

STORY **DARLA WORDEN**

COCKEYED ABOUT CODY

THIS COLORFUL WYOMING OUTPOST
CELEBRATES 125 YEARS OF THE OLD WEST



PHOTO PARK COUNTY TRAVEL COUNCIL

On Sheridan Avenue, the main street through town, many historic buildings have been preserved.



Cody made headlines recently when rapper, singer, record producer, businessman, politician and fashion

designer Kanye West purchased a nearby ranch for \$7.7 million near this Wyoming town, population 10,000. After the news settled, Cody residents went about their business as usual; after all, the town has had many notable characters in its 125-year history—beginning with its founder, William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody.

A frontiersman, promoter and entrepreneur, Buffalo Bill recognized there was money to be made from a new railroad line being built from Montana to bring tourists to Yellowstone National Park. All those travelers would need a place to stay, and he knew the perfect site for a town, a place with ample water and gorgeous scenery in the Bighorn Basin. Buffalo Bill formed a land partnership in 1896, and the town, fittingly named Cody, was incorporated in 1901.

After traveling through Europe with his Wild West Show, Buffalo Bill was arguably the most famous American in the world at the turn of the century, and his name gave Cody instant credibility. He used his far-reaching connections to develop deals and business partnerships in the new town, and he built several hotels and lodges in the area including the Wapiti Lodge and Pahaska Teepee, as well as the Irma Hotel, named after his daughter. The historic hotel is still in business today on Cody’s Sheridan Avenue, the main drag through town.>>

ABOVE LEFT: Founding father William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody first came to the area as a scout for the U.S. Army. ABOVE RIGHT: Ernest Hemingway came into Cody while staying at the L Bar T Ranch to pick up guests at the train station and once, to have his chin stitched up.

PHOTOS FROM LEFT: WILLIAM F. “BUFFALO BILL” CODY, N.D., MS 6 WILLIAM F. CODY COLLECTION, MCCRAKEN RESEARCH LIBRARY, BUFFALO BILL CENTER OF THE WEST, CODY WYOMING, P.6.0114; JOHN F. KENNEDY PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

Around the same time that the Irma was built, a Kansas woman, Agnes Chamberlin, opened the Chamberlin Hotel boarding house downtown on 12th Street in 1903. The hotel, with its convenient location and well-appointed rooms, was popular with actors, authors, politicians, opera singers, movie stars and tycoons, including Ernest Hemingway, who stayed there in 1932 on his way back to Key West, Florida, after spending the summer at the L Bar T Ranch near Yellowstone. Restored and renamed in 2005, the lovely Chamberlin Inn was re-created as a boutique hotel, and Hemingway's signature on the hotel register is on display for guests to view.

Early in Cody's history, a forward-thinking group of citizens realized the town's special place in Western history, and in 1927, ten years after Buffalo Bill's death, the Buffalo Bill Museum was launched in a one-level building modeled after the showman's home on the Shoshone

River. Collections were eventually moved to the Buffalo Bill Center of the West, a complex of five separate museums and a research library in the heart of town, including the Plains Indian Museum, the Cody Firearms Museum, Draper Natural History Museum, Whitney Western Art Museum and the Buffalo Bill Cody Museum—a tribute to the town's founding father.

Although steeped in rich history, today Cody is a modern Western town, complete with telecommuters, coffee shops and art galleries on Sheridan Avenue. Kanye West's ranch purchase may have stirred up interest in the little outpost, but this town is experienced when it comes to notable characters, and who knows, perhaps one day there will be a museum exhibit dedicated to Kanye. >>

At the turn of the century, Buffalo Bill realized that tourists on their way to Yellowstone would need a place to stay and he built the Irma Hotel, named after his daughter, and still in existence today.



PHOTOS IRMA HOTEL, DOWNTOWN CODY, WYOMING, CA. 1902-1910. MS 6 WILLIAM F. CODY COLLECTION, MCCRAKEN RESEARCH LIBRARY. BUFFALO BILL CENTER OF THE WEST, CODY WYOMING. Pg.1.636.041



ABOVE: The five-campus Buffalo Bill Center of the West includes the Plains Indian Museum, depicting Native American life in the West. BELOW: The Buffalo Bill Museum was originally located in the log cabin that now houses Park County Visitor's Center before moving into the Buffalo Bill Center for the West. Outside the BBCW a traditional teepee welcomes guests at the entrance. >>



PHOTOS FROM TOP: PLAINS INDIAN MUSEUM AT THE BUFFALO BILL CENTER OF THE WEST, CODY, WYOMING; BUFFALO BILL CENTER OF THE WEST, CODY, WYOMING



The Scoop:

GETTING THERE

CODY'S YELLOWSTONE REGIONAL AIRPORT

offers direct flights from Denver and Salt Lake City.

FOR THOSE DRIVING, don't miss the spectacular Chief Joseph and Beartooth Scenic Highways.

HISTORIC STAYS IN CODY

The Chamberlin Inn,
chamberlininn.com

The Irma Hotel,
irmahotel.com

GLIMPING HISTORY

HISTORY TOURS—download a free 45-minute boots-on-the-ground experience created by Park County Travel Council and Buffalo Bill Center of the West on the TravelStorys app.

TIRED FEET? The one-hour Trolley Tour provides an overview through town.

THE WILD WEST ON DISPLAY

BUFFALO BILL CENTER FOR THE WEST

is located at 720 Sheridan Avenue
For hours and special events visit
centerofthewest.org.

OLD TRAIL TOWN

is located at 1831 Demaris Drive,
oldtrailtown.org. ○

To learn more about Ernest Hemingway's adventures in Cody, Wyoming, check out Darla Worden's new book, Cockeyed Happy: Ernest Hemingway's Wyoming Summers with Pauline, available for presale now at amazon.com and bookstore.org.

TOP: The rugged country outside Cody is home to mountain goats, elk, deer, black bears and grizzlies—the wildlife and fishing were a few of the reasons Ernest Hemingway stayed in the region. BOTTOM: Children enjoying a glimpse into the past at Old Trail Town.