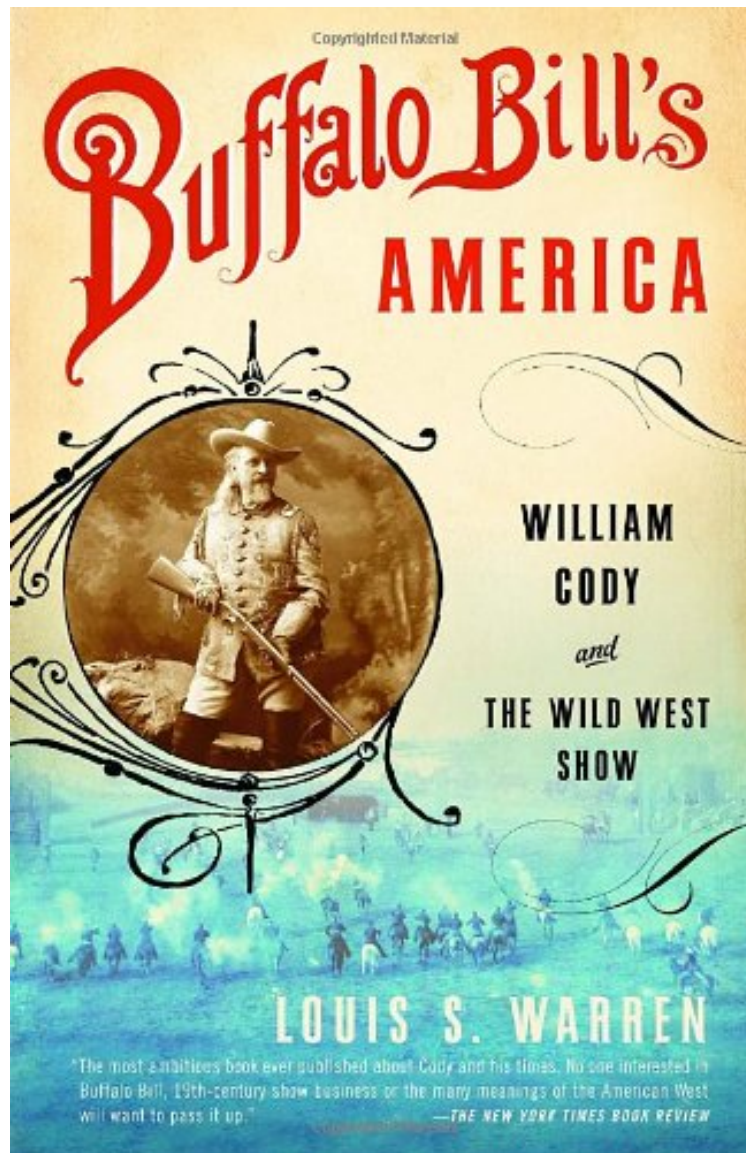


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## Buffalo Bill's America: William Cody and The Wild West Show

Louis S. Warren

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#944199 in Books Warren, Louis S. 2006-12-05 2006-12-05 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.01 x 1.63 x 5.201, 1.37 #File Name: 0375726586672 pages | File size: 64.Mb

**Louis S. Warren : Buffalo Bill's America: William Cody and The Wild West Show** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Buffalo Bill's America: William Cody and The Wild West Show:

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Read Don Russell's Buffalo Bill instead. By Rick Pickren Very disappointing. Warren's thesis, that W.F. Cody was a complete fraud, is typical of the trend of current historians to scathingly criticize and/or debunk American heroes. In the first 25 pages, Warren attacks young Will's participation in

the Pony Express as a complete fable. The twisted logic he uses to arrive at this conclusion is weak and unconvincing. Repeatedly throughout the tome, Warren, annoyingly and unsuccessfully, attempts to psychoanalyze Cody's family relationships and marriage. Although Warren introduces some interesting backstory to the narrative of Cody's life, it does little to overcome his overall tenure that Buffalo Bill was nothing more than a clever and talented circus performer. Not recommended. Read Don Russell's *The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill* instead.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The many sides of a great showman  
By Joan Littlefield  
A most complete biography of the period and this amazing showman!  
The book arrived on time and in excellent (like new) condition. It will take me a while to read the whole book. It is the kind that you can leave and get back to easily. Anyone with an interest in the West at this time as well as the man would get a lot out of reading this book.

44 of 46 people found the following review helpful. When the Legend becomes fact, print the legend  
By Wayne Klein  
An entertaining combination of history and biography  
Louis Warren's book manages to capture the elusive spirit of William Cody aka Buffalo Bill. Bill was a combination of hero, poser and entertainer as he frequently told tall tales linking him to the archetypal western hero Wild Bill Hickock. He dressed like Wild Bill, claimed to be his cousin (although the two weren't related Cody did meet Wild Bill at a young age and did travel with him later). Cody would variously claim that he was the youngest pony express rider (he never rode for the pony express), was a spy during the Civil War (he wasn't) and was at many of Wild Bill's most famous exploits (he wasn't). It's ironic then that Bill Cody felt the need to embellish an already heroic career as a tracker and guide during the infamous Indian Wars. Cody lived during an uncertain time in the west and his role as a "white" Indian scout made people more comfortable that he was one of "us" who could fight and befriend one of "them" (i.e., the Indians whatever group they belonged to) unlike Wild Bill or other well known scouts who had reputations for violence and/or consorting (meaning marrying an Native American Indian) with the "enemy". Warren provides a fair balanced account of these troubled prejudiced times and what those on the frontier did to survive. Why did Bill Cody feel the need to tell tall tales about his career when he wasn't the charlatan that many trackers and guides were? Cody had that need to be larger than life and learned by observing people like P. T. Barnum that a little bit of truth and a lot of hokum go a long way. As Maxwell Scott (Carleton Young) states in "The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance", "When the Legend Becomes fact, Print the Legend". Perhaps Cody felt the facts weren't enough and that he needed to become a legend so that he might be recognized as such during his life time and after he died. Either way, this man who was an odd combination of hero and entertainer entered the realm of legends. Interestingly, Buffalo Bill and Wild Bill Hickock were frequently confused as the same person by people of the time. This marvelous book covers Cody's youth, his stretch as a scout, entertainer with his Wild West Show (which did feature Wild Bill Hickock at one time although Hickock supposedly became annoyed at one point by Cody's attempts to be like him) and later as a popular celebrity who embodied the lost days of the wild west. Featuring illustrations, Warren's book brings to life a lost era in America when heroism and legends became far more than stories to be told by camp fires late into the night.

William F. Buffalo Bill Cody was the most famous American of his age. He claimed to have worked for the Pony Express when only a boy and to have scouted for General George Custer. But what was his real story? And how did a frontiersman become a worldwide celebrity? In this prize-winning biography, acclaimed author Louis S. Warren explains not only how Cody exaggerated his real experience as an army scout and buffalo hunter, but also how that experience inspired him to create the gigantic, traveling spectacle known as Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. A dazzling mix of Indians, cowboys, and vaqueros, they performed on two continents for three decades, offering a surprisingly modern view of the United States and a remarkably democratic version of its history. This definitive biography reveals the genius of America's greatest showman, and the startling history of the American West that drove him and his performers to the world stage.

From Publishers Weekly  
In this ambitious biography, Warren depicts William "Buffalo Bill" Cody as a man who took a set of extraordinary skills, added a few fanciful tales and built a persona that made him one of the most recognizable men of his time. But it's in Cody's Wild West Show that UC-Davis historian Warren finds Cody's true genius: the ability to capture in theater the anxieties, cultural myths, ambitions, class divides and cultural direction of America as it approached the 20th century. Warren seeks metaphor and symbolism everywhere and is remarkably inventive in finding them. Readers who tire of the discussions of the domestication of America as captured in the Wild West Show, or theories that the show symbolized American labor unrest (with the Indians as stand-ins for labor), will find Warren's analysis of Cody's influence on Bram Stoker's *Dracula* or what Edvard Munch had in common with Cody's Wild West Show entertaining, if not totally convincing. Warren sends out a fusillade of theories about late-19th-century American culture, the American west and their intersection with the Wild West Show; some resonate, some are provocative and some simply (and unintentionally) amuse. All in all, Warren manages to both entertain and instruct. 41 bw illus. (Oct. 14) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From Booklist  
In his public career, William Cody straddled two worlds and two eras. Born in 1846 in Iowa, he moved west as the nation expanded to the Pacific; he was a genuine product of the frontier who served as a Pony Express rider, army scout, and big-game hunter. Yet he achieved his greatest fame as the frontier was closing, and his Wild West shows, with their

utilization of mass-marketing techniques and electronic gimmickry, clearly belong to the twentieth century. But, as Warren reveals in this engrossing and thoroughly enjoyable biography, Cody himself, and the public perception of his life, were always riddled with contradictions. In later life, Cody undeniably embellished his accomplishments, but Warren shows that, as a frontiersman, Cody was the genuine article. He was often self-centered, even narcissistic, but he seemed to genuinely like people and was generous to a fault. Warren has provided an outstanding examination of the life and times of an enigmatic "hero" who was perhaps our first media-driven superstar. Jay Freeman Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved The most ambitious book ever published about Cody and his times. No one interested in Buffalo Bill, 19th-century show business or the many meanings of the American West will want to pass it up. The New York Times Book Warren writes with the tireless ebullience of a scholar in love with his material. . . . The grocery tabloids missed a good thing by not being around when Buffalo Bill was king of the box office. The New York of Books Meticulously researched and entertaining. . . . A fascinating and accessible study of a man who . . . can still teach us today about how things are not always what they appear to be. The Portland Oregonian Not just a biography but an examination of the cultures of the eastern United States and Europe and their relationship with the American West. The Denver Post