to Yellow Hand), declaring that he had "taken the first scalp for Custer." Historians disagree on whether Cody actually rode for the Pony Express as a young man, but he claimed to have done so, and he re-enacted a Pony Express mail run in nearly every performance of the Wild West, as well.[41] As Cody aimed to make the show as authentic as possible, the line between showman and frontiersman blurred as he donned his fringed buckskin, gripped a shotgun, and rode his old war horse Charlie into the arena. The striking showman atop the beautiful steed was the real deal: an authentic frontiersman who genuinely "possessed very real skills as tracker, fighter, and buffalo hunter."[42] His riding and shooting skills captivated audiences, European dignitaries, newspapermen and his employees alike. They praised his ability and his energy and spoke highly of his character. Annie Oakley found him honest and generous to a fault. Newspapermen described him as the "beau ideal," a man who "was every inch the hero," and dignitaries remarked on his good grammar, poise, and elegance, and the way he filled "a full-dress suit as gracefully as he does the hunter's buckskins."[43]

In 1869, Cody moved Louisa and daughter Arta, born in 1866, to Fort McPherson, Nebraska, where he was based. Son Kit Carson was born there in 1870 and daughter Orra Maude in 1872. It was at Fort McPherson that Cody befriended Maj. Frank North, who commanded the Pawnee Scouts, an elite army reconnaissance unit. In future years, North's work with the Pawnee gave Cody a connection for obtaining Indian performers for his Wild West show.[44] At Fort McPherson, Cody also met dime novelist and playwright Ned Buntline (Edward Zane Carroll Judson), who visited the fort in 1869. The following year, Buntline released the dime novel *Buffalo Bill, the King of Border Men*. The novel was adapted as a melodrama, and Cody was offered $500 a week to play himself. Cody scoffed at the idea, but Buntline, realizing the publicity potential, persuaded him, in

---

[37] Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 118–120; Russell, *Lives and Legends*, , 214–215; Barnes, *Great Plains Guide*, 79–80, 88–91, 108–109; Louis S. Warren, "Cody's Last Stand: Masculine Anxiety, the Custer Myth, and the Frontier of Domesticity in Buffalo Bill's Wild West," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 34:1 (Spring 2003), 50–54; Sandra K. Sagala, *Buffalo Bill on Stage* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008), 82–83, 87.

[38] Don Russell, *The Wild West: or, A History of the Wild West Shows, Being an Account of the Prestigious, Peregrinatory Pageants Pretentiously Presented Before the Citizens of the Republic, the Crowned Heads of Europe, and Multitudes of Awe-Struck Men, Women, and Children Around the Globe, Which Created a Wonderfully Imaginative and Unrealistic Image of the American West* (Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum of Western Art, 1970), 14.

[39] Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 147–49; Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 174–79.

[40] Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West*, 17.

[41] Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 44–48; Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 3–7.

[42] Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 92–93.

[43] Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 313, 335, 477.

[44] Ibid., 125, 294; Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 58–59, 103-04; Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody*, 83, 130, 149, 174; Yost, *Buffalo Bill*, 25; Barnes, *Great Plains Guide*, 64, 68–69, 73–74.

the spring of 1872, to join the theater and perform in a new Buntline play, *The Scouts of the Prairie*.[45] Cody's decision to take to the stage set him on a show business trajectory that would last for the rest of his life.

By 1876, Cody was running his own traveling theatrical troupe, the Buffalo Bill Combination and, by 1877, was using American Indians in his melodramas as a way to improve realism. He hired Oglala Sioux from the Red Cloud Agency and Pawnees from the Pawnee Agency in Indian Territory (now Oklahoma). American Indians would become central performers, as well, in Buffalo Bill's Wild West.[46]

The Buffalo Bill Combination usually disbanded in late May or June, allowing Cody a brief respite from the hectic pace of theater life and to spend his summers in the West, pursuing his other two passions: guiding hunting parties and scouting for the military. The summer breaks also allowed Cody to pursue his long-lasting dream to build a cattle ranch on the frontier's edge, where he could entertain guests, relax and eventually retire.[47] The loss of his son Kit Carson to scarlet fever in 1876 increased tensions with Louisa, who never liked his career in show business, though she had relocated the family to Rochester, New York, to be closer to the Eastern theater circuit.[48] The theater fueled Cody's passion for entertainment, honed his management skills, and paved the way for his Wild West. Cody remained with his stage troupe through 1886 as a way to boost his income until his Wild West show, which launched in 1883, began to turn a profit.[49]

Cody the Rancher: North Platte and Scout's Rest, 1877–1913

Adding authenticity to his stage persona as the quintessential American frontiersman was Cody's decision to begin ranching in 1877 with his friend Frank North. They bought 1,500 head of cattle and grazed them on the open range in Nebraska's Sand Hills. They constructed a log cabin, sod stable, and pole corral on the South Fork of the Dismal River, and by 1881 owned 6,800 head of cattle and 400 horses. Each summer, with his theatrical season complete, Cody joined North and their cowboys in a sixty-five mile cattle drive from North Platte, a cattle and supply shipping point on the transcontinental railroad, to their Dismal Ranch.[50]

In February 1878, Cody moved his family to North Platte, where Louisa supervised the building of a simple, one- and a half-story frame house with an outbuilding at the northwest corner of West Sixth and Sherman streets. She hoped the move would enable her to see more of her husband in the summers, and Cody liked the idea of having a home near his ranch, although the theater and his other business interests kept him away much of the year. That same year of 1878, Cody paid $750 for a 160-acre-parcel situated just west of North Platte and adjacent to the Union Pacific railroad tracks. He kept adding to his purchase and soon amassed 4,000 acres, where he established Scout's Rest Ranch. As his attention turned to developing Scout's Rest, he sold the Dismal River outfit in 1882, including the cattle, horses, wagons, equipment, and buildings.[51]

---

[45] Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 149–151, 192–193; Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody*, 138–139, 149–150, 170, 176–177, 187; Barnes, *Great Plains Guide*, 17–18; Sagala, *Buffalo Bill on Stage*, 8–9, 11, 18–21, 118, 51–52, 134, 136, 142; Reddin, *Wild West Shows*, 56–59; Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 155;

[46] Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 258; Sagala, *Buffalo Bill on Stage*, 101, 106–108, 110, 113, 116; Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 190–192, 194; Barnes, *Great Plains Guide*, 129.

[47] Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 204.

[48] Ibid., 205; Warren, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West*, 232.

[49] Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 250–251; Barnes, *Great Plains Guide*, 121; Sagala, *Buffalo Bill on Stage*, 7–8, 165, 168, 192–195; Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 157; Russell, The *Wild West*, 11–12.

[50] Barnes, *Great Plains Guide*, 127–128, 131; Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody*, 216–217; William F. Cody, *The Life of Hon. William F. Cody, Known as Buffalo Bill: The Famous Hunter, Scout, and Guide: An Autobiography* (1879; reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), 360–363; Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 260–261; Sagala, *Buffalo Bill on Stage*, 91, 99, 113, 161, 168; Yost, *Buffalo Bill*, 98–99, 101–102, 104; Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 208–210; Allen, "There Is No Rest at Scouts Rest These Days."

[51] Later owners moved the two-room log house at the Dismal Ranch to other ranches. In the 1960s, during rehabilitation of Scout's Rest Ranch, the State of Nebraska purchased the log cabin and moved it to the new Buffalo Bill State Historical Park. Barnes,

By December 1885, Scout's Rest Ranch was fully functional. "The waters of the great Platte flow through no prettier or more natural stock ranch," the *Omaha Herald* reported that December.[52] The newspaper said the river skirted the northeastern portion of the ranch for four miles. The article also mentioned Scout Creek, "a small overflowing creek, fed by a cool living spring" that flowed nearly through the center of the ranch, "dividing it into two parts." The newspaper told of the nutritious buffalo grass that grew on the south side of the ranch and the "wild prairie grass" found on the north side.

The article stated that the "ranch buildings" were three miles from North Platte. It also mentioned a residence that Cody owned one mile west of town (this would have been the home Cody built for Louisa and the children at West Sixth and Sherman streets). "Mr. Cody is a great lover of fine stock, and moreover a good judge of a horse or cattle as well," the newspaper stated. "He takes great pride in his herd of 125 of the best blooded cattle, composed of Herefords, Shorthorns, Polled Angus and other high grades.…Among the herd of 181 horses, most of which are thoroughbred, are some of the best ever brought out west."[53]

Fine as Cody's ranch was reported to be, Louisa refused to live there, preferring instead the house in town, where the Cody's youngest child, Irma, was born in February 1883. When the house at West Sixth and Sherman streets burned down in 1891, Louisa still preferred to live in town, so Cody found a new house for her. Situated on West Sixth between Washington and Adams streets, it was the former mansion of George McKay, a local merchant. As she had done with her first house, Louisa named the mansion *Welcome Wigwam*.[54]

In 1882-83, Cody made a startling discovery about money he had been sending home to Louisa to buy property for him while he was on the road; She had placed title to the land in her name rather than his. Her decision infuriated him. "Ain't that a nice way for a wife to act?" Cody wrote to his sister on March 9, 1882.[55] In September 1883, Cody filed a petition for divorce. In Louisa's defense, she distrusted many of her husband's speculative business ventures and might have sought a way to at least ensure some measure of financial security for herself and the children. However, when daughter Orra Maude died the following month, the couple attempted to reconcile, and Cody dropped the suit.[56]

North Platte's Old Glory Blowout

Scholars usually credit the Old Glory Blowout, a Fourth of July celebration staged by Cody in North Platte in 1882, as the inspiration for Buffalo Bill's Wild West. The event, which began with a street parade and band, drew on Cody's experiences in the West, his stage career, and his ranching business. Inspired by roundups he had witnessed on the Dismal River, Cody enlisted hired men at Scout's Rest Ranch and local cowboys to stage a mock buffalo hunt and compete in roping, racing, and bronco busting in what was one of the nation's first

---

Great Plains Guide, 127–128, 131; Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody*, 216–217; Cody, *Life of Hon. William F. Cody*, 360–363; Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 260–261; Sagala, *Buffalo Bill on Stage*, 91, 99, 113, 161, 168; Yost, *Buffalo Bill*, 98–99, 101–102, 104; Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 208–210; Allen, "There Is No Rest at Scouts Rest These Days."

[52] *Omaha Herald*, December 6, 1885, quoted in Yost, *Buffalo Bill*, 154–55.

[53] Ibid.

[54] In 1912, she sold the mansion, and a later owner tore it down in 1930. Barnes, *Great Plains Guide*, 133–134, 136–138, 140; Cody, *Life of Hon. William F. Cody*, 361; Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 232; Yost, *Buffalo Bill*, 33–35, 99–101, 232–233, 243–246, 319–320, 377–378; Bare and McDonald, *Illustrated History*, Vol. I, 1, 6–7, 44, 73, 201, 234, 236, 238; Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody*, 216–219, 243, 254–255, 364; Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 260, 299.

[55] Foote, *Letters*, 18.

[56] Yost, *Buffalo Bill*, 98, 115, 171; Barnes, *Great Plains Guide*, 133; Sagala, *Buffalo Bill on Stage*, 165; Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 232–33; Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 421; Cody to Julia Cody Goodman, Albany, New York, March 9, 1882, and Cody to Al and Julia Goodman, Youngstown, Ohio, September 24, 1883, in Foote, *Letters*, 27, 33.

rodeos. Participants lassoed buffalo and Texas steers and demonstrated their sharpshooting skills. Festivities concluded with a dance and fireworks.[57]

The very next year, in the spring of 1883, Cody launched the nation's first Wild West show in partnership with William Frank "Doc" Carver, a sharpshooter recently returned from an exhibition tour in Europe. With the unwieldly name of Buffalo Bill and Doc Carver's Wild West, Rocky Mountain and Prairie Exhibition, the show opened in Omaha on May 17, 1883, but lasted only one season. The following year of 1884 Cody got a new partner and his show a new name—Buffalo Bill's Wild West. His new partner, who would remain for many years, was Nate Salsbury, the manager of a theatrical combination whom Cody had met in New York in 1882.[58]

The show that Cody and Salsbury staged was tailored for American tastes at a time when the American frontier was drawing to a close. Americans, as historian Paul Reddin explains, "wanted to see conquest of a continent as a grand accomplishment filled with drama and excitement," and that is what they got in Buffalo Bill's Wild West.[59] The show provided "a simplified, patriotic, and believable national epic that blended history and mythology." The Wild West kicked off with a street parade through whatever town it happened to be playing. Its arena often was a sandlot, where visitors paid fifty cents for the show and an additional dime for a colorful program, which listed the acts and spectacles to come, as well as biographies of Cody and star performers. An Overture by the Cowboy Band and the Grand Entry of performers opened the show, which featured foot races and horse races, steer roping and bronco riding, sharpshooters and Indian dancers. The appearance of the Deadwood Stage Coach, re-enactments of the Pony Express, a buffalo hunt, and Cody's duel with Yellow Hair (changed to Yellow Hand) became staples of the show, as did dramatic spectacles, including "The Attack on the Settlers' Cabin," the finale of nearly every performance between 1884 and 1907.[60]

Precursors to the Wild West

Elements of the Wild West show that Cody staged were not entirely new. As early as 1843, P. T. Barnum had staged a "Grand Buffalo Hunt" involving the roping of a buffalo calf or two, as had Tyler's Indian Exhibition, which toured in 1855 and also featured Indian dances and spectacles, such as Pocahontas being rescued by Capt. John Smith. The artist George Catlin toured the United States and Europe in the 1830s and 1840s, exhibiting his paintings of American Indians and lecturing about Indian lifeways and material culture. In later years he hired Iowa and Ojibwa people to perform songs and dances or *tableaux vivants*, "living pictures" of actors posed and dramatically lit in front of painted backdrops. Indians proved to be such a sensation, historian L. G. Moses writes, that others took to displaying them in circuses, the theater, and anthropological exhibitions at world's fairs, as well as ill-reputed enterprises such as the Kickapoo Medicine Company, where one Dr. N. T. Oliver, also known as Nevada Ned, used Indian performers to hawk his medical cure-alls.[61]

---

[57] Sagala, *Buffalo Bill on Stage*, 168, 171; Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody*, 239–241, 243–244; Russell, The *Wild West*, 1–22; Sarah J. Blackstone, *Buckskins, Bullets, and Business: A History of Buffalo Bill's Wild West* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 13; Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 290–292; Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 210; Barnes, *Great Plains Guide*, 141; Yost, *Buffalo Bill*, 107, 116–120; Bare and McDonald, *Illustrated History*, Vol. I, 247–248; Michael Wallis, *The Real Wild West: The 101 Ranch and the Creation of the American West* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 140–141, 227.

[58] Salsbury later claimed that it was he, not Cody, who invented the Wild West idea. While Salsbury's contributions were significant, this claim was blatant self-aggrandizement, Warren argues, because most of the Wild West's enduring scenes were present in 1883 before Salsbury came on board. See Louis Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 210, 236; Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 287–89; Sagala, *Buffalo Bill on Stage*, 163, 169; Blackstone, *Buckskins*, 11–12.

[59] Reddin, *Wild West Shows*, 61.

[60] Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody*, 253–255; Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 298–303, 308; Blackstone, *Buckskins*, 11–15, 15; Yost, *Buffalo Bill*, 126–128; Sagala, *Buffalo Bill on Stage*, 182, 196–197; Russell, *The Wild West*, 24–25; Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 222, 236–238.

[61] Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians*, 17; Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 287–89; Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody*, 235–36, 241; Reddin, *Wild West Shows*, 19–25, 28–51; Linda Scarangella McNenly, *Native Performers in Wild West Shows:*

In other words, Buffalo Bill's Wild West owed its beginnings to a long line of other spectacles, including cattle roundups, anthropological exhibitions, circuses, melodramas, and medicine shows. But what was new about Buffalo Bill's Wild West, historian Don Russell argues, was the way it combined events "in a formula that spelled success."[62] Buffalo Bill's Wild West was not just a series of western acts and skills but a program that resonated because it organized frontier scenes into a dramatic narrative. As those who saw the show remarked, it was a narrative with often "blood curdling realities," that were "wild enough to suit the most devoted admirer of western adventure and prowess."[63] And yet, the spectacle's violence was framed in such a way, Warren argues, that even "middle-class women could attend."[64] In fact, Cody and publicist John Burke never called the Wild West a *show* because they thought the word implied frivolous entertainment. Instead, it was "America's National Entertainment," an education full of realism and authenticity. So seamlessly woven was the line between truth and fiction in the Wild West arena that Louis Warren argues it was "all but invisible."[65]

In addition to drawing on elements of earlier spectacles, Buffalo Bill's Wild West also learned from other outdoor exhibitions, especially circuses, at least fifty of which were on the road by 1885.[66] Cody copied the management and advertising system created by P. T. Barnum, who deployed advance men and billposters to advertise his circus. Cody also transported his Wild West on the railroad, something circuses had been doing for years.[67] Thus, from the circus, Cody learned how to organize a traveling show, how to schedule routes to avoid competitors, and how to use advance advertising to maximize audiences.

The Importance of the Wild West Indians

So important to Wild West shows were their Indian participants that without them, L. G. Moses writes, "there would have been no Wild West."[68] Over the years, more than a thousand Indians chose to perform with Cody's show.[69] From 1885 on, they were almost exclusively Lakota and Oglala Sioux from the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota,[70] making Buffalo Bill's Wild West one of the reservation's largest employers. Even as Buffalo Bill's Indians were public favorites, their participation in the show was criticized from the outset by reformers and the Bureau of Indian Affairs as exploitation and degradation of Indians and their culture.[71] Reformers and government officials distained the "wild" image presented in the arena because they wanted the public to embrace a vision of Indians who were assimilating as productive farmers and living a Christian lifestyle. Reformers claimed that Wild West shows glorified Indians' "heathenish ways," encouraged their "unsettled habits," and brought him into contact with "disreputable characters."[72]

From Buffalo Bill to Euro Disney (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012), 4, 22; Lewis, *Traveling Show*, 4–7, 22–23, 108–110, 129, 137, 264–65; Wallis, *Real Wild West*, 20–21; Russell, The *Wild West*, 2–3, 5–8; Blackstone, *Buckskins*, 11; Sagala, *Buffalo Bill on Stage*, 195;Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 204, 206.

[62] Russell, *Wild West*, 5.

[63] Reddin, *Wild West Shows*, 62.

[64] Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 216–17.

[65] Ibid., 218.

[66] Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 278, 292; Russell, *The Wild West*, 7.

[67] Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 206.

[68] Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians*, xi.

[69] Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 359.

[70] Ibid., 406–407; Moses, *Wild West Shows*, 23–25. For more information on the participation of Pawnees in Buffalo Bill's Wild West, see Mark Van De Logt, *War Party in Blue: Pawnee Scouts in the U.S. Army* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010).

[71] Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians*, xii, 20, 64; and Alan Trachtenberg, review of *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians*, by L. G. Moses, *Journal of American History* 84, no. 2 (September 1997): 604–606.

[72] L. G. Moses, "Interpreting the Wild West, 1883–1914," in *Between Indian and White Worlds: The Cultural Broker*, ed. Margaret Connell Szasz (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 162–63.

The government's goal of assimilation stood at odds with the image presented in the show arena, where Buffalo Bill's Indians "acted out roles, again and again, of a defeated though colorful people who surrendered a continent to a hardier race."[73] Indeed, the Indians' defeat in the battle between "savagery and civilization" played out every day in the arena at Buffalo Bill's Wild West as the Sioux whom Cody hired raced bareback across the arena, ambushing the Deadwood Coach or attacking a settler's cabin.

The reasons Indians chose to join Wild West shows and other entertainments varied, but the chance to earn money was a big factor. In the 1880s, Cody paid his show Indians $25 a month.[74] While considerably less than regular arena performers, who earned between $35 and $50 a month, the money was important, especially because the late 1880s and early 1890s, in particular, Philip Deloria writes, were "starving times for many Indian communities."[75]

Wild West shows not only offered wages and food, but "promised extraordinary mobility" and "a chance to escape the reservation."[76] Deloria points to Kicking Bear, a Ghost Dance leader who had been locked up in a Chicago stockade before joining Cody's Wild West. "For six weeks I have been a dead man," Kicking Bear is reputed to have said to Cody. "Now that I see you I am alive again."[77]

Historian Vine Deloria argues that the shows not only gave Indian performers financial independence, but the opportunity to observe—and report back—on what they had seen of American society, which, he writes, "was worth more than every school house built by the government on any of the reservations."[78] The education through travel proffered to Indian performers was, in fact, a benefit noted by Cody during the winter of 1886-87 when Buffalo Bill's Wild West played a long stand in New York City. That winter, Cody informed federal authorities that his Indian employees had attended church twice each Sunday and had visited city hall, a newspaper office, Central Park, and Bellevue Hospital. "I know from personal knowledge," he said, "that these Indians are acquiring benefits in their Eastern life."[79]

Cody's words undoubtedly were intended to deflect criticism from reformers and the government, which preferred that Indians stay on their reservations. The government had no statutory authority to keep peaceable Indians there, but it could assert its authority in other ways.[80] Beginning in 1886, the Office of Indian Affairs required show owners to place their Indian employees under contract. As L. G. Moses writes, owners were bound to provide "adequate food, shelter, and medical care; pay 'fair and reasonable' salaries; hire chaplains and interpreters to accompany the performers; and return the show Indians to their reservations at the close of their contracts." Violation meant forfeiture of a surety bond (usually $10,000-$20,000) and a ban on employing Indians again.[81]

---

[73] Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians*, xi.

[74] Ibid., 174. Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 366, states that between 1885 and 1891, Wild West show managers calculated that they paid $74,300 in wages to Pine Ridge Indians alone. Clyde Ellis, "Five Dollars a Week to Be 'Regular Indians': Shows, Exhibitions, and the Economics of Indian Dancing, 1880–1930," in *Native Pathways: American Indian Culture and Economic Development in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Brian Hosmer and Colleen O'Neill (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2004), 199, 201, quotes L. G. Moses and Joy Kasson to write that non-Indian stars, such as cowboy Buck Taylor, earned more. When Sitting Bull joined Buffalo Bill's Wild West in 1885, he was guaranteed $50 a week, a $125 bonus, free transportation to and from the show, and the right to sell his own photographs and autographs, which could net $1.50 to $2 apiece.

[75] Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2004), 69.

[76] See Ibid.; Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians*, 174; Ellis, "Five Dollars a Week to Be 'Regular Indians'," 201.

[77] Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, 69.

[78] Vine Deloria referenced in Ellis, "Five Dollars a Week to Be 'Regular Indians'," 187.

[79] Ibid., 194–95.

[80] L. G. Moses, "Interpreting the Wild West," 161–63.

[81] Ibid. Moses states that "no Wild West show ever forfeited its bond."

Government concern stemmed not only from the image of Indians being presented in the Wild West arena, but from allegations that show Indians were being mistreated and exploited. In 1890, charges were leveled against Cody and his show. The charges stemmed in part from the deaths of five Indian performers traveling with Buffalo Bill's Wild West in Europe.[82] That same November, seventy-nine Lakota employed by Cody met in a room at the Interior Department with Robert V. Belt, Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs, who had stated his disapproval of shows featuring Indian dances and stated that Indians ought to "remain at home and engage in more civilizing avocations."[83]

Although there were intimations, Joy Kasson writes, "that the Indians had been coached and bribed," the Sioux had nothing but good things to say about their employment with Buffalo Bill's Wild West. Their words not only went a long way in restoring Cody's good reputation, but also provide first-hand accounts of why they chose to join the show. Rocky Bear, who served as spokesman for the seventy nine, spoke of the opportunity to earn money: "If [the show] did not suit me, I would not remain any longer," he stated. "That is the way I get money. If a man goes to work in some other place and goes back with money, he has some for his children." Black Heart explained that the Indians had been raised on horseback, and "these men furnish us the same kind of work we were raised to do; that is the reason we want to work for these kind of men."[84]

Black Elk, who traveled to Europe with Cody's show in 1887, spoke of his reasons for traveling with Cody in accounts of his life narrated to John Neihardt in 1930. "I might learn some secret of the Wasichu [white man] that would help my people somehow," he said.[85] Red Shirt, who had a long career with Buffalo Bill and also sailed to England with the show in 1887, said: "I never saw the ocean or a boat before. I look forward with pleasure to seeing this country."[86]

Other Indians saw the arena as a place where they could assert their identity, culture, and politics to white audiences.[87] To Luther Standing Bear, "going away with the enemy" was a way to demonstrate bravery, while other Indians "used the shows to recapture remembered lives."[88] "It gave me a chance to get back on a horse and act it out again," Wild West showman Joe Rockboy said.[89]

On the other hand, Paige Raibmon notes that the Indians were laboring for the benefit of capitalist-industrialists and their performances "used and reinforced the colonial categories that framed them as 'other.'"[90] Jeffry Steele argues that Wild West shows "fixed the image of the Indian in time 'as if the only true Indian were a past one.'" The shows presented a vanishing culture that turned Indians "into fetishized images that satisfied the hunger for entertainment and disposable commodities."[91]

---

[82] Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West*, 184–85. Two Indians died from smallpox, two of a heart attack, and one from influenza. The situation made headlines after Cody sent five more ill performers home and one died in a hospital in New York.

[83] Ellis, "Five Dollars a Week to Be 'Regular Indians'," 185.

[84] Moses, *Wild West Shows*, 101-03; Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West*, 185; Trachtenberg, review, 605; and Reddin, *Wild West Shows*, 115. For a larger discussion of the treatment of Indians who performed with Wild West shows, see Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians*, Chapters 4 and 5.

[85] Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West*, 189.

[86] Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, 70.

[87] Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2005), 11.

[88] Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, 70.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Raibmon, *Authentic Indians*, 10.

[91] Jeffrey Steele, "Reduced to Images: American Indians in Nineteenth-Century Advertising," in *Dressing in Feathers: The Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture*, ed. S. Elizabeth Bird, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), 45.

Contemporary criticism came from Indians themselves. In 1914, Chauncey Yellow Robe, a Sioux, wrote in the *Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians* that Wild West shows commercialized Indians. He wrote that the shows depicted "lawlessness and hatred" and were "the greatest hindrance, injustice, and detriment to the present progress of the American Indian toward civilization."[92] As Clyde Ellis writes, "Yellow Robe poured out a stream of invective" accusing white people of perpetuating "tribal habits and customs" and showmen of teaching children "that the Indian is only a savage being."[93]

Historian L. G. Moses, however, argues that Cody favored assimilation and saw his show Indians as cultural brokers who "would speak to non-Indian listeners about their cultures and to their own people about their experiences in the white world," thus contributing to what Cody called "the great mission of 'harmonizing the races.'"[94] The Indian camp, for instance, was an important part of the Wild West experience where Indians were humanized. In Europe, visitors who bought a ticket to the show also could tour a "grand village" of Indian families, teepees, and lodges and "watch the Indian families at work and at play."[95]

In his book, *My People the Sioux*, Luther Standing Bear, who traveled to Europe with Buffalo Bill's Wild West in 1902, described Cody as a fair employer who stepped in to address grievances, even as small as a pancake. "We always had plenty to eat, so there was no complaint in that direction," he wrote. He did not initially care that everyone except the Indians were served pancakes at breakfast one morning because, he wrote, "Indians do not eat such food." But he *did* care when he sat down to dinner that evening and "the 'left-overs' from the morning," were served to the Indians. "I was very angry," he wrote. He quietly left the table and walked over to Buffalo Bill's table. "…the cook has put his old cold pancakes on our table and expects us to eat what was left over from breakfast, and it isn't right."[96] According to Luther Standing Bear, "Buffalo Bill's eyes snapped" as he rose from the table and confronted the manager of the dining room. "Look here, sir," Cody reportedly said. "You are trying to feed my Indians the left-over pancakes from the morning meal. I want you to understand, sir, that I will not stand for such treatment. My Indians are the principal feature of this show, and they are the one people I will not allow to be misused or neglected."[97]

Other first-hand accounts speak well of Cody and his Wild West. When Black Elk, who traveled to Europe with Cody in 1887, became separated from the Wild West troupe in Manchester, England, he said Cody was glad to see him when he rejoined the show in Paris. "He had all his people give me three cheers. Then he asked me if I wanted to be in the show or if I wanted to go home."[98] When Black Elk said he preferred to return to Pine Ridge, Cody gave him a ticket and $90. "Then he gave me a big dinner," Black Elk said. "Pahuska [Buffalo Bill] had a strong heart."

Buffalo Bill's Wild West: America's National Entertainment

During its first season, bad weather, low attendance, and accidents plagued Buffalo Bill's Wild West. The show was struggling financially until sharpshooter Annie Oakley and the Sioux chief Sitting Bull joined the cast in 1885, ushering in a long period of success. That year of 1885 the Wild West performed for more than one million people in forty cities, including stops in Canada, and made a profit of $100,000. Interest in the show

[92] Chauncey Yellow Robe quoted in Ellis, "Five Dollars a Week to Be 'Regular Indians'," 189.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Moses, "Interpreting the Wild West," 159.
[95] Rita Napier, "Across the Big Water: American Indians' Perceptions of Europe and Europeans, 1887–1906" in *Indians and Europe: An Interdisciplinary Collection of Essays*, ed. Christian F. Feest, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 384.
[96] Luther Standing Bear, *My People the Sioux* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1928, reprint Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975), 260–61.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West*, 189–90.

flourished in 1886 when the Wild West made long stands in New York City. That summer it set up at Erastina Resort on Staten Island and drew 360,000 visitors in its first four weeks. That winter it moved indoors to Madison Square Garden, where it performed "The Drama of Civilization," a newly created extravaganza that employed elaborate backdrops and machinery so sophisticated that it was possible to stage a prairie fire and devise a cyclone to blow down Deadwood City in the Black Hills. The show packed the house, and by 1887, Buffalo Bill's Wild West was "an American success story" that "nearly monopolized the western theme and easily withstood threats from the multitudes of small shows that tried to imitate it."[99]

Its fame mushroomed after it set sail in the spring of 1887 for London, where it played in conjunction with the American Exhibition, a showcase of art and manufacturing timed to coincide with Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. On May 11, Cody and his cast—including the 180 horses, eighteen buffalo, ten elk, ten mules, five Texas steers, four donkeys, and two deer that made the long ocean journey—held a private performance for Queen Victoria in what was her first appearance at a public performance since the death of her consort, Prince Albert. At another command performance on June 20, so many European royalty attended that Cody famously likened the group to a poker hand, saying he had held four kings before, "but four kings and the Prince of Wales makes a royal flush, such as no man ever held before."[100]

The Wild West played in London for six months, entertaining two and a half million people and enjoying non-stop press coverage on both sides of the ocean. It spent that winter in Birmingham and Manchester, returned to the United States in 1888, and then sailed again for Europe in 1889 for a tour of the Continent that lasted four years. The Wild West opened in Paris at the *Exposition Universelle*, a world's fair with the new Eiffel Tower at its heart. As popular celebrations of progress and prosperity, fairs like that in London and Paris were a perfect place for the Wild West to showcase its theme of the "progress of civilization."[101] In Paris, the Shah of Persia and the Queen of Spain rode in the Deadwood Stagecoach before the Wild West moved on to Lyon and Marseille, Barcelona, and Rome, where Pope Leon XIII blessed a delegation from the show. In 1890, Cody's Wild West played Innsbruck and Vienna, Austria, then traveled to Germany. Kaiser Wilhelm II attended numerous performances and his military officers took copious notes, recording how the Wild West fed its large crew and how it set up and tore down so quickly. Historian Don Russell mentions that the notes came in handy during World War I as the German military planned troop logistics.[102]

Before sailing home to America in 1892, Buffalo Bill's Wild West toured the Netherlands and returned to London, where Queen Victoria saw it again.[103] When it set up for shows, particularly for long stays, Buffalo Bill's Wild West resembled a huge tent city. Staff and crew and some performers slept in dozens of canvas tents on the show grounds. A ticket to the show gave visitors access to the grounds, so spectators were encouraged to come an hour or two early to stroll through camp and observe cast and crew going about their daily routines and work-related tasks. Visitors particularly enjoyed seeing the culture of Indian families who lived in tepees on the show grounds. They could also visit the show's animal pens, where the buffalo proved particularly popular. In its annual report for 1887, the Smithsonian Institution credited Buffalo Bill's Wild West with helping to save

---

[99] Reddin, *Wild West Shows*, 84. See also Russell, *The Wild West*, 26; Blackstone, *Buckskins*, 17–21, 37–38; Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody*, 264–266, 268, 274, 282–284, 288, 292–293, 296, 298, 300, 303, 330–331; Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 309, 316–318, 321–323, 326–327; Shirl Kasper, *Annie Oakley* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 24–33, 38–39, 55, 59–62, 86–92, 97–101; Wallis, *Real Wild West*, 312–314; Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 51, 249, 253–258, 267–274, 280; Moses, *Wild West Shows*, 25–30; Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West*, 169–183.

[100] Russell, *Wild West*, 26–27.

[101] Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 419.

[102] Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 371–72.

[103] Ibid., 323, 327–331, 337, 339–340, 370–372; Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody*, 304, 317, 320–324, 332–334, 336, 361–362, 367; Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 282–287, 297, 344; Blackstone, *Buckskins*, 22–23; Russell, *Wild West*, 35, 40; Reddin, *Wild West Shows*, 111–114; Moses, *Wild West Shows*, 92; Kasper, *Annie Oakley*, 113–114.

the American bison from extinction. That year, the show counted eighteen bison, including four calves. By the end of 1888, of 256 bison in captivity, only two herds were larger than Buffalo Bill's.[104]

The Continental tour validated Buffalo Bill's Wild West as the quintessential American entertainment and not only shaped European perceptions of the United States, but also Americans' perceptions of themselves. Other Wild West shows may also have found success, but it was Buffalo Bill's Wild West that enshrined the American frontier as national culture and, as historian Paul Fees notes, "put the elements of 'winning of the West' into a coherent narrative that conveyed what we call 'the myth of the West' to more people nationwide (and worldwide) than any other medium."[105]

On the heels of its European triumph, Buffalo Bill's Wild West set up across the street from Chicago's 1893 World's Columbian Exposition. Over 27 million people visited the Exposition, and few missed the opportunity to cross the street and experience Cody's Wild West. The show recorded a profit of nearly $1 million for the season. As usual, Cody's sense of timing and history were uncanny. Three years earlier, the U.S. Census had announced the closing of the American frontier, and about that same time the Indian wars on the High Plains came to a tragic conclusion at Wounded Knee. Frederick Jackson Turner was also at the Columbian Exposition, presenting his theory on "The Significance of the Frontier in American History." Turner's thesis argued that from the taming of the frontier a unique American character of pragmatism, individualism, and egalitarianism had emerged. While scholars today challenge or even discredit many of Turner's premises, Buffalo Bill's Wild West captured the essence of the national beliefs Turner voiced and presented them in an optimistic and exhilarating fashion. Wild West shows, Paul Reddin argues, were "important reflectors of American values because they were self-consciously American institutions devoted to defining their nation's values and history through the lens of the frontier experience."[106]

Cody's show opened at the Chicago Exposition with a new name: Buffalo Bill's Wild West and Congress of Rough Riders of the World, a name inspired by its European tour and new, international perspective. The show now included Mexican vaqueros, Argentine gauchos, Russian Cossacks, and Syrian and Arabian horsemen performing native sports and pastimes, in effect, "inviting once-excluded peoples into the American myth."[107] From England came a company of 12th Lancers, from France a company of Chasseurs, and from Germany the "Potsdamer Reds," the First Guard regiment of His Majesty King William II. They rode into the arena and performed military evolutions alongside a company from the American Sixth Cavalry, though the cowboys still reigned supreme and the Indians still played out their role in the battle between "savagery and civilization." The Wild West sold an estimated 3.8 million tickets during the world's fair and took in an estimated $700,000 to $1 million in profits in what has been called "the most successful year in outdoor-show history."[108]

---

[104] Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 278–80, 342–48. The largest herd, 140 head, Russell states, was held by Charles J. Jones of Garden City, Kansas, who had purchased seventy of the animals from S. L. Bedson of Stony Mountain, Manitoba, Canada, who was a pioneer in the breeding of buffalo. The Montanan Charles Allard also had thirty-five head. See also Blackstone, *Buckskins*, 42, 48, 75; Roger A. Hall, *Performing the American Frontier, 1870–1906* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 141; Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 408, 438; Russell, *The Wild West*, 99–100.

[105] Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 301. Buffalo Bill's Wild West made a final European tour from 1903 to 1906; Paul Fees, "Review of Nomination of Scout's Rest Ranch to National Historic Landmark Status," submitted to the Heritage Partnerships Program, National Park Service, April 4, 2017; see: Howard Lamar, "The Cowboys" in *Buffalo Bill and the Wild West*, ed. by David Katzive (Brooklyn: The Brooklyn Museum, 1981), Richard Slotkin, "The Wild West," in *Buffalo Bill and the Wild West*, ed. by David Katzive (Brooklyn: The Brooklyn Museum, 1981), and Chris Bruce, ed., *The Myth of the West* (Seattle: Henry Art Gallery and the University of Washington Press, 1990).

[106] Reddin, *Wild West Shows*, 220–221.

[107] Ibid., 430.

[108] Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 374–77; Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 332, 418–25, 430–31; Blackstone, *Buckskins*, 26–27; Lewis, *Traveling Show*, 239–241; Kasper, *Annie Oakley*, 123–24; Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody*, 368, 370.

Besides Cody himself, Buffalo Bill's Wild West created other legendary stars, such as Annie Oakley, who became the quintessential "Western Girl," though she actually hailed from Ohio.[109] Oakley, who performed with Buffalo Bill's Wild West for seventeen years, was among many key performers and staff members who stayed with Cody for years. Sharpshooter Johnny Baker, who started with the show as an errand boy when he was thirteen years old, stayed for the entirety of the Wild West's thirty-three year run, as did publicist John Burke, whom historian Don Russell credits for "making the name Buffalo Bill a household word."[110] Sitting Bull toured with the show for only one season (1885), but Wild West press coverage added to his Little Big Horn notoriety.

Scout's Rest Ranch and the Wild West

Over the years, Scout's Rest Ranch played a prominent role in Cody's life as well as his management of Buffalo Bill's Wild West. While he spent most of his time on the road touring with his show, it was to Scout's Rest that he returned every winter between seasons. Here was his headquarters where he conducted Wild West business such as purchasing and training horses and signing contracts for new performers. Always on the lookout for fresh, local talent, Cody often held tryouts at Scout's Rest, when cowboys, Indians, and rough-riding performers auditioned, often before local crowds who gathered to watch. Scout's Rest also was a place for performers to recuperate from injuries or to simply rest or rehearse on the grounds. Cody wintered the Wild West's equipment, rolling stock, and most of the animals in Bridgeport, Connecticut (on space rented from the Barnum & Bailey Circus), but he often stabled horses at Scout's Rest before shipping them East in the spring. While full dress rehearsals were usually held in Bridgeport before the start of the season, partial rehearsals sometimes occurred at Scout's Rest, including one for the inaugural season of 1883.[111]

Scout's Rest Ranch bore an indelible connection not only to Buffalo Bill's Wild West, but to Cody's public persona as frontiersman and family man. The ranch, promoted in Wild West show programs, was a powerful piece of publicity and propaganda that illustrated how Cody carried out his role as frontiersman and domesticator, not just in the arena, but in his private life. Photos and drawings of the land and buildings at Scout's Rest, prominently featured in Wild West show programs, provided visual proof that Cody was the West's quintessential frontiersman and domesticator who had turned the Nebraska prairie into a lush, profitable enterprise and retreat.[112]

The show programs emphasized not just Cody's "abilities as Indian fighter and hunter, but his accomplishments as a progressive pioneer who not only conquered the West but domesticated it."[113] The 1893 program made the point by compressing two images: one of Buffalo Bill "Lassoing Wild Horses on the Platte in the Old Days," and another of cattle grazing peacefully in front of the Victorian home and large barn at Scout's Rest. The caption noted how the peace scene once was "the Old Fighting Ground of Pawnee and Sioux." The narrative sequence, Louis Warren explains, was clear: "The progress from frontier to pastoral countryside, from war to peace, and even from open space to domestic space, had been made possible by Buffalo Bill." Indeed, the

[109] Kasper, *Annie Oakley*, 3–4, 170. Oakley was one of only two women in the history of Buffalo Bill's Wild West to have top billing and her own act; the other was sharpshooter Lillian Smith, who toured with the show from 1886 through 1888.

[110] Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 202-03, 297. Burke, Russell writes, "was one of the founders of the art of press-agentry." Johnny Baker went on to serve as Cody's arena director, responsible for hiring and training performers, supervising rehearsals, and handling equipment and performance cues backstage.

[111] Ibid., 305-07, 422; Yost, *Buffalo Bill*, 127–28, 184, 162, 165–68, 227–28, 233–36, 425; Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody*, 245–46, 292, 356–57, 359, 364, 367; "Cody's 'Wild West' Home May Be Preserved," 76; Glenn Shirley, *Pawnee Bill: A Biography of Major Gordon W. Lillie* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1958), 197–98; Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 222, Blackstone, *Buckskins*, 79–80; Foote, *Letters*, 38.

[112] Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 498–99; Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody*, 409–410.

[113] Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 498.

beautiful house and verdant fields at Scout's Rest proved Cody's "powers as domesticator of the savage frontier" and "publicly reinscribed the show's myth of advancing civilization back into his own life." The lovely, middle-class Victorian home, planted in front of a row of trees on the Nebraska prairie, provided a clear message: "By subduing the frontier, Buffalo Bill made homes possible."[114]

So important was Scout's Rest Ranch that Cody ordered the name SCOUT'S REST writ so large on the roof of the barn that people passing by on the train could see it. Buffalo Bill built the place, Warren argues, for admiration as much as for enjoyment.[115] He built the porch wide so that he could entertain, and when his guests stepped into the dining room they were surrounded by images of the Wild West etched on the wallpaper that Cody had designed himself. Scenes included the attack on the Deadwood Stagecoach, a bronco-riding cowboy and the sharpshooting Annie Oakley. Cody promoted Buffalo Bill's Wild West even in the horse barn, where he tacked show posters on the walls above the stalls and, on the roof, carved the exposed rafter ends in the shape of gunstocks.

Buffalo Bill's Wild West: On the Road

After its astounding year at the Chicago Columbian Exposition, Buffalo Bill's Wild West fell onto harder times with the economic depression that began in 1893. With Nate Salsbury seriously ill and profits down, Cody, in 1895, partnered with circus owner James A. Bailey, who implemented a rigorous schedule of one-day stands that took the Wild West to dozens of towns across the country, where it gave two performances a day, six days a week, setting up in the morning, tearing down after the second show, and hitting the rails to the next town. The scores of towns and cities it played over the next handful of years boosted profits and endeared Buffalo Bill's Wild West to millions of Americans who remembered and talked about the experience for years to come.[116]

The grueling one-day stands continued when Buffalo Bill's Wild West set out for a third tour of Europe in 1903. The tour began on a gloomy note with the death of Nate Salsbury just before the opening performance. By the time the tour concluded in 1906, the decades of grueling schedules had taken their toll on Cody as well, who only kept the show going to pay off debts and fund investments. James Bailey's death in 1906 brought financial problems when his estate, to pay debts, took over Bailey's third of the Wild West and also Salsbury's third, which Cody had mortgaged.[117]

The Two Bills Show and the Farewell Tour

Managing Buffalo Bill's Wild West on his own so exhausted Cody that he eventually warmed to the idea of merging his show with that of Pawnee Bill (Gordon W. Lillie). Lillie approached Cody in 1908 about the merger, which promised to solve Cody's need for a partner and financial assistance; for Lillie, the use of Cody's name promised greater success. At the end of the 1908 season the two shows merged into Buffalo Bill's Wild West and Pawnee Bill's Far East—known to cast and crew as "The Two Bills Show." Except for a Far East circus-like spectacle from Lillie's show, most of the acts and spectacles came from Cody's program. Lillie paid off Cody's debts to the Bailey estate and bought out the heirs, allowing Cody to pay Lillie back until they became equal owners of the show.[118]

---

[114] Ibid., 499.
[115] Ibid., 232.
[116] Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 378–79; Kasper, *Annie Oakley*, 140–145; Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody*, 380–84, 388.
[117] Russell, *Wild West Shows*, 70–74; Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 439–444; Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 524–25;
[118] Shirley, *Pawnee Bill*, 94–95, 105, 120, 122–24, 133, 163–65, 190; Russell, *The Wild West*, 50; Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody*, 413–14; 418–19; Blackstone, *Buckskins*, 29–31; Russell. *Lives and Legends*, 447–49; Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 532–33.

Cody, more ready than ever for retirement, announced a farewell tour for the 1910 season, the promotion proving so successful that it stretched into a series of farewells lasting into 1913. As part of the farewell, Cody brought the Wild West to North Platte, Nebraska, on August 19, 1911, when a crowd filled all 16,000 seats for both performances. It was the third time the Wild West had played North Platte, and each time it did, tremendous fanfare welcomed Cody home. On October 12, 1896, nearly the entire town and 4,000 wagons from all around the region assembled at the train station to greet him. In 1898, the State of Nebraska declared August 31, as "Cody Day," and Cody accepted the honor with a stop in North Platte that September.[119]

The happy days were gone by late 1912. With low profits, Cody took out a $20,000 loan with Harry Tammen of Denver, owner of *The Denver Post* and the Sells-Floto Circus. Tammen forced Cody to sign a contract that required repayment of the loan in July 1913 and may have stated that Cody was selling the rights to his name and show over to Tammen. On July 21, 1913, days before Cody's loan was due, the show appeared in Denver, and Tammen sent a sheriff to seize the ticket office money and attach the show for debt. Without cash, Cody and Lillie could not feed or pay their cast and crew and had to use their own funds to get the stranded and now unemployed performers home. Lillie filed for bankruptcy and dissolved his partnership with Cody. All of the show's equipment, supplies, gear, costumes, props, and livestock sold at auction on September 15, 1913. Buffalo Bill's Wild West and Pawnee Bill's Far East was finished.[120]

Harry Tammen forced Cody to tour with the Sells-Floto Circus for the 1914 and 1915 seasons to pay off his debts. It was a miserable two years, and Cody's health rapidly deteriorated. In 1916, Cody joined a former competitor, the Miller Brothers 101 Ranch Wild West and added a military preparedness segment to the Miller Brothers' program. The season closed on November 11, 1916, in what was Cody's last public appearance; two months later he was dead. He died in Denver on January 10, 1917, at the home of his sister, May Cody Decker. Cody had frequently mentioned his desire to be buried on Cedar Mountain, overlooking Cody, Wyoming, but Louisa chose to have her husband interred on Lookout Mountain, west of Denver. Cody's body was embalmed and placed in a crypt until the day of the funeral, June 3, 1917. The Colorado Legislature issued a resolution and the body lay in state in the Capitol rotunda, where 25,000 people lined up to pay their respects. And then, a long motorcade wound its way up Lookout Mountain to the burial site.[121]

One Hundred Wild Wests: The Competitors and Imitators

So popular had Buffalo Bill's Wild West become over the years that more than 100 imitator shows appeared between 1883 and the 1930s. Most of the imitators played small, local venues or scheduled short tours in the United States, though more ambitious outfits toured Europe, and even Australia and countries in South America. Other shows were so ephemeral that they left scant records or even press clippings behind. Historian Don Russell documents the diversity of Wild West shows and their cross-pollination of themes, acts, and even performers. A new Wild West might derive from an anthropological exposition at a world's fair or be a circus that added a Wild West theme or act. Still others might be short on acts and simply comprise a large contingent of American Indians. But most imitators borrowed not only arena acts, but also Buffalo Bill's organizational structure, advertising, and transportation and scheduling systems. Some created their own Buffalo Bill-like personage.[122]

---

[119] Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody*, 383, 387–88, 423; Yost, *Buffalo Bill*, 266–72, 281, 371–73.

[120] Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 452–56, Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 536–37; Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody*, 427–32; Blackstone, *Buckskins*, 32–33; Yost, *Buffalo Bill*, 381; Shirley, *Pawnee Bill*, 197–98, 208-09.

[121] Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 541–542; Barnes, *Great Plains Guide*, 189, 195–196; Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 469, 471; Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody*, 7–8; Robert Bonner, *William F. Cody's Wyoming Empire: The Buffalo Bill Nobody Knows* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007), 179, 256, 270; W. Hudson Kensel, *Pahaska Tepee: Buffalo Bill's Old Hunting Lodge and Hotel: A History, 1901–1946* (Cody, WY: Buffalo Bill Historical Center, 1987), 64; Yost, *Buffalo Bill*, 411.

[122] Russell, *The Wild West*, and in particular pages 121–127, which provide a list of Wild West shows operating between 1883 and

Some imitators were men who had performed previously with Cody's Wild West. Sharpshooter "Doc" Carver, after ending his partnership with Cody in the fall of 1883, organized his own show and, in 1885, engaged in a vicious billposting war with Buffalo Bill's Wild West. Cody sued Carver for using the phrase *Wild West*, and Carver filed a counter suit claiming that his was the original "Wild West." Simultaneously, Carver sued five other "imitator" shows or circuses with western-themed acts for using the term *Wild West*. Thus, only two years after Cody created the Wild West show movement, a handful of imitators already existed, forcing him to be on the alert for copycats impinging on his name and acts. Because imitators could hurt his business and confuse people about the "real" Wild West and the "real" Buffalo Bill, Cody fought his competitors vigorously, plastering over their posters, taking them to court, and forcing many into bankruptcy.[123]

Besides "Doc" Carver, former Cody ally Gordon W. "Pawnee Bill" Lillie went on to create his own Wild West show. Lillie, who had served as interpreter for Cody's Pawnee performers during the 1883 and 1884 seasons, organized Pawnee Bill's Historical Wild West in 1888. The show struggled early on but soon became successful, which toured from 1890 to 1907. Pawnee Bill's show and the Miller Brothers 101 Ranch Wild West, both of which toured for more than a decade, proved to be Cody's strongest competitors—but no show matched Cody's financial success, popularity, or thirty-three year run.[124]

Pawnee Bill's Historical Wild West

Like Buffalo Bill, Pawnee Bill grew up on the frontier. In the 1870s, he worked as interpreter and schoolteacher at the Pawnee Agency in Oklahoma's Indian Territory. In 1881, he resigned from the agency and began cattle ranching and promoting the opening of Oklahoma's Indian Territory to white settlers. In 1888, he created Pawnee Bill's Historic Wild West, complete with horses, American Indians, scouts, cowboys, Mexican vaqueros, and dramatic spectacles that imitated those in Buffalo Bill's Wild West. When plans fell through to take his show to Belgium, Lillie toured the United States. Though crowds were large, money was not coming in as fast as Lillie anticipated, and the show went bankrupt toward the end of the season when it crossed paths with Buffalo Bill's Wild West.[125] In 1890, Lillie reorganized his show as Pawnee Bill's Historical Wild West, Indian Museum and Encampment and gave top-billing to his sharpshooter wife, May Manning Lillie. Between 1890 and 1908, Lillie enjoyed many successful show seasons as he hired Pawnee, Cheyenne, and Comanche performers and encouraged visitors to tour the show's Indian encampment and tent museum of Indian artifacts. He featured "Oklahoma Al" as his own "king of the cowboys" and other star performers, as well as his own historic stagecoach.[126] To stay competitive after the turn of the century, he added circus elements and enlarged the show's name to Pawnee Bill's Historical Wild West and Great Far East. By 1907, the show required forty railcars and had a crew and staff of 587 people. That season the show toured eighteen states and Mexico and sold two million tickets.[127]

---

the 1940s. See also Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody*, 380–81, 393, 413; Kasper, *Annie Oakley*, 140, 190–92, 196; Blackstone, *Buckskins*, 27–28; Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 421, 524; Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 378, 383–84; Shirley, *Pawnee Bill*, 159, 162–63; Moses, *Wild West Shows*, 144, 156, 168–69; NcNenly, *Native Performers*, 105-07, 126–27; Reddin, *Wild West Shows*, 189–212; Wallis, *Real Wild West*, 343, 396–97.

[123] Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 299–300; Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody*, 255, 409; Sagala, *Buffalo Bill on Stage*, 182, 195–96; Russell, *The Wild West*, 24–25, 37, 72, 74; Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 262.

[124] Blackstone, *Buckskins*, 8; Salaga, *Buffalo Bill on Stage*, 197, Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 219; Wallis, *Real Wild West*, 260; Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody*, 381; McNenly, *Native Performers*, 21, 23–24; Russell, *The Wild West*, 47, 68, 70; Moses, *Wild West Shows*, 168–69.

[125] Shirley, *Pawnee Bill*, 120.

[126] Ibid., 41, 66, 73, 78, 81, 92, 94–95, 109–11, 118–24, 133–36, 14–42, 163–66, 169, 208-09; Wallis, *Real Wild West*, 266–69; Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 296; Russell, *The Wild West*, 32–33, 50, 52, 54, 57, Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody*, 330–331; Blackstone, *Buckskins*, 30–31; McNenly, *Native Performers*, 30, Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 532–33, 536–37.

[127] When Buffalo Bill's Wild West and Pawnee Bill's Far East went bankrupt in 1913, Lillie retired permanently from show

Miller Brothers 101 Ranch

Also establishing a firm foothold in the Wild West movement was the Miller Brothers' 101 Ranch Wild West, which came on the scene in June 1905 after the Miller brothers (Joseph, George Jr., and Zack) staged an event similar to Buffalo Bill's Old Glory Blowout at their Oklahoma ranch, the 101. The event featured the Apache Geronimo, as well as African American cowboy Bill Pickett, who invented the sport of bulldogging. Cowboys Tom Mix and Will Rogers performed, as well as cowgirl Lucille Mulhall, who had starred since 1899 in her father's show, Colonel Zack Mulhall's Wild West. Sixty-five thousand people saw the June 11, 1905 show, which included Indian dancers, shooting contests, bronco riding, trick riding and roping, and an Indian attack on a wagon train with a rescue by cowboys.[128]

The show went on the road in 1906 with fifty Pullman railcars carrying 126 performers and another train of 100 freight cars carrying stock and equipment. The show would tour through 1917, covering enormous amounts of territory in the United States, Mexico, Canada, and Europe. So large was the cast and crew that the Millers frequently split the show in half in order to play two tour routes simultaneously. It also was unique for its employment of a larger contingent of cowgirls than other Wild West shows. In fact, its cowgirls and cowboys were the show's greatest strength. Many of the show's Indians were Ponca who lived near the 101 Ranch (designated a National Historic Landmark in 1975), although the Millers also recruited from a dozen other tribes including Oglala and Brule Sioux, Cheyenne, Sac, Fox, Comanche, and Kiowa.[129]

The outbreak of World War I brought financial hardship to many shows, including the 101 Ranch Wild West, which folded in 1917. The Millers revived the show between 1925 and 1931, but the Great Depression, declining attendance, and poor advertising put the 101 Ranch Wild West out of business in 1931.[130]

Rodeo and Film

The Miller Brothers also played a significant role in the creation of the western film industry and modern rodeo, both of which exploded into popularity after World War I. As early as 1909, films appeared of the 101 Ranch cattle herds and its cowboys, including Tom Mix, the 101's "King of the Cowboys" who began a career in motion pictures and became the highest paid Hollywood star of his day. In 1911, the Miller brothers entered into a contract with the New York Motion Picture Company and director Thomas Ince to create Bison 101 Films. By February 1912, they had produced four movies using crews and actors from the 101 Ranch. Many of the western films produced in the early twentieth century had an Oklahoma setting or Oklahoma actors, and the Millers or their associates produced nearly every one.[131] Many cowboys and cowgirls employed by the 101 Ranch and its Wild West show transitioned into motion pictures, particularly in the days before talkies when all they needed were performing skills.

They also turned to the rodeo circuit with its paid, competitive events. Wild West shows had paved the way by exposing the public to riding and roping acts. The Calgary Stampede and Cheyenne Frontier Days, for example,

---

business.

[128] Ellsworth Collings and Alma Miller England, *The 101 Ranch* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), 142–46, 171–72, 178, 180–88; Wallis, *Real Wild West*, 137, 140–41, 217–39, 246–55, 258–59, 271–73, 304,08, 388–92, 400, 418–33, 462, 496–98, 501, 510–11.

[129] Collings and England, The *101 Ranch*, 162–66, 168, 171–74; Reddin, *Wild West Shows*, 159–60, 163–65, 170–72; McNenly, *Native Performers*, 33–36; Wallis, *Real Wild West*, 292; Moses, *Wild West Shows*, 179–80.

[130] Russell, *The Wild West*, 108-09; Collings and England, *The 101 Ranch*, 142–46, 171–72, 178, 180–88.

[131] Collings and England, *101 Ranch*, 115–19; Reddin, *Wild West Shows*, 189–91; Wallis, *Real Wild West*, 238–39, 342–43, 349–50, 355, 362, 367, 372, 377, 436.

began in the first decades of the twentieth century and, in the 1930s, many of the events that the Rodeo Cowboy Association approved as standards had been events showcased in Wild West arenas: saddle-bronc riding, bareback riding, steer wrestling, wild horse races, and steer roping. Western films also drew from Wild West shows, using similar themes and characters to present melodramatic representations of frontier life.[132] Buffalo Bill's Wild West, in particular, created the image of the stereotypical Plains Indian and that of the heroic, masculine cowboy in Stetson hat. Early on, cowboys and cowgirls used Wild West shows as a launching point into rodeo and the movies, but in time they went directly into the new forms of entertainment—signal that the Wild West movement was in decline. As the motion picture industry gained momentum, Wild West shows fell out of favor, and by the 1930s all but a handful had disappeared. By World War II, the great era of outdoor entertainment and its most spectacular expression—the Wild West show—was over.

Changes at Scout's Rest Ranch

In 1913, the same year he lost his Wild West show, Cody also lost his beloved Scout's Rest Ranch. That February, local newspapers announced that Scout's Rest Ranch was for sale, valued the property at $100,000, and noted that it encompassed 3,000 acres, down from its height of 4,000 because Cody had recently sold off parcels to pay debts. In April, papers reported that James M. Hamilton had purchased the ranch. Mounting debt and Cody's inability to pay creditors likely led to the sale after he had already heavily mortgaged the property in the past few years. Cody would have lost the ranch to Harry Tammen in the bankruptcy settlement later that year had he not sold the ranch.[133]

Over the years, much family conflict centered on Scout's Rest Ranch because Louisa had insisted on overseeing the ranch managers. When daughter Arta married rancher Horton Boal in 1889, Louisa demanded that Boal become the new manager even though sister Julia and her husband, Al Goodman, had been doing the job and Cody said he had promised the ranch management to them. Cody argued that Boal did not have the experience to run such a complex operation, but Louisa made life difficult and forced the Goodmans to resign in 1891. Arta and Horton Boal managed the ranch until 1893, but when they found the work too difficult, the Goodmans returned in 1894, staying until Al Goodman's death in 1901. A succession of managers followed, most lasting only a short time due to the stress of navigating Cody and Louisa's conflicting orders.[134]

The ranch was not the only sore point in the couple's marriage. Louisa suspected her husband of infidelity and was frustrated by his tendency to spend lavishly, invest in dubious business ventures, and give generously to friends, business partners, and his sisters. In fact, Cody liked the ranch house in part because it provided him a respite from Louisa, who refused for years to live at the ranch. In January 1904, Cody filed for divorce, and the couple went to court when Louisa refused to sign papers. The judge found insufficient grounds for divorce and declared in Louisa's favor, creating negative press coverage that hurt Cody's public image as an honorable frontiersman and family man.[135] In 1909, a year after the Codys' daughter Irma married Frederick Garlow,

---

[132] Reddin, *Wild West Shows*, 181; Russell, *The Wild West*, 59–60, 85, 106, 108-09, 112, 114, 117–18; Blackstone, *Buckskins*, 9, 113; McNenly, *Native Performers*, 37–38; Lewis, *Traveling Show*, 18–20; Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 478–79; Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West*, 268.

[133] "Col. Cody Sells Ranch," *North Platte Semi-Weekly Tribune*, April 08, 1913, 4; Yost, *Buffalo Bill*, 380, 392; Shirley, *Pawnee Bill*, 205; Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody*, 422; Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 451. Fees, "Review of Nomination" notes that Cody's show-business partner, Pawnee Bill Lillie, held a heavy mortgage on the ranch as well.

[134] Yost, *Buffalo Bill*, 163, 223–225, 231–232, 255, 259, 264, 298, 317, 322, 324, 361–365; Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 344–345, 417–418, 493, 501, 501–515, 512, 519; Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 425, 431–433; Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody*, 393, 402–408; Cody to Al Goodman, July 7, 1887, August 25, 1891, April 11, 1895, in Foote, *Letters*, 55, 68–69, 77, 79; Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West*, 126–131; Barnes, *Great Plains Guide*, 137, 180; Foote, *Letters*, 70, 73, 75, 89–90, 102, 107, 112.

[135] Yost, *Buffalo Bill*, 167, 170–171, 220; Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 347; Barnes, *Great Plains Guide*, 136; Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody*, 225, 297; Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 424–425; Cody to Julia Cody Goodman, March 9, 1882, July 24, 1886, and Cody to Al and Julia Goodman, September 16, 1886, in Foote, *Letters*, 27, 38–39, 41.

the Garlows and Louisa Cody moved into the Scout's Rest ranch house. They often had friends and guests over for parties, social club meetings, dinners, luncheons, and teas. One of their favorite activities was holding summer picnics at the pond under the shade of the cottonwood trees. In this idyllic setting, the only one missing was Cody, who was on the road with the Wild West and, after 1901, spent part of every winter at his TE Ranch in Wyoming, where he took friends and business associates on hunts.[136] Despite acrimony over the divorce proceedings, it was at Scout's Rest Ranch that Cody and Louisa reconciled in June 1910.[137]

William F. Cody's Wyoming Investments

Soon after the sale of Scout's Rest in 1913, the Codys and the Garlows moved out of the house, left North Platte permanently and moved to Wyoming, where Cody had been investing Wild West profits for years. Among his early investments was a hotel in the town of Sheridan. In 1892, when the Burlington & Missouri Railroad extended its line to the town, Cody convinced the railroad and the Sheridan Land Company to build a hotel; when it opened, Cody became owner of one-third of its stock. Then he founded the W. F. Cody Transportation Company to run a livery barn, feed stable, stage line, freighting service, and mail carrier.[138]

In 1894, Cody began purchasing land in Wyoming's Big Horn Basin and established the TE Ranch near Carter Mountain and the South Fork of the Shoshone River. He transported cattle and horses from Scout's Rest Ranch to the TE and purchased a herd of cattle in Deadwood, South Dakota, which bore the TE brand.[139] Cody also founded the Shoshone Irrigation Company in an effort to build a canal to irrigate the parched Wyoming landscape and, with partner George Beck, established the town of Cody. In 1901, he built the Irma Hotel, naming it after his youngest daughter. He spent an exorbitant amount furnishing the hotel with western art, European-style furniture, and a cherry wood bar from France.

With Yellowstone National Park just fifty miles west of Cody, William F. Cody realized the important role that the park could play in the area's development. He envisioned a chain of tourist hotels between the town and the park and, between 1903 and 1905 he constructed Pahaska Tepee and Wapiti Inn on the Cody Road.[140] He promoted the building of the road, which opened on July 10, 1903, and ran from Cody to Yellowstone's east entrance. In 1910, Cody started a transportation service with White Steamer automobiles to carry tourists from town to the lodges for $5 round trip. On August 1, 1915, due in part to Cody's promotional efforts and lobbying, the Federal government approved use of automobiles inside Yellowstone National Park's boundaries.[141]

Cody turned to family members to manage his many Wyoming properties. He persuaded his sister, Julia Cody Goodman, to move to Wyoming and manage the Irma hotel, where he maintained a private suite of rooms for himself when he was in town. He appointed his sister and brother-in-law, May and Louis Decker, as managers of Pahaska Tepee and Wapiti Inn until they moved to Denver in 1913. Then, Cody's daughter Irma and her

---

[136] In 1912, Louisa Cody sold her house in town; it was torn down in 1930 by a later owner. Bonner, *William F. Cody's Wyoming Empire*, 27, 78, 175–177, 179, 226–227; Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 426–427; Yost, *Buffalo Bill*, 260, 266; Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 487–488.

[137] Yost, *Buffalo Bill*, 358–366; Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 536; "Buffalo Bill's Home Life," 14. That year of 1910, Louisa began traveling with Cody on the Wild West tour circuit, the first time she had ever done so

[138] Patti Atkins, *Reflections of the Inn: Historic Sheridan Inn, House of 69 Gables* (P. Atkins, 1994), 4–5, 7–11, 15, 24, 26–29; Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody*, 379; Yost, *Buffalo Bill*, 257; Bonner, *William F. Cody's Wyoming Empire*, 7–9; Barnes, *Great Plains Guide*, 123–124; Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 471–472.

[139] Bonner, *William F. Cody's Wyoming Empire*, 27, 78, 175–177, 179, 226–227; Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 426–427; Yost, *Buffalo Bill*, 260, 266; Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 487–488.

[140] Cody tore down Wapiti Inn in 1913 and used the lumber for improvements at Pahaska Tepee.

[141] Bonner, *William F. Cody's Wyoming Empire*, 139–141, 174, 243–246; Kensel, *Pahaska Tepee*, 1, 4–9, 20–21, 25–27, 33, 37, 43–44, 52–57; Barnes, *Great Plains Guide*, 179; Foote, *Letters*, 120–121.

husband, Fred Garlow, took over management of the hotels.[142] Shortly after Cody's death, Louisa sold Pahaska Tepee, the Irma Hotel, and TE Ranch. She died of a heart attack in 1921 and was buried on Lookout Mountain in the same crypt as her husband.[143]

Comparative Analysis of Other William F. Cody Properties

There are many surviving historic properties associated with William F. Cody, but Scout's Rest Ranch is the property most associated with his life and business ventures, including Buffalo Bill's Wild West. Scout's Rest Ranch was where he lived the longest, where he carried out his role as frontiersman and domesticator, and where, as historian Paul Fees notes, Cody became a "mediating figure between the past and the future." Cody's activities at Scout's Rest Ranch heavily shaped America's emerging conception of the West: "on the Union Pacific railroad, Fort McPherson and North Platte became destinations for prominent visitors who were drawn there (or left impressed by) the famous scout, and, later, showman, Buffalo Bill … Cody well understood that his fame rested on a romantic past. But he was a forward-looking manager who paid homage to the passing frontier … while experimenting with breeding techniques and other agricultural practices" indicative of a modernized, settled West. Cody and Al Goodman are credited with introducing and promoting new ranching methods in Nebraska, further illustrating Scout's Rest Ranch's importance as a symbol of mediation "between old West and new." No other site so well exemplifies Cody's life and legacy.[144]

Buffalo Bill Boyhood Home, Le Claire, Iowa.
In 1841, Cody's father bought this two-story frame house where the family lived off and on until moving to Kansas in 1854. In 1933, the Chicago, Burlington, & Quincy Railroad moved the house to Cody, Wyoming, as a tourist attraction next to the Burlington Inn. In 1947, the railroad gave the home to the Buffalo Bill Memorial Association to use as the Buffalo Bill Museum. When the museum (now the Buffalo Bill Center of the West) expanded and moved to its current location in Cody, Wyoming, in 1970, it relocated the house. The house was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1975 as nationally significant for its association with William F. Cody.[145] The property is associated with Buffalo Bill, but not with his nationally significant Wild West career.

Buffalo Bill Cody Homestead, Princeton, Iowa.
In 1847, Cody's father worked on a farm in the Wapsipinicon River Valley, where he built a two-story Greek Revival house from locally quarried limestone. In 1885, J. C. McCausland purchased the farm and added a two-story frame addition. In 1967, a later owner donated the house to the Scott County Conservation Board to operate as the Buffalo Bill Cody Homestead museum. The home was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1974 as locally significant for its association with William F. Cody and for its association with

[142] Bonner, *William F. Cody's Wyoming Empire*, 12–14, 17–18, 31, 47, 53, 55–57, 60, 69–77, 114, 136, 138, 167–170, 173; Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody*, 384, 395, 397, 401; Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 471–474, 477–478, 489; Kensel, *Pahaska Tepee*, 3; Yost, *Buffalo Bill*, 300–301; Barnes, *Great Plains Guide*, 188–189; Cody to Julia Cody Goodman, Madison Square Garden, New York City, March 23, 1902, in Foote, *Letters*, 90, 92.

[143] Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 541–542; Barnes, *Great Plains Guide*, 189, 195–196; Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 469, 471; Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody*, 7–8; Bonner, *William F. Cody's Wyoming Empire*, 179, 256, 270; Kensel, *Pahaska Tepee*, 64; Yost, *Buffalo Bill*, 411.

[144] Fees, "Review of Nomination"; for discussion of Cody's and Nebraska's place in the growing national consciousness of the West, see Andrew Hutton, ed., *Ten Days on the Plains* (Dallas, TX: Southern Methodist University Press, 1987); National Register of Historic Places, Scout's Rest Ranch.

[145] Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 5, 8–9; Barnes, *Great Plains Guide*, 2–6; "Buffalo Bill Cody History"; National Register of Historic Places, Buffalo Bill Boyhood Home, Cody, Park County, Wyoming, National Register #75001906; "Buffalo Bill's Boyhood Home," Buffalo Bill Center of the West, accessed October 26, 2015, http://centerofthewest.org/explore/buffalo-bill/research/boyhood-home.

agriculture and with entertainment through the Wild West show.[146] The property is associated with Buffalo Bill, but is not associated with the period of his national significance.

Sheridan Inn, Sheridan, Wyoming.
The Missouri & Burlington Railroad and the Sheridan Land Company jointly constructed this hotel in 1892-1893. Cody helped promote the building of the hotel, a three-story structure with a gambrel roof, dormers, and a long porch. Omaha architect Thomas Rogers Kimball designed the hotel. The Sheridan Inn became a National Historic Landmark in 1964 for its role in the development of Wyoming and Sheridan, and for its association with Cody. The Sheridan Inn was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1966 as nationally significant for commerce in the West, for its association with William F. Cody, and for its association with architect Thomas Rogers Kimball. Later owners have continued to operate the property as a hotel.[147] Although the inn is connected with Buffalo Bill, he spent little time here, and it is not as strongly associated with his Wild West career as is Scout's Rest Ranch.

Irma Hotel, Cody, Wyoming.
In 1902, Cody built the two-story Irma Hotel from buff-colored brick and native sandstone and included a veranda and a canted entry. It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1973 as nationally significant for commerce in the West, for its association with William F. Cody, and for its architectural style. Cody maintained a private suite in the hotel where he stayed occasionally when in town on business, but he did not regard it as his principal residence. The current owner still operates the building as a hotel.[148] Although the hotel is associated with Buffalo Bill, it is not as strongly associated with his Wild West career as is Scout's Rest Ranch.

Pahaska Tepee, Cody, Wyoming.
In 1905, Cody constructed Pahaska Tepee for tourists on the Cody Road to Yellowstone National Park. Later owners made many alterations to the two-story log structure and added outbuildings. Pahaska Tepee was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1973 as nationally significant for commerce and automobile tourism in Cody, Wyoming, and Yellowstone National Park and for its association with William F. Cody. Cody used Pahaska as a base for taking friends and business associates on hunting trips, and he stayed here only occasionally. The current owner still operates the site as a vacation lodge.[149] Although the hotel is associated with Buffalo Bill, it has undergone many alterations since Cody's time and does not retain the high degree of historic integrity required for a National Historic Landmark.

TE Ranch Headquarters, Cody, Wyoming.
Starting in 1894, Cody began purchasing land near Carter Mountain and the South Fork of the Shoshone River south of Cody, Wyoming. Here he established the TE Ranch, which became his getaway and base for taking friends on hunting excursions. The ranch house is a one-story rustic log structure and was listed in the National Register of Historic Plates in 1973 for its statewide significance for agriculture and ranching and for its association with William F. Cody.[150] Since Cody's death, a succession of philanthropists and executives has

---

[146] Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 6; Barnes, *Great Plains Guide*, 2–6; "Buffalo Bill Cody History"; "Buffalo Bill Cody Homestead"; National Register of Historic Places, Cody Homestead, Le Claire, Scott County, Iowa, National Register #74000812.

[147] National Register of Historic Places, Sheridan Inn, Sheridan, Sheridan County, Wyoming, National Register #66000762; Patti Atkins, *Reflections of the Inn*, 7–9, 11, 15, 24, 104–117, 129–131; Yost, *Buffalo Bill*, 257.

[148] National Register of Historic Places, Irma Hotel, Cody, Park County, Wyoming, National Register #73001936; Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 474; Bonner, *William F. Cody's Wyoming Empire*, 169–170.

[149] Barnes, *Great Plains Guide*, 191; Kensel, *Pahaska Tepee*, 1–9, 20, 64, 85–104; National Register of Historic Places, Pahaska Tepee, Cody, Park County, Wyoming, National Register #73001938.

[150] Bonner, *William F. Cody's Wyoming Empire*, 112, 175–179, 25–252; Yost, *Buffalo Bill*, 260, 266; Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 488; Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 426–427; Barnes, *Great Plains Guide*, 189; National Register of Historic Places, TE Ranch Headquarters, Cody, Park County, Wyoming, National Register #73001939.

made the ranch their private residence, which may raise questions about the property's historic integrity. Although the TE Ranch is connected to Cody, it represents Cody's private life, whereas Scout's Rest Ranch is more strongly associated with Cody's renowned persona as Buffalo Bill and his Wild West show.

Comparative Analysis of Other Wild West Show Properties

Although many exhibitions imitated Buffalo Bill's Wild West, only two Wild West shows achieved substantial success and longevity, both of which have surviving historic sites associated with the shows. Since the sites relate to Wild West imitators, they do not represent the original progenitor of the movement, William F. Cody and Buffalo Bill's Wild West.

Blue Hawk Peak Ranch (Pawnee Bill Ranch), Pawnee, Oklahoma.
This ranch was the home of showman Gordon W. "Pawnee Bill" Lillie, who ran an imitator Wild West in 1888 and again from 1890 to 1907, before combining his show with Cody's from 1908 to 1913. After retiring from show business, Lillie focused on ranching and the bison conservation movement. In 1902, he began purchasing land near Pawnee, Oklahoma, and established a 2,000-acre property that he named Blue Hawk Peak Ranch. In 1910, he hired architect James Hamilton to build a Craftsman bungalow mansion from locally quarried stone and red cement. The property also included a garage, stable, and a stone barn built in 1926. Lillie used his ranch to breed cattle, pigs, and bison. By the 1920s, Lillie's 150 bison formed one of the largest captive pureblood herds in the world. The Oklahoma Historical Society acquired the ranch in 1961 and turned it into the Pawnee Bill Ranch and Museum. Blue Hawk Peak Ranch was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1975, and updated with a boundary expansion in 2014. The site is significant at the state level for commerce because of the Wild West show movement and association with bison conservation, and for its association with Gordon W. "Pawnee Bill" Lillie. It is also locally significant for bungalow architecture and architect James Hamilton. The owners have expressed a desire in designating the ranch as a National Historic Landmark. Despite Lillie's success as a Wild West imitator, his show drew heavily on Cody's and lacked originality. He is more famous for being Cody's partner than he is for his own show. Lillie's roles in Oklahoma land politics and the bison conservation movement were arguably more significant than his Wild West show.[151]

101 Ranch Historic District, Marland, Oklahoma.
In 1893, George W. Miller established the 101 Ranch, which became the empire of his three sons, Joe, George L., and Zach, who ran a Wild West show from the ranch between 1905 and 1917 and again from 1925 to 1931. The 101 Ranch Wild West was the last great Wild West show of the era. Although it had a slightly different focus than Buffalo Bill's Wild West, it owed many of its acts and organizational features to Cody's show. The Millers' show was a forerunner to the modern rodeo movement, and many of its acts became rodeo staples. The Millers were also among the early promoters of western films, which they felt flowed naturally out of their Wild West. The 101 Ranch was an enormous enterprise that included three towns spread over four counties and spanned 110,000 acres. The Millers called it the largest diversified farm in the nation, and used it to plant a variety of crops and breed livestock. The ranch was based around a central headquarters area with a lavish three-story mansion called the White House, and was completely self-sufficient with its own cannery, tannery, meat packing plant, dairy, blacksmith, workshops, ice plant, oil refinery, filling station, power plant, store, and café. In the 1930s, financial difficulties bankrupted the Miller family, and the bank foreclosed on the ranch. The Farm Security Administration (FSA) purchased the land in 1941, dividing it into small farms as part of a federal resettlement program. The FSA then sold or razed most of the ranch buildings in 1943. Only ruins of the ranch

[151] Shirley, *Pawnee Bill*, 118, 133, 137–140, 148–157, 199–202, 212–217, 221–224; Wallis, *Real Wild West*, 270; Russell, *Wild West*, 54; Reddin, *Wild West Shows*, 152–153; National Register of Historic Places, Blue Hawk Peak Ranch, Pawnee, Pawnee County, Oklahoma, National Register #75001571; National Register of Historic Places, Blue Hawk Peak Ranch (Boundary Increase), Pawnee, Pawnee County, Oklahoma, National Register #14000428.

headquarters remain. The 101 Ranch was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1973 as nationally significant for agriculture through diversified farming and ranching, for commerce through the Wild West show movement and the rodeo, and for African American history through cowboy Bill Pickett. It became a National Historic Landmark in 1975.[152]

Conclusion

More than a century after the demise of Buffalo Bill's Wild West, William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody remains one of the nation's most recognized figures. His name, historian Louis Warren writes, "still resonates in the imagination of Americans and people the world over."[153]

The success Cody achieved in his show career had lasting implications for generations of Americans, even for those who never saw his show or were not yet born when the Wild West set up its tents and brought its interpretation of the frontier and "Manifest Destiney" to hundreds of towns and cities across America and Europe. As Warren writes, Cody's Wild West so perfectly drew the line "between truth and fiction" that it was "all but invisible."[154]

The thrilling spectacles at Buffalo Bill's Wild West, whether they were an attack on the Deadwood Stagecoach or the riding of the Pony Express, told a triumphant story of conquest and "progress;" it was a contest, however skewed and blurred by invention, between "savagery and civilization." The show resonated with an America that looked nostalgically to its frontier past and anxiously ahead to a future of industrialization and urbanization. For generations of Americans, "Buffalo Bill defined the meaning of American history and American identity."[155]

William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody and the Wild West movement he created influenced—and continues to influence—how the entertainment industry, mass media, and popular culture present the history of the American West. Cody's version of frontier conquest and the mythic hero who achieved it became so entrenched that it is a popularized history of the American West still heard today. Buffalo Bill "rose to greater heights of fame than any American could have dreamed. He became the nation's brightest star."[156] No site has stronger direct associations with his legacy and that of Buffalo Bill's Wild West than Cody's beloved home, Scout's Rest Ranch in North Platte, Nebraska.

---

[152] Wallis, *Real Wild West*, 3–4, 169–171, 181, 184, 191–192, 215–218, 225–227, 258–262, 278–279, 335, 342–343, 367, 377, 462, 486, 496–498, 501, 510–515; Collings and England, *101 Ranch*, 24–27, 36–37, 39–41, 68, 87; National Register of Historic Places, 101 Ranch Historic District, Marland, Kay County, Oklahoma, National Register #73001560.

[153] Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, x.

[154] Ibid., 218.

[155] Ibid., xi.

[156] Ibid., x.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

National Register Documents

National Register of Historic Places, 101 Ranch Historic District, Marland, Kay County, Oklahoma, National Register #73001560.

National Register of Historic Places, Blue Hawk Peak Ranch, Pawnee, Pawnee County, Oklahoma, National Register #75001571.

National Register of Historic Places, Blue Hawk Peak Ranch (Boundary Increase), Pawnee, Pawnee County, Oklahoma, National Register #14000428.

National Register of Historic Places, Buffalo Bill Boyhood Home, Cody, Park County, Wyoming, National Register #75001906.

National Register of Historic Places, Cody Homestead, Le Claire, Scott County, Iowa, National Register #74000812.

National Register of Historic Places, Irma Hotel, Cody, Park County, Wyoming, National Register #73001936.

National Register of Historic Places, Pahaska Tepee, Cody, Park County, Wyoming, National Register #73001938.

National Register of Historic Places, Scout's Rest Ranch, North Platte, Lincoln County, Nebraska, National Register #78001705.

National Register of Historic Places, Sheridan Inn, Sheridan, Sheridan County, Wyoming, National Register #66000762.

National Register of Historic Places, TE Ranch Headquarters, Cody, Park County, Wyoming, National Register #73001939.

Primary Sources

Bare, Ira L., and Will H. McDonald, eds. *An Illustrated History of Lincoln County, Nebraska and Her People. A Narrative of the Past with Special Emphasis Upon the Pioneer Period of the County's History; Particular Attention Also Given to the Social, Commercial, Educational, Religious and Civic Development of the County from the Early Days to the Present Time.* 2 vols. Chicago: American Historical Society, 1920.

Cody, William F. *The Life of Hon. William F. Cody, Known as Buffalo Bill: The Famous Hunter, Scout, and Guide: An Autobiography.* 1879. Reprint, with foreword by Don Russell. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978.

Foote, Stella. *Letters from "Buffalo Bill."* El Segundo, CA: Upton & Sons, 1990.

Standing Bear, Luther. *My People the Sioux.* 1928. Reprint. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975.

North Platte Semi-Weekly Tribune, North Platte, Nebraska

The North Platte Telegraph, North Platte, Nebraska.

Scout's Rest Ranch site file, LN00-012, Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office.

Sunday World-Herald, Omaha, Nebraska.

Sunday World-Herald Magazine, Omaha Nebraska.

Sunday World-Herald Magazine of the Midlands, Omaha Nebraska.

Sunday World-Herald Midlands News, Omaha, Nebraska.

Secondary Sources

Atkins, Patti. *Reflections of the Inn: Historic Sheridan Inn, House of 69 Gables.* P. Atkins, 1994.

Barnes, Jeff. *The Great Plains Guide to Buffalo Bill: Forts, Fights & Other Sites.* Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2014.

Blackstone, Sarah J. *Buckskins, Bullets, and Business: A History of Buffalo Bill's Wild West.* New York: Greenwood Press, 1986.

Bonner, Robert. *William F. Cody's Wyoming Empire: The Buffalo Bill Nobody Knows.* Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007.

Bruce, Chris, ed. *The Myth of the West*. Seattle: Henry Art Gallery and the University of Washington Press, 1990.

Buffalo Bill Center of the West. "Buffalo Bill's Boyhood Home." Copyright 2015, accessed October 26, 2015. http://centerofthewest.org/explore/buffalo-bill/research/boyhood-home.

Carter, Robert A. *Buffalo Bill Cody: The Man Behind the Legend.* New York: J. Wiley, 2000.

Collings, Ellsworth and Alma Miller England. *The 101 Ranch*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971.

Deloria, Philip J. *Indians in Unexpected Places*. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2004.

Ellis, Clyde. "Five Dollars a Week to Be 'Regular Indians': Shows, Exhibitions, and the Economics of Indian Dancing, 1880-1930." In *Native Pathways: American Indian Culture and Economic Development in the Twentieth Century*, edited by Brian Hosner and Colleen O'Neill, 184-208. Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2004.

Feest, Christian F., ed. *Indians and Europe: An Interdisciplinary Collection of Essays*, edited by Christian F. Feest. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999.

Hall, Roger A. *Performing the American Frontier, 1870-1906.* Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Hutton, Andrew, ed. *Ten Days on the Plains*. Dallas, TX: Southern Methodist University Press, 1987.

Kasper, Shirl. *Annie Oakley*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992.

Kasson, Joy S. *Buffalo Bill's Wild West: Celebrity, Memory, and Popular History.* New York: Hill and Wang, 2000.

Katzive, David, ed. *Buffalo Bill and the Wild West*. Brooklyn, NY: The Brooklyn Museum, 1981.

Kensel, W. Hudson. *Pahaska Tepee: Buffalo Bill's Old Hunting Lodge and Hotel: A History, 1901-1946.* Cody, WY: Buffalo Bill Historical Center, 1987.

Lewis, Robert M., ed. *From Traveling Show to Vaudeville: Theatrical Spectacle in America, 1830-1910.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003.

McNenly, Linda Scarangella. *Native Performers in Wild West Shows: From Buffalo Bill to Euro Disney*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012.

Moses, L. G. "Interpreting the Wild West, 1883-1914." In *Between Indian and White Worlds: The Cultural Broker*, edited by Margaret Connell Szasz, 158-178. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994.

———. *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933.* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996.

Raibmon, Paige. *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth Century Northwest Coast*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005.

Reddin, Paul. *Wild West Shows.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999.

Russell, Don. *The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill.* Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960.

———. *The Wild West: or, A History of the Wild West Shows, Being an Account of the Prestigious, Peregrinatory Pageants Pretentiously Presented Before the Citizens of the Republic, the Crowned Heads of Europe, and Multitudes of Awe-Struck Men, Women, and Children Around the Globe, Which Created a Wonderfully Imaginative and Unrealistic Image of the American West.* Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum of Western Art, 1970.

Sagala, Sandra K. *Buffalo Bill on Stage.* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008.

Shirley, Glenn. *Pawnee Bill: A Biography of Major Gordon W. Lillie.* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1958.

Scott County, Iowa. "Buffalo Bill Cody History." Copyright 2015, accessed October 26, 2015. www.scottcountyiowa.com/conservation/buffalo-bill-cody-homestead/buffalo-bill-history.

———. "Buffalo Bill Cody Homestead." Copyright 2015, accessed October 26, 2015. www.scottcountyiowa.com/conservation/buffalo-bill-cody-homestead.

Steele, Jeffrey. "Reduced to Images: American Indians in Nineteenth-Century Advertising." In *Dressing in Feathers: The Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture*, edited by S. Elizabeth Bird, 45-64. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998.

Trachtenberg, Alan. Review of *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, by L. G. Moses. *Journal of American History* 84, no. 2 (September 1997): 604-606.

Van De Logt, Mark. *War Party in Blue: Pawnee Scouts in the U.S. Army*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010.

Warren, Louis S. *Buffalo Bill's America: William Cody and the Wild West Show.* New York: Alfred Knopf, 2005.

Warren, Louis S. "Cody's Last Stand: Masculine Anxiety, the Custer Myth, and the Frontier of Domesticity in Buffalo Bill's Wild West." *The Western Historical Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 49-69.

Wallis, Michael. *The Real Wild West: The 101 Ranch and the Creation of the American West.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999.

Yost, Nellie Snyder. *Buffalo Bill, His Family, Friends, Fame, Failures, and Fortunes*. Chicago: Sage Books, 1979.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

_X_ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
__ Previously Listed in the National Register. NR#78001705, Listed January 30, 1978
__ Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
__ Designated a National Historic Landmark.
__ Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #
__ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

_X_ State Historic Preservation Office
_X_ Other State Agency
__ Federal Agency
_X_ Local Government
__ University
_X_ Other (Specify Repository): Buffalo Bill Center of the West, Cody, Wyoming; Buffalo Bill Grave & Museum, Golden, Colorado; Denver Public Library Western History/Genealogy Department, Denver, Colorado.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Acreage of Property: 8.25

UTM References:

Point	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	14	349244	4558521
B	14	349451	4558517
C	14	349448	4558362
D	14	349241	4558366

Verbal Boundary Description:

The proposed boundary of Scout's Rest Ranch Headquarters National Historic Landmark is roughly square and encompasses approximately 8.25 acres in the southwest corner of the Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park. The boundary begins at the northwest corner (Point A) at the fenced west property line. The boundary goes directly east approximately 685 feet until reaching the barn and runs along the north side of the barn, then continues east along an unnamed service road to the point of a curve in the service road (Point B; northeast corner of boundary). From here the boundary runs south approximately 530 feet, along the west edge of the large parking lot until the parking lot meets Scout's Rest Ranch Road (Point C; southeast corner of boundary). From here the boundary proceeds west along the northern edge of Scout's Rest Ranch Road approximately 685 feet to where the fenced west property line meets the west access road's intersection with Scout's Rest Ranch Road (Point D; southwest corner of boundary). The boundary continues north approximately 530 feet along the west fence and west edge of the access road until reaching Point A (northwest corner of boundary).

Boundary Justification:

The boundary of the Scout's Rest Ranch Headquarters includes all of the ranch's surviving historic buildings, structures, and sites present during the period of significance which maintain historic integrity. Buildings and structures in Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park that date after the period of significance have been excluded from the proposed NHL boundary. The boundary includes all of the resources in the 1978 National Register of Historic Places nomination and in addition extends to the west along the historical park property line to include additional buildings, structures, and sites that retain a high degree of historic integrity and which support the understanding of the property's national significance.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: Hannah Braun

Address: Public Lands History Center,
Campus Delivery 1776
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, Colorado 80523

Telephone: (970) 491-6130

Date: October 31, 2015

Edited by: Shirl Kasper
National Park Service
National Historic Landmarks Program
12795 W. Alameda Parkway
Denver, Colorado 80228

Edited by: Patty Henry, Roger Reed, and Barbara Wyatt
National Park Service
National Historic Landmarks Program, WASO
1849 C Street, Mail Stop 7228
Washington, DC 20240

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS PROGRAM
June 01, 2017

Figure 1: SCOUT'S REST RANCH HEADQUARTERS, North Platte, Nebraska
Main ranch house, front (south) elevation, ca. 1887–1900.
Courtesy of Buffalo Bill State Historical Park, Archive room safe, Album 6 "Scout's Rest Ranch, Restoration, Welcome Wigwam," SSR-48, BB–219.

Figure 2: SCOUT'S REST RANCH HEADQUARTERS, North Platte, Nebraska
Ranch house, horse barn, T barn, and yard, ca. 1894.
Courtesy of Buffalo Bill State Historical Park, Archive room, framed photograph.

Figure 3: SCOUT'S REST RANCH HEADQUARTERS, North Platte, Nebraska
West and south elevations of the horse barn with T barn and windmill beyond, ca. 1891–1904. Courtesy of Buffalo Bill State Historical Park, Archive room safe, Album 6 "Scout's Rest Ranch, Restoration, Welcome Wigwam," SSR–100, BB–117–834.

Figure 4: SCOUT'S REST RANCH HEADQUARTERS, North Platte, Nebraska
Buffalo Bill's Wild West, group with Deadwood stagecoach, ca. 1880s. Left to right: Fred Matthews (stage driver), Johnny Baker (sharpshooter), John Burke (press agent), William F. Cody (in dark suit with cigar and cane), Native American woman and child (John Y. Nelson family), Bronco Bill (cowboy), Buck Taylor ("King of the Cowboys"). On stagecoach: Native American children (John Y. Nelson family), John Y. Nelson (scout and stage driver), Jule Keen (treasurer).
Courtesy of Buffalo Bill State Historical Park, Archive room safe, Album 3 "Wild West Show," BB–117–580.

Figure 5: SCOUT'S REST RANCH HEADQUARTERS, North Platte, Nebraska
William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody, ca. 1909.
Courtesy of Buffalo Bill State Historical Park, Archive room safe, Album 1 "W. F. Cody," BB–63, BB–117–382.

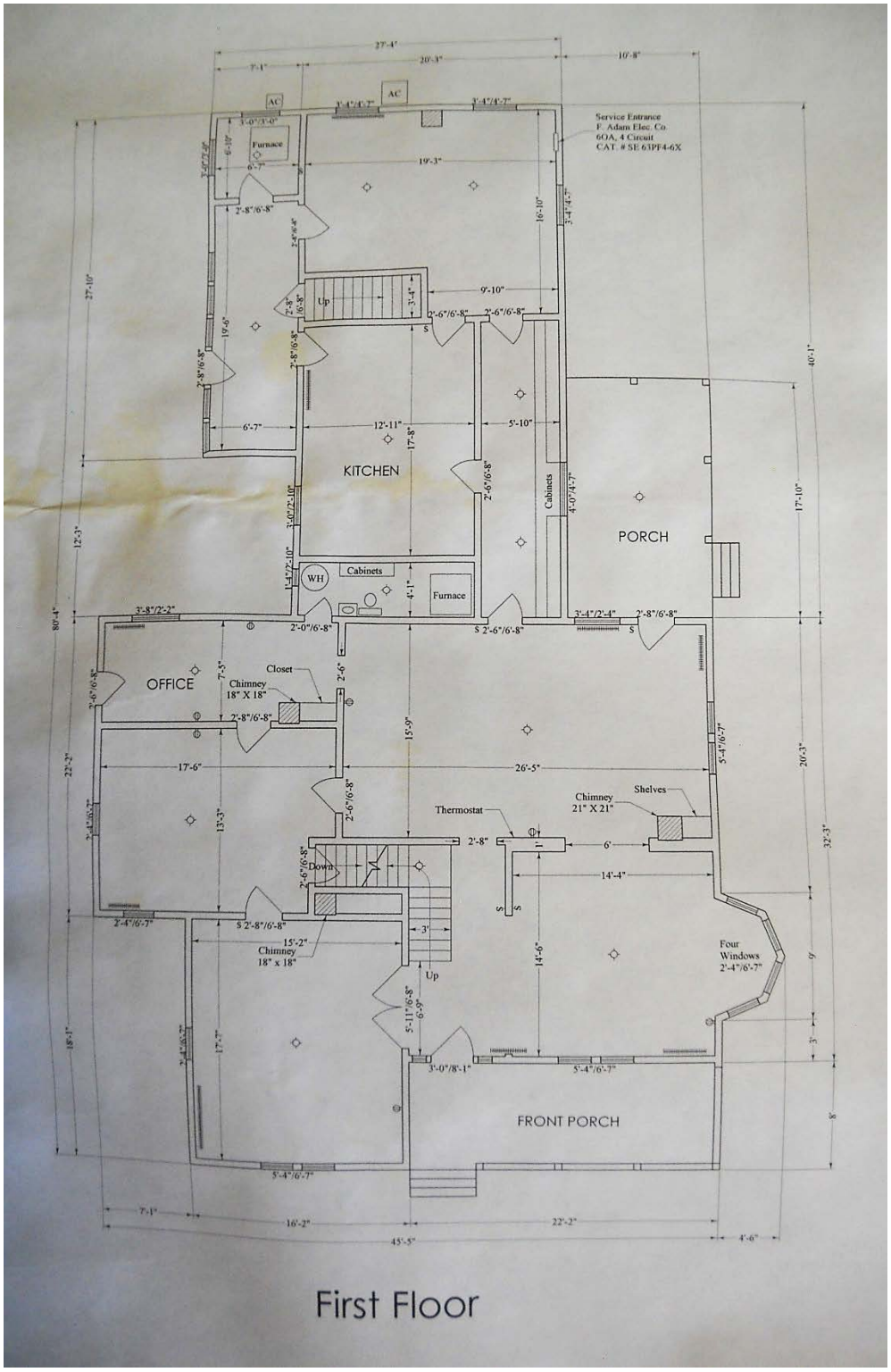

Figure 6: SCOUT'S REST RANCH HEADQUARTERS, North Platt, Nebraska
Main ranch house, first-story floor plan, 1886.
Courtesy Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Engineering Division, Floor Plans and Elevation drawings, sheet 1 of 1. Scout's Rest, Buffalo Bill State Historical Park. Scale: 1/8" = 1'
Drawn by C. J. C., July 16, 1999.

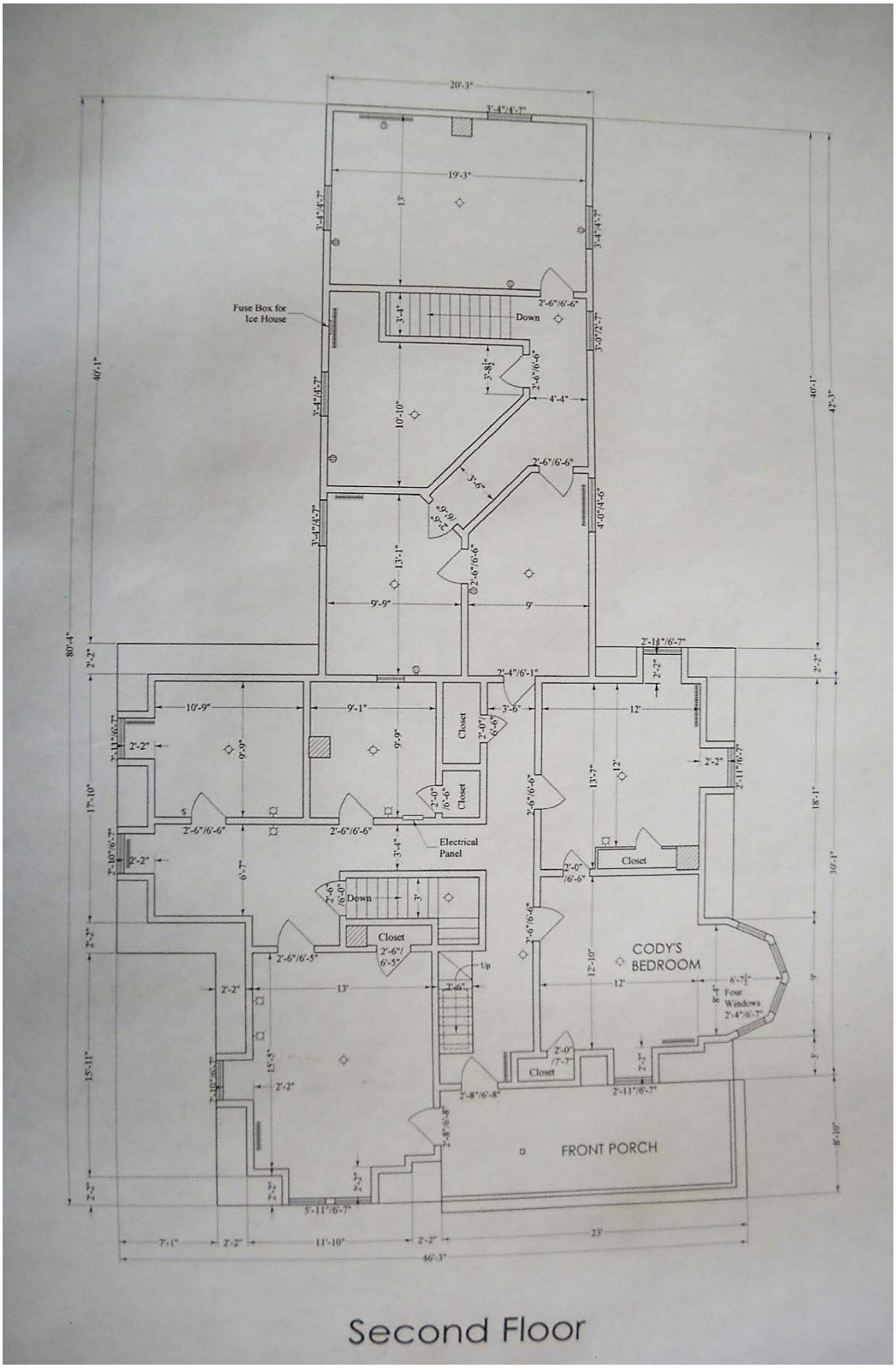

Figure 7: SCOUT'S REST RANCH HEADQUARTERS, North Platte, Nebraska
Ranch house, second-story floor plan, 1886.
Courtesy Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Engineering Division.
Floor Plans and Elevation drawings, sheet 1 of 1 Scout's Rest, Buffalo Bill State Historical Park. Scale: 1/8" = 1' Drawn by C. J. C., July 16, 1999.

SCOUT'S REST RANCH HEADQUARTERS, North Platte, Nebraska
Wooden Arch Footbridge
Photo by Hannah Braun, June 2015

SCOUT'S REST RANCH HEADQUARTERS, North Platte, Nebraska
Ranch House, south (main) façade and east elevation
Photo by Hannah Braun, May 2014

SCOUT'S REST RANCH HEADQUARTERS, North Platte, Nebraska
Left to right: Ranch House north (rear) elevation; Cob House; Springhouse/Cellar and Ice House
Photo by Hannah Braun, May 2014

SCOUT'S REST RANCH HEADQUARTERS, North Platte, Nebraska
Dining Room
Photo by Hannah Braun, June 2015

SCOUT'S REST RANCH HEADQUARTERS, North Platte, Nebraska
Upstairs hall looking south towards door onto second story porch
Photo by Hannah Braun, June 2015

SCOUT'S REST RANCH HEADQUARTERS, North Platte, Nebraska
Horse barn, west (main) façade and south elevation
Photo by Hannah Braun, May 2014

SCOUT'S REST RANCH HEADQUARTERS, North Platte, Nebraska
Horse Barn, east elevation, with corral and windmill
Photo by Hannah Braun, June 2015

SCOUT'S REST RANCH HEADQUARTERS, North Platte, Nebraska
Horse Barn first floor interior, horse stalls
Photo by Hannah Braun, June 2015

SCOUT'S REST RANCH HEADQUARTERS, North Platte, Nebraska
Horse Barn second floor interior, hay storage and chutes
Photo by Hannah Braun, June 2015

SCOUT'S REST RANCH HEADQUARTERS, North Platte, Nebraska
Diversion Dam and Diversion Pond
Photo by Hannah Braun, May 2014

SCOUT'S REST RANCH HEADQUARTERS, North Platte, Nebraska
Scout Creek with Concrete/Earthen Footbridge in distance
Photo by Hannah Braun, June 2015

SCOUT'S REST RANCH HEADQUARTERS, North Platte, Nebraska
West End Pond Bridge
Photo by Hannah Braun, June 2015

SCOUT'S REST RANCH HEADQUARTERS, North Platte, Nebraska
Dam Bridge
Photo by Hannah Braun, June 2015

SCOUT'S REST RANCH HEADQUARTERS, North Platte, Nebraska
Comfort Station, south façade
Photo by Hannah Braun, June 2015