



PAWNEE BILL HISTORIC HOUSE TOUR



Pawnee, Oklahoma

Welcome to Gordon and May Lillie's dream home, built on "Blue Hawk Peak." The mansion, constructed of native stone, was begun in 1908 and completed in 1910. Pawnee Bill's friend James Hamilton was the architect, and Pawnee Bill referred to the 14 room mansion as a "bungalow."



PAWNEE BILL

Pawnee Bill was neither Indian nor was he from Pawnee. He was born in Illinois and was very early attracted to the great Western plains. He grew up reading novels about Buffalo Bill and the Indians, and his dream was to become part of the quickly vanishing West. His many endeavors included teaching, being a colonizer of Oklahoma, ranching, creating Wild West Shows, filmmaking, and oil and real estate ventures.

Many of the interior designs of the home reflect things that Pawnee Bill had seen during his travels with the Wild West Show. The downstairs woodwork is solid mahogany and the floor is oak.

DINNING ROOM

In the dining room on the buffet is a silver tea service that was given to Pawnee Bill and May on their 25th wedding anniversary by the members of their show. The tray has the names of the cast members on it and you can see Buffalo Bill's name at the top and center of the tray. In the china cabinet is May's collection of cut glass and crystal. The vase in the center of the table is also part of the collection. In the northeast cabinet is their dinner china. The china was originally a 40 place setting and it is decorated with a gold glaze trim and the initials G.W.L., which stands for Gordon William Lillie.



PAWNEE BILL in the LIVING ROOM

LIVING ROOM

The picture on the piano in the living room is of Pawnee Bill. One can see the Native American influence in the room from the hand woven Navajo rugs on the floor to the Navajo pottery on the mantle. The painting above the fireplace is entitled "Indian Love Call", and it was done by Charles Stephens. The paintings of the bison are by Emil Lenders, and he painted those while staying here as a guest on the ranch. As you leave the dining room the guest lavatory is located on your right and the stairway to the basement and the maid's stairway are on your left.

SITTING ROOM

Directly in front of you in the downstairs sitting room is a picture of Pawnee Bill and on the desk are pictures of May and their son Billy. Pawnee Bill and May had a child soon after their marriage, but he died when he was only six weeks old. Due to complications from surgery, May could no longer have children. They adopted Billy in 1916 and he lived until 1925. He accidentally hung himself out on the windmill while attempting to imitate a rope trick.

MASTER BEDROOM

As you step into the bathroom, you will see the doorway to the master bedroom on your right. At the head of the bed is a photograph of May in her riding outfit. She was a very important part of the Wild West Show and was billed as the "Champion Girl Shot of the West" and as an expert rider. On the dresser is her silver dressing set – which does include a snuff box.

BATHROOM

When the home was completed in 1910, it had hot and cold running water, steam heat, and electricity. The downstairs bathroom is tiled with china tile from the floor to the ceiling and has a decorative border trimmed in gold glaze. The stool is in a separate room out in the hall and is called a "water closet."

BILLY'S BEDROOM

After Billy died, this became a guest room. It includes many items related to the bison. Pawnee Bill thought that the bison were a very important part of the old West that needed to be preserved. At one time, Pawnee Bill had the largest privately owned bison herd in the world.

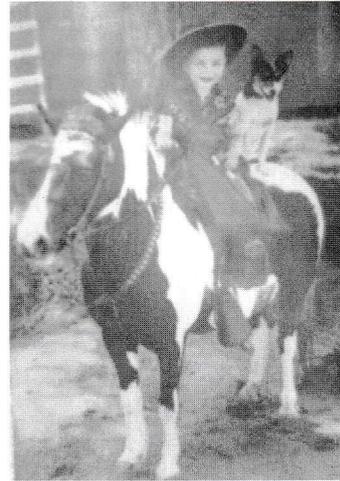
As we walk into front entry hall, notice the paintings by Hal Morrison of Pawnee Bill and May. The medal around May's neck was one she one for her shooting skills.

DEN

Pawnee Bill's favorite room of the house was the den. On the wall to your right is a picture of Pawnee Bill, a portrait of May, and a picture of Billy. The ostrich eggs on the mantle remind us of the ostrich that was part of the show. In the original show, a man wrestled a bear and an alligator. We have a bearskin rug on the floor, and when the alligator died, Pawnee Bill had him stuffed and mounted for a cane and umbrella rack.

On the stair landing, you will see a painting of Blue Hawk. This home was built on land which Pawnee Bill obtained from Blue Hawk, his Indian friend who taught him the Pawnee language and customs. H.H. Cross painted Blue

Hawk in such a way that his eyes appear to follow you and watch over the house. Please watch your step as we go upstairs.



BILLY

BILLY'S PLAYROOM

This room houses many of Billy's toys. He had his own miniature golf clubs, a miniature oil well, a scooter, and on the floor in front of you is one of the first electric trains ever made. Pawnee Bill and May loved children, and when Pawnee Bill died he willed his estate to the Boy Scouts of America. The Boy Scouts did not accept the bequest because of their lack of operating capital, and they gave it back to the family. Pawnee Bill's sisters had ownership until they sold it to the State of Oklahoma in 1962.

SITTING ROOM

On the wall in the upstairs sitting room is a photograph of downtown Pawnee in 1916. Many of the buildings can be seen today.

MAID'S BEDROOM

Many items in this bedroom reflect a Mexican influence. This is to remind us of Mexican Joe. Joe Barrera was the foreman of the ranch and the trick roper of the Wild West Show. His daughter Mary also worked for Pawnee Bill for many years.

GUEST BEDROOM

Buffalo Bill greatly influenced Pawnee Bill all of his life. The picture above the bed is of the two men signing the contract to merge their two shows together. Their partnership lasted from 1908-1913. On the table are some playing cards featuring pictures of Pawnee Bill and Buffalo Bill. They were sold during the intermission of the show and we do have reproductions of these in our museum store. On the wall behind you is a photo of the 1910 cast of the combined show. In it you will see Buffalo Bill, Pawnee Bill, Tom Mix, Mexican Joe, and Iron Tail, who modeled for the Indian head on the buffalo nickel.

UPSTAIRS BATHROOM

This bathroom has china tile and a decorative border. The doorway across the room opens to a balcony but from the outside of the home, you can't tell there is a doorway.

GUEST BEDROOM

In this room you can see many of the priceless relics collected during Pawnee Bill's travels with the show. The furniture in the corner of the room was given to Pawnee Bill and May by the people of China. It is teakwood, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, with marble backs.

ROUTE 64 BEDROOM

This guest room looks out over Highway 64. Pawnee Bill was president of the Highway 64 Association and he saw it go from a stagecoach road to an all weather route that started in Little Rock, Arkansas, and ended in Raton, New Mexico.

As you come out of the room, notice the painting at the head of the stairs. It was painted by Hal Morrison and is called "Ghost at the Top of the Stairs." If you will stand between the doors of the bedroom and the toy room, you can see a ghost image in the painting. Watch your step as we go downstairs.

LIVING ROOM

Gus Borglum, the man who started the faces on Mount Rushmore, sculpted the bust of Pawnee Bill across the room from you. The gold pieces on the library table given to Pawnee Bill and May on their 50th wedding anniversary, which they celebrated in Taos, New Mexico in 1936. May died that year as a result of a car accident.

Pawnee Bill's last few years were spent here in his home. He died in his sleep in 1942, just days before his 82nd birthday. He lived a life not only colorful, but of great importance to the development of the West. He was a friend to the Indian, a savior of the bison, and a builder of Oklahoma. He often credited his involvement with the 1890's Boomer movement as the reason for his initial popularity in the state and nation.

Thank you for being our guests today. The tour is free but we do have a donation box near the door if you care to contribute to our property. Please watch you step as you go out the front door. Please come back and visit us again.



PAWNEE BILL, MAY and BILLY