

# Buffalo Bill OR Wild Bill?

People commonly mix up Buffalo Bill Cody and Wild Bill Hickok.

Buffalo Bill lived until 1917, passing away in Denver due to disease at the age of 70. He was a Pony Express rider, buffalo hunter, military scout, actor, recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor for valor, entrepreneur, town founder and the showman who created Buffalo Bill's Wild West. In the years around 1900, William Frederick "Buffalo Bill" Cody was the most famous man on the planet.

Buffalo Bill is linked romantically to Annie Oakley by Hollywood but that never happened. Annie Oakley did perform with Buffalo Bill's Wild West as a sharpshooter for 17 seasons but she was very happily married to Frank Butler, who traveled with her and acted as her manager.

James Butler "Wild Bill" Hickok was about ten years older than Buffalo Bill and lived until 1876 when he was murdered during a poker game at the age of 39. Wild Bill had noteworthy experiences as a civil war soldier, military scout, gold prospector, gambler, gunfighter and town marshall. At 6 foot 3, he was a wonderful physical specimen and had an exaggerated reputation as a fast-drawing man killer.

Wild Bill Hickok is romantically linked to Calamity Jane by Hollywood but that was unlikely too. Wild Bill had just married Agnes Lake five months before his death and had only been in Deadwood three weeks before he was murdered by Jack McCall. Calamity Jane was a colorful character whose tall tales linked herself to Wild Bill.



*James Butler "Wild Bill" Hickok*

Buffalo Bill and Wild Bill knew each other and Buffalo Bill credited Wild Bill with saving his life. Buffalo Bill was about 11 years old and a drunken cowboy was about to pummel little Billy when Wild Bill stepped in and prevented it. Wild Bill worked with Buffalo Bill on wagon trains, scouting assignments and even as an actor in one of Buffalo Bill's shows. They were friends right up until Wild Bill's death in 1876.