

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type 6) All entries - complete applicable sections

STATE:	Wyoming
COUNTY:	Park
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE:	DEC 9 1 1974

1. NAME

COMMON: Buffalo Bill Statue

AND/OR HISTORIC: Buffalo Bill Statue

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: 720 Sheridan Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: Cody CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: First

STATE: Wyoming CODE: 56 COUNTY: Park CODE: 029

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Object <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Buffalo Bill Memorial Association, Inc.

STREET AND NUMBER: 720 Sheridan Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: Cody STATE: Wyoming CODE: 56

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Park County Courthouse (under Buffalo Bill Historical Center)

STREET AND NUMBER: 1002 Sheridan Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: Cody STATE: Wyoming CODE: 56

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Wyoming Recreation Commission Survey of Historic Sites, Markers & Mon.

DATE OF SURVEY: 1967 (1973 revised) Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Wyoming Recreation Commission

STREET AND NUMBER: 604 East 25th Street

CITY OR TOWN: Cheyenne STATE: Wyoming CODE: 56

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

 Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Ruins Unexposed

(Check One)

 Altered Unaltered

(Check One)

 Moved Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Buffalo Bill Statue stands on an acre or two of ground encircled by a looping city street. That loop forms the western end of Sheridan Avenue and Sheridan Avenue is the central business street of Cody, Wyoming. Thus, for one looking westward from the business district, about eight blocks distant, this equestrian statue—heroic in size and topping a high and massive base—appears to completely block the city's most important avenue. Actually, the statue was located before the avenue had been extended so far and it stands within the original northern boundary—now removed southward to allow for the width of the street—of a 25 acre tract of land, which, including the statue, is the property of a private owner, the Buffalo Bill Memorial Association, Inc.

When placed, in 1924, this statue stood on open prairie to the westward of the westerly fringe of a small town. Now the city has grown around it, but this is a handsome urban district and the 25 acres owned and studiously developed by the Memorial Association has been designed to provide in perpetuity a sense of spaciousness surrounding the statue.

As stated, the Buffalo Bill Statue stands in one of the handsomer districts of a small city which in its entirety is notable for its neatness and cleanness—its air of prosperity. Within the district where the statue is located perhaps the single most noticeable attribute is spaciousness. This quality exists in both a natural and a cultivated state. When the statue was dedicated, its immediate surroundings were entirely natural—undisturbed prairie. Since then, beyond to the west, a residential district of substantial homes with wide lawns and many trees has grown up. But the statue has been protected from falling into a completely urban setting by two circumstances: first, the Buffalo Bill Memorial Association—although building a great museum and art edifice and cultivating the adjacent grounds—has seen fit to maintain a sizeable portion of its 25 acre plat in that plat's original prairie-land condition; second, on its north face the statue overlooks a steep bluff carved in bygone ages by the meandering Shoshone River—this provides an open view of plains and mountains that no future urban growth can completely shut off.

Besides the residences and the Memorial Association's building, the Buffalo Bill Historical Center, already mentioned, the statue is situated in proximity of several other well designed structures. These include the old, log-construction, Buffalo Bill Museum, now named the Stock Center and currently in nomination status for National Register enrollment; a fine Catholic Church, its offices and rectory; and, neighboring to the east along the north side of Sheridan Avenue, a hospital and medical center complex.

The statue stands on a base that is a miniature replica of Cedar Mountain, that mountain which stands in closest proximity of all the mountain background scenery. The reason for this replica is allegorical, Buffalo Bill having chosen a location on Cedar Mountain for his grave site—a choice denied by those who buried him.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

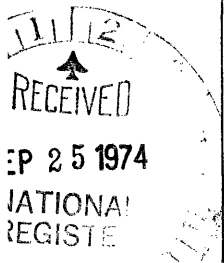
Since early Renaissance time when Columbus and other westering adventurers first began to establish the existence and shape of the American Continents, European man has maintained a steadfast interest in this "new world." Over the centuries he demonstrated an especially keen interest in the fitful progress made by a series of more venturesome but never numerous compatriots in rolling back the mysteries of wilderness and establishing, in place thereof, their own only relatively less wild, rudimentary civilization.

One way in which this European man has shown his interest in, and appreciation of, pathfinders and frontiersmen is by raising memorials in their honor. Thus, he has several times in several places honored the chief of them all—Columbus himself. And so also he has honored a Cortez, a Champlain, a Mackenzie, a Boone, a Lewis, a Clark, and many others. But eventually the venturesome business of opening frontiers in the wilderness ran out of wilderness and necessarily came to an end. Aside from arctic waste and tropical jungle, about the last frontier was that of the Rocky Mountains-High Plains and one of the last frontiersmen—too late for pathfinder status—to play out a part therein was William F. Cody (Buffalo Bill).

It is fitting that there should have been a memorial raised to Buffalo Bill, representing the last of the western frontiersmen. It is more than fitting that the creator of that memorial should have been one who had previously raised a memorial to Christopher Columbus, representing the first of the western frontiersmen.

The history of the creation of this statue-memorial commenced one day during the early 1920's when Mrs. Mary Jester Allen, a niece of Buffalo Bill then living in New York City, called at the town house of Mrs. Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney. Mrs. Allen had recently helped other interested relations organize the Cody Family, Incorporated, and she had been selected chairman of that corporation's National Museum Committee. Now she called on Mrs. Whitney to present the proposition that Mrs. Whitney should sculpt a statue of Buffalo Bill.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

McGraw-Hill Dictionary of Art, New York-London 1969, pp 511.
 The National Encyclopedia of American Biography, James P. White & Co.,
 New York 1920, Vol. XVII, pp 149.
 Frost, Richard I. (Curator, Buffalo Bill Museum) Personal interview, 2/11/72
 Park County, Wyo. Official Records, County Clerk's Office, Articles of
 Incorporation, Buffalo Bill Memorial Association, Property Deeds, etc.
The Union Pacific Magazine August 1924, pp 16-17.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

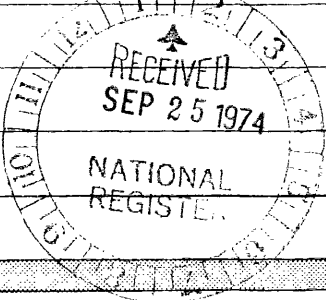
LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	0	'	"	0	'	"	44°	31'	35"
NE	0	'	"	0	'	"	109°	04'	22"
SE	0	'	"	0	'	"			
SW	0	'	"	0	'	"			

12/6-650
4931-200
C

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Ned Frost, Chief, Historic Division

ORGANIZATION: Wyoming Recreation Commission DATE: 1/25/74

STREET AND NUMBER: 604 East 25th Street

CITY OR TOWN: Cheyenne STATE: Wyoming CODE: 56

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION **NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name Paul H. Westedt
Paul H. Westedt

Title Historic Preservation Officer

Date February 4, 1974

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

A. Puortner
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date DEC 31 1974

ATTEST:
Ronald M. Greenberg
Keeper of The National Register

Date DEC 31 1974

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Buffalo Bill Statue

(Continuation Sheet)

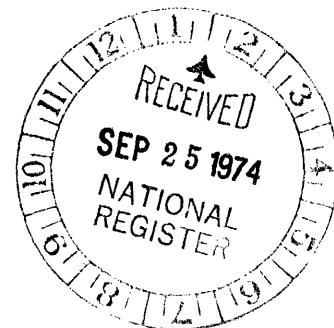
(Number all entries)

Physical Appearance - 2

However, in building this replica of a mountain its constructors chose to give it a 90-degree turn from the original. That was because the abrupt face of the mountain was to the north where it forms the south wall of the Shoshone River's spectacular canyon. In the replica this abrupt face was turned to the east, looking down Sheridan Avenue which is the approach route used by most visitors. This abruptness is achieved with huge blocks of granite, native to the original canyon wall, and set in the shape of that wall so as to model the north face of Cedar Mountain. The backing of this face is built more of earth than of rock and is similar to the mountain's own surface in that respect. It is formed like a ridge, with two inclining sides, but the backbone of this ridge—again as in the mountain itself—slopes on a gradual grade from its highest point over-topping the simulated canyon wall down to street level. Up the two inclining sides rise shallow steps, deep set so as to permit a horizontal stride between rises, which lead to the summit. The miniature is more than 20 feet high and about 270 feet in circumference at the base. Solidly set on the summit is Mrs. Whitney's statue of Buffalo Bill.

This bronze equestrian statue is of moderately heroic proportions. The sculptress conceived her subject as an Indian Wars army scout riding in lead of a swiftly moving cavalry column: suddenly the scout spies a tell-tale sign and checks his mount to a haunch settling, hoof scraping halt; simultaneously he bends in his saddle, the better to observe ground markings, while throwing up his right arm—the hand clutching a Winchester carbine—as a signal for the column to draw rein. The statue measures about 14 feet from planted horse's hooves to muzzle tip of the upflung Winchester.

Thus the statue, reaching almost 35 feet above street level, massive and the personification of forceful action, creates a striking effect.



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Statement of Significance - 2

Mrs. Allen has written that she found Mrs. Whitney to be very gracious and that they "struck it off from the first." The conditions explained by Mrs. Allen were that the Cody Family was promoting the establishment of a National Memorial to their famous kinsman but that the Family was more interested that such a memorial should be raised than it was in where it should be raised. In fact, the Family still deliberated among four possible choices of sites, in as many different states, for location of the proposed memorial. These four possibilities were: in Iowa, where Cody had been born; in Kansas, where he had won the sobriquet Buffalo Bill; in Nebraska where he had established his "Scout's Rest" Ranch; and in Wyoming where he had finally chosen to make his home.

According to Mrs. Allen, Mrs. Whitney became enthused with the idea of a Buffalo Bill Statue and nothing would do but that she should adopt and take over management of the entire project. The Cody Family, Inc., and its National Museum Committee, chairmanned by Mrs. Allen, stepped aside and from that time Mrs. Whitney was in charge of at least the statue part of the dual memorial conception. It is relevant, therefore, to understand something of the background, including professional credentials, of this gracious but determined lady.

Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney was born in New York in 1877 and died there in 1942. Born the daughter of one Cornelius Vanderbilt and the granddaughter of another Cornelius (the Commodore) Vanderbilt, she married into another prominent New York family becoming, in 1896, the bride of Harry Payne Whitney. Having been born with a talent and into money, there was no problem of availability of the latter for use in promoting the former. She studied under Hendrick C. Anderson and James Earle Fraser in New York and, later, under Andrew O'Connor and Rodin in Paris. By 1920 she had fully developed her style and, having completed works attracting favorable comment in a number of widely scattered places, was well known in her own artistic right. Of her works to that date, some of the better known ones were: Titanic Memorial in Washington, D. C.; El Dorado Fountain in San Francisco; Aztec Fountain in Washington, D. C.; and the heroic statue of Columbus at Palos in Spain.

Mrs. Whitney was not the sort of a person who permitted the torments of indecision. For her the question of where a work of art should be located was easily answered—go and look at the proposed locales and decide. So she went to look and eventually came to the Cody Country in Wyoming and stayed long enough to inspect the works of civilization which Buffalo Bill had helped to found and the works of nature which had been there seemingly forever, and to capture a feel for both. Particularly she inspected Buffalo Bill's T E Ranch and the livestock grazing its pastures, including several saddle animals the old scout himself had formerly bestrode. Then she went into the town and, bordering on its west side—well out on sage covered

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Statement of Significance - 3

prairie and in unobstructed view of the Absoroka Mountain Range where the frontiersman had so often secluded himself, chose her location. She arranged to buy forty acres of that untrampled prairie ground and, having done that, as far as she was concerned or any protest might matter the business of a location for a Buffalo Bill memorial statue was a settled affair.

She had also settled in her mind that the statue would be an equestrian one, one depicting the frontier army scout in mounted action. To that end she decided that only models of genuine western origin could validly pose for this work. So she arranged to have the T E horse "Smokey" shipped via railway express to New York; found a local citizen, a tall and lithe cowboy, to pose in the saddle; arranged for him to go to New York also; and then she was herself ready to return to her studio and her work.

Early in 1924 the statue was finished. It was then shipped on a railroad flatcar to Cody, where an unveiling ceremony was scheduled for July 4th.

The unveiling and dedication of Mrs. Whitney's statue of Buffalo Bill on that 4th of July in 1924 caused more than a little stir. The French Government, aware of the circumstances through a replica of the statue which aroused great interest at the Paris Salon, conferred the "Award of Honor" upon its sculptress, General of the Armies, John J. Pershing, attended in his capacity as Chairman of the Buffalo Bill American Association—no doubt he was also there to honor one, Colonel William Frederick Cody, who had held the position of Chief of Scouts of the United States Army. Other members of that Association attending were Colonel J. Howell Cummings, Philadelphia; Senator John B. Kendrick, Wyoming; General Cornelius Vanderbilt, New York City, vice-chairman; Robert D. Dripps, Philadelphia, executive secretary; and George W. Simmons, New York City, treasurer. The Governor of Wyoming attended, as did the governors of several neighboring states. And a number of Buffalo Bill's old Indian friends were also there. Miss Jane Cody Garlow, granddaughter of Buffalo Bill, unveiled the statue.

Thus, socially, the unveiling proved a successful event. But it was a remarkable event as well, and that for two separate reasons. Viewed only from the narrow standpoint of a consummate art work—heroic size and physical artistry placed on the outskirts of a little western town, starkly standing against a background of spreading prairies and far ranging mountains—the statue was, as it remains, an impressive sight. It was qualified to take its place among other artistic treasures, sculpted or painted, which commemorate wilderness pioneers and frontiersmen who were the precursors of European civilization's westerly extension.

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(Number all entries)

Statement of Significance - 4

From a broader view the statue's very actuality proved an inspiration to divergent groups seeking to preserve vestiges of a singular legacy, that they should join forces and work together toward the step by step development of a truly significant concept. That concept envisioned a cultural center concerned with the heritage left by the Rocky Mountains-High Plains Frontier—its aboriginal status, its natural history and its human history. Thus previously unallied corporate entities, the Buffalo Bill Memorial Association and the Cody Family, who, pursuing this same concept had gone their separate ways, found inspiration in the statues existence for a coordination of future efforts.

Without in any way disparaging its artistic merit, this boost given to the morale of early day historic preservation workers may have been the single most significant factor concerning the Buffalo Bill Statue. That plus the fact that its power as a stimulant appears to have established a precedent whereby each succeeding achievement has become, rather than a resting place for laurels, an inducement to get on with the greater work.

