

WESTERN SPIRIT:

Scottsdale's Museum Of The West
Heritage finds a new home
in the Southwest's newest venue for the arts.



(Previous Page) "Fighting Meat," also known as "Horse and the Hunter," by Charles M. Russell, 1919. Oil on canvas. Tim Peterson Family Collection.

"The Lost Greenhorn" by Alfred Jacob Miller, circa 1865. Chromolithograph. Tim Peterson Family Collection.

By James D. Balestrieri

S COTTSDALE, ARIZ. —
Scottsdale has long been a nexus of Western history, lore and art. In the beginning, there was Troy Murray, who hung his first Olaf Wieghorst canvas and turned his saddle shop into a gallery. Steve Rose opened the Biltmore and stocked it with scenes of the Grand Canyon, Taos and Canyon De Chelly.



*Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West
as seen from its northern perspective. Concrete
walkways are imprinted with tooled leather
designs inspired by Western saddles.*



Beaded spurs marked by North & Judd, New Britain, Conn., patent dates 1911 and 1912. Buffalo nickel mountings with Native American beaded straps. A.P. Hays Collection. —Gabe Mikesell photo

And Abe Hays, who plied his trade among the impedimenta of the Old West — bits and bridles, saddles and spurs, and more than a few Maynard Dixon paintings. There was also the

woman who billed herself as Pancho Villa's widow. She sold — once or twice a year, and strictly on the q.t. — the great Mexican revolutionary's "authentic" skull to a gullible tourist. Legend says Villa popped up here, there and everywhere at the same time, but who knew he was cloned?



Centuries ago, in what would become Scottsdale, the Hohokam people tamed the Salt River, constructing a complex irrigation system that allowed them to farm the desert. Their descendants, the Pima and Maricopa, expert weavers and potters, reside here. To the south loom the



Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West opened in January in the renovated Loloma Transit Station. It is centrally located between the heart of the Main Street gallery scene and the Scottsdale Artists' School.

Superstition Mountains, home of the Apache Thunder God. In the 1870s, Apache widows wept there after a fierce battle with the US Cavalry. Their tears fell

as black obsidian stones: the Apache Tears you find, along with the story, in the great old rock shops. General Miles chased Geronimo through the

Superstitions. General Pershing chased Villa there, as well. And it was there that the lost Peralta gold mine was found by the “Dutchman” Jacob Waltz in the 1890s. But the Dutchman died the night before he said he would reveal the location. Treasure hunters still seek his



Badges, spurs and other Western artifacts from the collection of Abe Hays.



▲ Badges from the collection of Scottsdale gal-
lerist Abe Hays include, top, a Deputy Sheriff
crescent badge from Crawford County, Kan.,
circa 1895, and, right, a prized Federal Prohibi-
tion Agent badge, 1920, once owned by Frank
Hamer, a Texas Ranger. Hamer is considered one
of the most important lawman of the Twentieth
Century. —Gabe Mikesell photo

▼ In the Saddle Corral, examples by some of the West's top
makers, including Visalia Stock Saddle Company of San
Francisco; N. Porter Saddle and Harness Company of
Phoenix; Frazier Saddlery of Pueblo, Colo.; and F.M. Stern of
San Jose, Calif. A.P. Hays Collection. —Gabe Mikesell photo





The museum's entrance and visitor services area.

mine. Every year, some quester vanishes in the labyrinthine rocks, adding to the mystery.

These stories resonate and circulate in the atmosphere of Scottsdale's Old Town, in the galleries during the Art Walk on Thursday evenings, in the music that drifts out of the Rusty Spur, in the Harley roar and Mustang rumble on Scottsdale Road. Two auctions, the Scottsdale Art Auction and Altermann's, add to the action, offering fresh opportunities for collectors to acquire Western art and become

"Pony Express Rider" by Herman W. Hansen. Oil on canvas. Tim Peterson Family Collection.

part of the story themselves. Painters and sculptors; artists who work in clay, silver, fiber or leather; writers, dancers, composers and filmmakers all

call Scottsdale home, or home away from home. Like the West itself, Scottsdale is continually adding new layers to its slogan: "The West's Most Western Town."





*This Colt .45 pistol with factory-carved ivory longhorn steer grip was owned by lawman Frank Hamer. Hamer's posse killed outlaws Clyde Barrow and Bonnie Parker in 1934.
—Gabe Mikesell photo*



There are several Scottsdale. The Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art represents the urban, cosmopolitan New West. The Scottsdale Artists' School brings exceptional artists and talented students together to pass on the area's artistic heritage. At the edge of town, Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin West affirms the Phoenix suburb's place in the Modernist movement. Missing until now was a crucial piece of the cultural puzzle — a museum devoted to the American West, one that would show and tell the story of westward

Accoutrement of the working cowboy, Stetson hats and chaps from the A.P. Hays Collection. —Gabe Mikesell photo

expansion, of powerful cultures on a collision course, a story of conflict and cooperation, a story that spins and renews itself for each generation. Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West opened this past January. It is precisely what the city needed. Housed in the renovated Loloma Transit Station, the museum sits

between the heart of the Main Street gallery scene and the Scottsdale Artists' School...

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