

American Museum of Western Art – The Anschutz Collection
Writing the West: Season 7, January 2026
Historical Fiction with Buffalo Bill Museum & Grave

The Historical Fiction genre blends fiction and fact to great effect. Set in the real historical past with real characters, historical fiction stories use factual details, customs, and events to then activate fictional characters, fictional outcomes to those same historical events, as well as challenge the accepted history of the lives of real people. With help from the Buffalo Bill Museum, we'll write about Buffalo Bill Cody using an historical fiction lens.



Louis Maurer, *The Great Royal Buffalo Hunt*, 1895

Before exploring the fictional aspects of this painting, it's important to ground the scene in the historical. Take a few minutes and describe what we know to be true of this organized hunt. For example, who was there: Buffalo Bill, Grand Duke Alexei, Lakota Chief Spotted Tail, 500 men, and a buffalo herd. Then, use fiction to embellish the history. Add a character to the scene, or change what really happened during the hunt into something different, or take a detail such as the glass target balls, or the Duke's travel itinerary, or his timetable card, or the hunt's newspaper clipping and article, and add your own twist to them. Have fun! Writing historical fiction is all about blending truth and fiction.

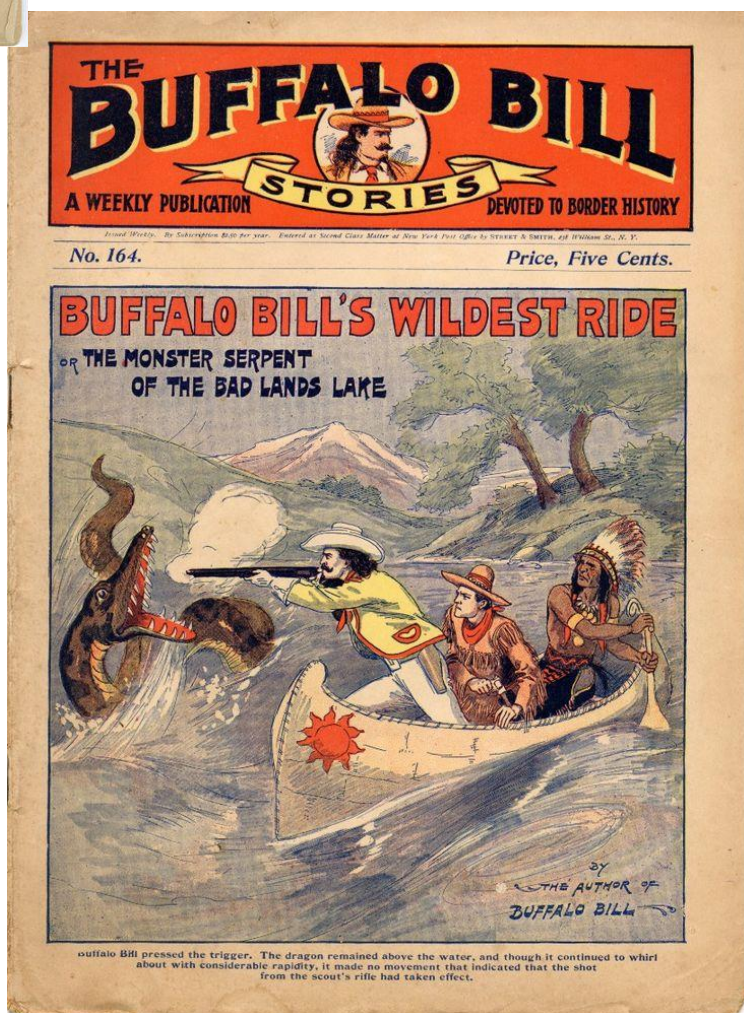
The Dime Novels of Buffalo Bill:

Choose a dime novel provided by the Buffalo Bill Museum and write a poem or story using its cover and title as your inspiration. Remember, first ground the scene in the historical—using details we know to be true, such as Buffalo Bill, the time period, the clothing, the Western landscape, etc. Then, bring in the fiction! Mountain top skeleton fight, sea serpent canoe attack, backwards rifle shot, ghost horse and rider—whichever cover speaks to you, write that story.



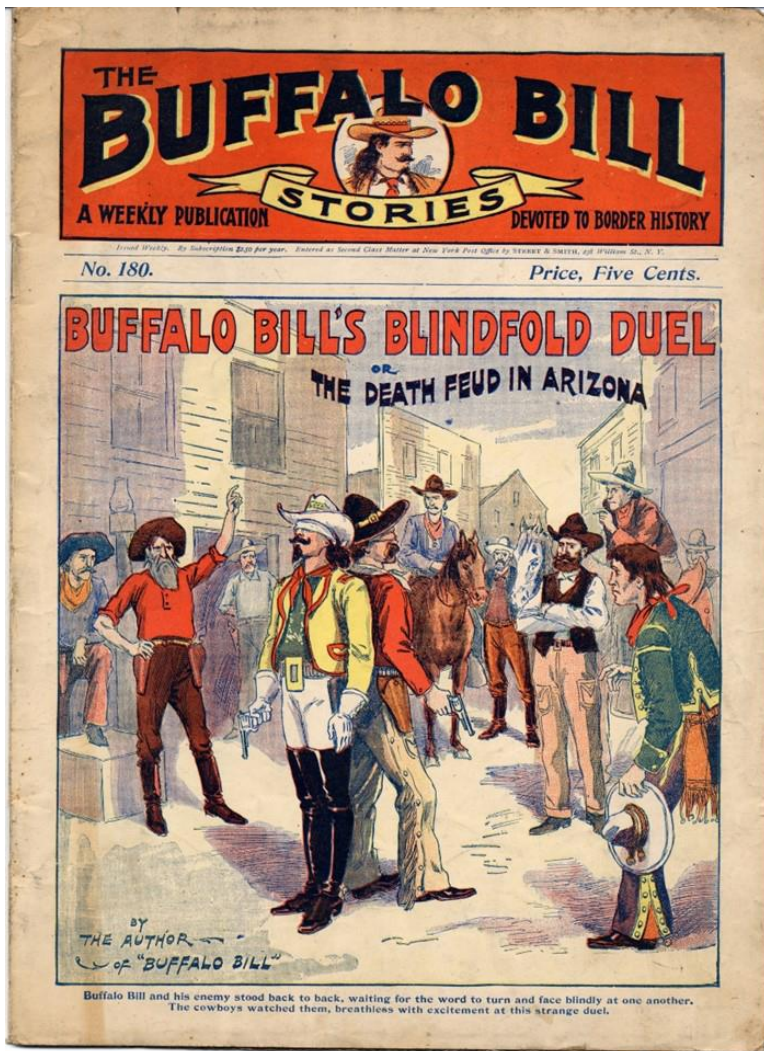
The Buffalo Bill Stories, "Buffalo Bill's Phantom Hunt" #49

Object ID# 2011.0003.4, Buffalo Bill Museum and Grave, Golden, Colorado



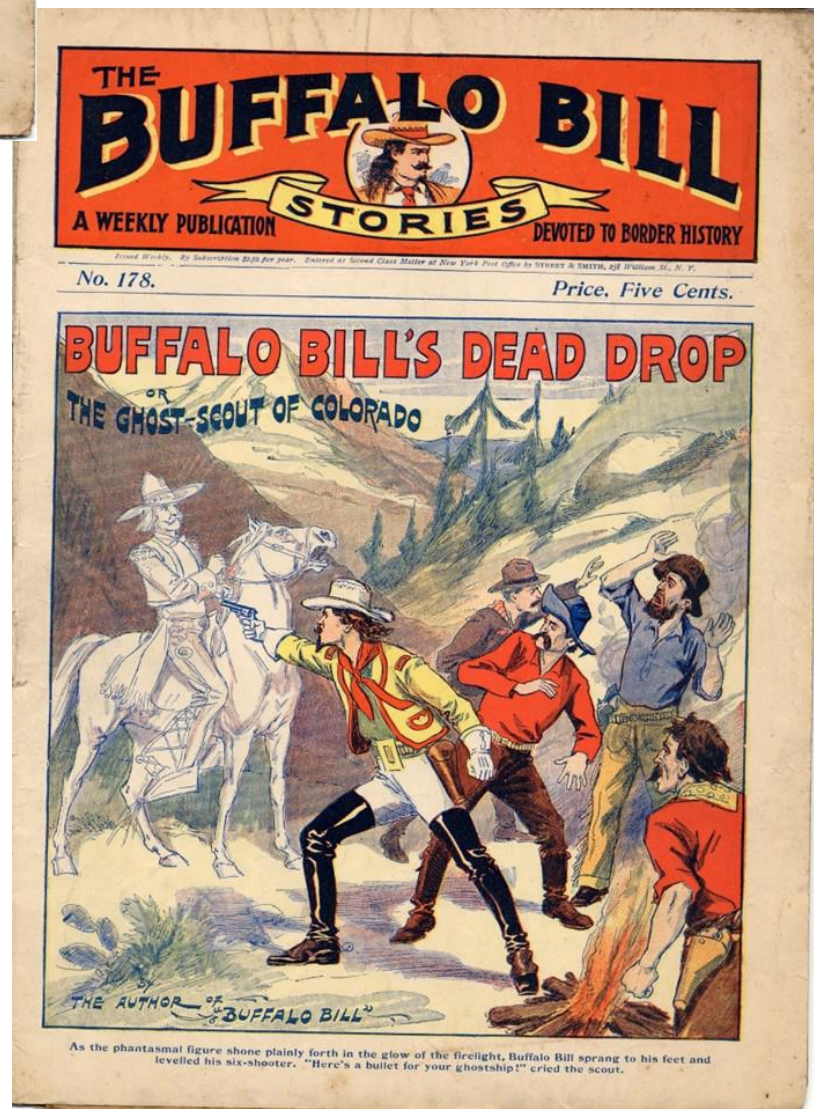
The Buffalo Bill Stories, "Buffalo Bill's Wildest Ride" #164. July 2, 1904.

Object ID# 2011.0003.68, Buffalo Bill Museum and Grave, Golden, Colorado



The Buffalo Bill Stories, "Buffalo Bill's Blindfold Duel"
#180. October 22, 1904.

Object ID# 2011.0003.83, Buffalo Bill Museum and Grave, Golden, Colorado



The Buffalo Bill Stories, "Buffalo Bill's Dead Drop"
#178. October 8, 1904

Object ID# 2011.0003.81, Buffalo Bill Museum and Grave, Golden, Colorado