

# How the West Was Made (Up)

a history video by Wim Coleman and Pat Perrin

Even as cowboys and cowgirls were living in the American West, some of them helped create a myth—a romantic idea called the Wild West. Sure, there were cowboys, army scouts, outlaws, and American Indians in the real West, but gunfights, holdups, and heroic rescues didn't happen every day. Life was hard and usually rather ordinary. Of course, that didn't keep exciting exaggerations out of newspaper stories, novels, wild west shows, and movies. Easterners couldn't get enough of those western stories, and western legends quickly became part of our culture.

## Research suggestions:

### Characters and topics featured in the video:

Wild Bill Hickok  
Buffalo Bill Cody  
Ned Buntline  
Annie Oakley  
Chief Sitting Bull  
dime novels  
Scouts of the Prairie  
Scouts of the Plains  
Buffalo Bill's Wild West

### Related characters and topics to check out:

Texas Jack Omohundro	Pony Express
Calamity Jane	Army Scouts
Frank Butler	was between settlers and
William Frank "Doc" Carver	Native American Indians
Tom Mix	buffalo (bison) hunts, buffalo
Lillian Smith	hunters, tourists hunting
Mexican Joe	stagecoach travel,
Bill Pickett	stagecoach robberies
Pawnee Bill	other wild west shows
Chief Joseph	trick riding, roping, shooting
Geronimo	Penny Dreadfuls
Miller brothers, The 101 Ranch	Beadle's Dime Novels
Wild West Show	<i>Harper's New Monthly</i>
Custer's Last Stand	<i>Magazine</i> , Feb. 1867
Grand Duke Alexis of Russia	interview by Colonel
Kit Carson (and dime novels)	George Ward Nichols

## Ideas to consider:

1. Why do you think 19th- and early 20th-century easterners and Europeans found western stories so fascinating?
2. Find examples of western stories in today's books, movies, and television shows. Explain their appeal. How are today's westerns similar to or different from the dime novels, stage shows, and wild west shows mentioned in the video?
3. Find examples of western-style adventures in different genres. (For example, science fiction, detective stories ... ) What are some basic characteristics of all these stories?
4. Use Joseph Campbell's description of the hero and the "monomyth" to analyze the appeal of westerns. (See Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.)
5. How do western legends affect some people's behavior even today? (Think of people, places, and situations you know, those in stories, those in the news ... )



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## NOTES

Make notes of important information in the video:

1. James Butler Hickok was known by the name \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Hickok became famous because of a story published in the year \_\_\_\_\_.
3. William F. Cody was known by the name \_\_\_\_\_  
because \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Ned Buntline wrote books that were called \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Hickok played the part of \_\_\_\_\_ in one of Buntline's plays.
6. Hickok was killed in the year \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Cody's show called "Wild West" toured places such as \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
8. "Wild West" performer Annie Oakley was known as \_\_\_\_\_  
because \_\_\_\_\_.
9. The Sioux chief \_\_\_\_\_ was also a member of Cody's "Wild West."
10. The invention of the \_\_\_\_\_ brought wild tales of  
the American west to a large audience.

Other points: \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



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