

of individual land ownership in the Southeast in the 1830s and Kansas in the 1860s remain important precedents. Yet these critiques should not lessen the importance of the authors' initial assertion regarding the Poncas' actions. Although this book more effectively traces the impact on individuals than on federal policy, Standing Bear's return to Nebraska clearly affected Indian affairs nationwide.

Buffalo Bill and Sitting Bull: Inventing the Wild West, by Bobby Bridger. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002. xx, 480 pp. Notes, index. \$34.95 cloth.

Reviewer Michael L. Tate is professor of history at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. His latest book is *The Frontier Army in the Settlement of the West* (1999).

In the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, the name Buffalo Bill evoked a heroic image recognized worldwide. Dime novels and cinematic portrayals placed William F. Cody on a pedestal that honored him as the archetypal frontiersman—rugged, courageous, honest, self-reliant, and chivalrous. In 1968 playwright Arthur Kopit challenged the Cody mystique by writing *Indians*, which director Robert Altman subsequently adapted into a film titled *Buffalo Bill and the Indians, or Sitting Bull's History Lesson*. Both portrayed Cody as a charlatan whose fame rested on his destruction of the bison and his self-serving manipulation of Indian people. In the 1980s, a five-part television series, "Images of Indians," demonized Cody and made him into a symbol of all that was wrong in American expansionism.

As one might guess, Buffalo Bill was neither the nature's nobleman featured in Ned Buntline's dime novels nor the evil incarnate that some revisionists have portrayed in more recent times. To set the record straight, Bobby Bridger has attempted a detailed synthesis of the published literature, and has tried to organize his work along a dual biography approach that compares and contrasts the lives of Cody and the Hunkpapa holy man Sitting Bull. This innovative technique, reminiscent of Stephen Ambrose's parallel biography of George A. Custer and Crazy Horse and Peter Aleshire's comparison of George Crook and Geronimo, offers rich possibilities for the broad reading audience to whom the book is directed.

Central to Bridger's argument are his assertions that Buffalo Bill had frequent contact with Indian people throughout his life, he learned to fully respect their cultures, he was a true friend to the Indians who joined his Wild West Show, and he frequently defended Indian rights and land claims when so many other whites favored their termination. Because relatively little is known about some phases of the subject's

life, the author has to rely on a life-and-times approach that relates Cody's *probable* role in events when his specific role is unknown. For instance, chapters on his boyhood; his work for the freighting company of Russell, Majors, and Waddell; his service for the same firm's Pony Express; and his Civil War duties are aptly presented as general discussions of those events and institutions, with a sprinkling of Cody thrown in when precise biographical connections are known.

Another prominent theme of the book is Cody's innovative role as a businessman and showman. His Wild West Show of 1882 grew to enormous size and complexity. Throughout the rigorous travel necessary for the show, its star demonstrated unbridled energy, an uncanny ability to relate to all types of audiences, and an honest commitment to the welfare of his employees. Some critics charged that his restaging of Indian battles unfairly cast American Indians as savages from the past, rather than honoring their alleged rapid acculturation into mainstream society. Yet most of his Indian friends and employees apparently maintained their respect for him even into their twilight years.

Employing a fast-paced writing style that will please all levels of readers, Bridger has provided a worthy biography. In addition to the public man, we also see Cody's private moments, his personal doubts about his international image, and his relationship with his wife, Louisa Frederici, throughout the long separations in their lives. The well-chosen subtitle ("Inventing the Wild West") nicely ties the book together as the author ably documents the important impact Buffalo Bill had in defining Americans' and Europeans' concepts of what the frontier experience had been. Sometimes the public image was exaggerated and even manufactured, but the impact of that imagery was, nonetheless, overwhelming.

Those looking for new revelations about Cody will not find them in this book. By his own admission, the author has depended on the standard published record only, often relying too heavily on Cody's 1879 autobiography and Helen Cody Wetmore's 1899 story of her brother. Furthermore, the implication that this is a parallel biography of Buffalo Bill and Sitting Bull misleads the reader, because this is overwhelmingly the former's story. Nonetheless, this book will find a large and appreciative audience for the life story of this native son of Le Claire, Iowa.

The Virgin and the Dynamo: Public Murals in American Architecture, 1893-1917, by Bailey Van Hook. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2003. xxii, 240 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$44.95 cloth.

Reviewer Karal Ann Marling is professor of art history and American studies at the University of Minnesota. She is the author of 19 books, including *Wall-*

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