

# Buffalo Bill

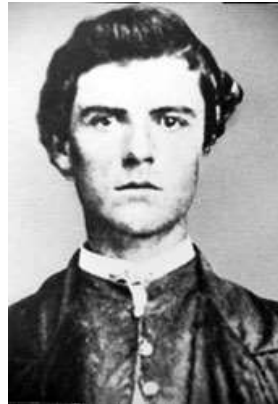


**William F. Cody**  
**1846-1917**

William F. Cody represents the spirit of the West for millions. His life experiences and the stories made up about him have become what we view as the **frontier** and Wild West today.

## Childhood

Born in Iowa, in 1846, Cody grew up on the **prairie**. When his father died, his mother moved to Kansas where Cody worked as a **mounted messenger** and **wrangler**. In 1859, he tried his luck as a **prospector** in the Pikes Peak gold rush, and the next year, joined the **Pony Express** at the age of 14 years.



In 1867, Cody got the job that gave him




his nickname, hunting buffalo to feed the construction crews of the railroad. He told the story that he killed 4,280 head of buffalo in 17 months earning him the name "Buffalo Bill". During this time he met and married his wife.

Cody began working for the Army. He was chief of **scouts** for the 5<sup>th</sup> **Cavalry** and took part in 16 battles. For his service

over these years, he was awarded the **Congressional Medal of Honor**.



While Cody was earning a reputation for skill and bravery in real life, he was also becoming a national **folk hero**, thanks to the

A small image of a dime novel cover. The title "DIME NOVELS" is prominent at the top. The cover art depicts a scene with a person on horseback, possibly a cowboy or soldier, in a Western setting.

"Adventures of Buffalo Bill" in **dime novels**. Later Mr. Cody was asked to star in a play called, *The Scouts of the*

*Plains*, and though Cody was not a professional actor, he was a natural showman, and was popular with the **audiences**.

He remained an actor for eleven years and also began writing books and stories about his life. But not even **show business** success could keep Cody from returning to the West. He began taking rich **adventure seekers** on Western hunting **expeditions**.

In 1883, when he started Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, an outdoor program



that acted out some of the things that happened in life on the frontier: a buffalo hunt with real buffalos, an Indian attack on with real Indian actors, a Pony Express ride. Half circus and half history lesson, the show was a huge success, **touring** the country for 30 years.

Cody made a **fortune** from his show business success and spent or lost it all before his death. Cody died on January 10, 1917, and is buried in a **tomb** in Colorado.



## Glossary

**adventure seekers** – a person who looks for unusual and exciting experiences.

**audiences** – people that come to see an event



**cavalry** – soldiers  
who fought on horses

**Congressional Medal of Honor** – an  
award given to soldiers for bravery

**dime novel** – a type of  
non-fictional story written  
and sold, usually for a few cents.



**expeditions** – a trip taken by a group  
with a purpose

**folk hero** – a person who gains popularity  
through oral stories

**fortune** – a large amount of money

**frontier** – the edge of  
settled land with wilderness  
beyond its border



**mounted messenger** – a person who  
delivers small items or  
letters on horse back

**Pony Express** – boys  
and men who delivered  
mail on horse back



**prairie** – a large  
open area of  
grassland



**prospector** – a person  
searching for gold or  
silver



**scouts** - a person sent  
in front of a group to



gather information  
about the land coming.

**wrangler** – a person  
in charge of cattle or  
livestock on a farm.

**show business** – theater, movie and  
music business

**tomb** – a place  
someone is buried



**touring** – performers going to different  
places to share their show

