
Western Author Caroline

by Necah Stewart Furman

“Caroline Lockhart,” as her cowboy friend Dave Good would say, “was a hell-of-a-good-lookin’ woman!” When she got off the train that day in October 1904, her fine figure and gold-burnished hair caught the sun and the approving glances of onlookers. Still a young woman at age thirty-three, Lockhart had the intelligent eyes of one who makes her living observing people and places.

In the distance, about a mile and a half across the sagebrush flat, she saw the little town of Cody, Wyoming, promoted as the “scenic gateway” to the beautiful Yellowstone country. Tumbleweeds rolled down the dusty streets to lodge against the steps leading into the Frost Saloon; cowboys tied their horses to hitching posts in front of weathered, clapboard buildings; and Indians wrapped in multi-colored blankets walked along the street.

The town boasted 210 inhabitants and 14 saloons, “none too many for such an arid landscape,” wrote Lockhart. The most impressive structure to be seen was Colonel William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody’s grand Irma Hotel on the corner of 4th (present-day 12th) and Sheridan streets. In the canyons above Cody, government

workers were blasting away the mountainside to make way for a dam that would transform the area into a garden spot.

The arrival of the beautiful and talented Lockhart, already established as a popular short-story writer and reporter, was a newsworthy event. “Miss Lockhart,” a local reporter announced, “has recently resigned from the staff of the *Philadelphia Bulletin* . . . and is in Cody for several weeks stay.” The writer also reported that Lockhart, a contributor to *Century* and *Lippincott*, was now interested in “general literary work” and would be visiting former newspaper editor Andrew C. McKenzie.¹ The “several weeks stay,” however, extended to the better part of a lifetime, as Lockhart quickly felt a kinship with the western spirit of the place.

Lockhart’s visit to Cody represented a turning point in her life and career. After fifteen years as a newspaper reporter in the East, she had decided to add writing novels to her considerable list of professional accomplishments. Impressed with the panorama of interesting people in Cody—the shepherders, cowboys, Indians, dudes from the East, and an occasional outlaw—Lockhart selected the town as her literary work-

and Her Perspectives on

Lockhart

shop. She admitted to a reporter that she “liked the country with its picturesque and friendly folk.” “The mountains and the sagebrush plains, the stimulating air, and the amusing episodes of the town,” she said, “appealed” to her.²

In later years, she explained that she viewed Cody as a microcosm of the West—a place where she could generate the creative energy necessary to produce the novels she wanted to write. “Cody here is my workshop,” she admitted. “I go East to play and enjoy it twice as much as though I lived there all the time.”³

In Cody, Caroline would experience what the West was all about, which to her way of thinking was essential to writing about the region. “I have endeavored to know what I am writing about before I write,” she confided in her journal.⁴ As a result of this precept, Lockhart’s life was filled with excitement, controversy, and creativity. The works that she would produce, spiced with an almost Mencken-like humor, championed what she believed were the better elements of a passing era and courageously derided the region’s less admirable characteristics. From the little town of Cody, Wyoming, Lockhart would gather the raw material from which to mold her novels of the West.

Wyoming

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Caroline Lockhart, ca. 1920

Born in Eagle Point, Illinois, on February 24, 1871, Caroline Lockhart spent her early years in Kansas where her parents, Joseph and Sarah Lockhart, had purchased a wheat farm and cattle ranch. Lockhart's love affair with the West, therefore, can be traced to a childhood spent on her parents' ranch near Auburn. After her mother died when Lockhart was only sixteen, there was no controlling this headstrong girl who liked to race up and down Main Street and ride her horse on the boardwalks of the small town. The solution, her father thought, was to send her to boarding school, first to Bethany College in Topeka, Kansas, and then to the Moravian Seminary in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania—an institution that reminded her of a "calaboose." Lockhart's pranks livened up the school, but the experience did little to tame her boisterous nature or to smooth her rough edges. She learned how to make "Vassar fudge," she later wrote, "but little else." When she received word that her father had married the family seamstress, she set out on her own rather than succumb to the will of a stepmother.⁵

In 1889, while still in her teens, Lockhart decided to become "The Nellie Bly of Boston"; and with her long blond pigtail tucked up under her sailor hat, she applied for a job as a reporter for the *Boston Post*. As the *Post's* first woman reporter, she quickly learned that she had to be exceptional to compete successfully in a man's profession. She was naturally courageous and athletic, however, and accepted dangerous and unusual assignments. Her stunts, which earned her quick notoriety, included being the first woman to dive in Boston harbor in a diving suit, getting into a cage with a lion, jumping out of a fourth-floor window to test the Fire Department's safety nets, and posing as an alcoholic to gain entrance to a home for intemperate women.

Lockhart's assignments also included interviewing well-known personalities, such as financier Jay Cooke, agnostic Robert J. Ingersoll,

and prizefighter Robert Fitzsimmons. One of the first celebrities she interviewed, "Buffalo Bill" Cody, rekindled her interest in the West.

She had located Cody's private railroad car on a siding near Boston's old South Street Station. Feeling some trepidation, she rapped on the door, and a voice from behind a red plush curtain invited her in. In the arena, Buffalo Bill cut a magnificent figure, wearing his wide-brimmed Stetson hat over flowing, shoulder-length hair and sitting very erect on his prancing white horse. But when Lockhart met him that day, the "Last of the Great Scouts" was wearing a drab dressing gown and his hair was tied in a straggly French twist with a knot on top. He held a water bottle full of ice against his head; his feet were thrust into a pair of roomy carpet slippers; and when he sat down one of them dropped off. He regarded his toes with interest.

"Do you like the East?" Caroline asked, making conversation. He pondered for some time before he replied.

"Well enough."

"Warm, isn't it," she added.

"Hot."

"Do you mind our damp climate in Boston?" she asked with dogged vivacity. The Colonel wiggled his toes before he replied cautiously:

"Tain't like out West."

Beginning to believe that as a reporter she was "a flop," Lockhart departed "with her tail feathers dragging." When Sunday came, Lockhart opened the *Post* in the dim hope that she might find a few paragraphs of the copy she had turned in. To her astonishment, the headline was splashed across the page in the newspaper's largest type. She received an added bonus when she learned that Buffalo Bill liked her story so much that he wanted her to go to the grounds and select a horse as his gift.⁶

1. Newspaper clipping, "Local Notes," October 19, 1904, Springcreek Museum Scrapbook, Cody, Wyoming. The clipping does not give the name of the paper, although it was probably the *Cody Enterprise*. Lockhart's comment is quoted by Paul Eldridge, *Mss. Notes, Caroline Lockhart Collection*, Box 7, American Heritage Center, Coe Library, University of Wyoming, Laramie [CLC]. For a good description of Cody's first twenty years, see Lucille Patrick, *The Best Little Town by a Dam Site* (Cody, Wyoming: Flintlock Publishing Company, 1968), 59-80.

2. George Criswell Morris, "Young Wyoming Girl is Creator of 'Me-Smith,'" clipping in Folder-Biographical, CLC.

3. "Author Caroline Lockhart Dies at Cody at 91 Years," *Billings Gazette*, August 24, 1962.

4. Caroline Lockhart, "Autobiographical Notes," Box 9, CLC. Lockhart made as many as three rewrites of portions of her autobiography, and the different versions vary in minor details. Donated to the American Heritage Center by David Dominick, certain files—especially those containing Lockhart's diaries—are restricted. The author appreciates Mr. Dominick's permission for their use. Paul R. Eldridge, who worked for Lockhart when she owned the *Cody Enterprise*, wrote a biographical sketch of her entitled "Woman on Horseback," which is housed at the American Heritage Center, Box 7, CLC (see p. 7). See also David Dominick, "An Introduction to Caroline Lockhart," Box 9, CLC.

5. *Philadelphia Bulletin*, May 22, 1907. Although there is some debate over whether Lockhart was born in 1870 or 1871, most evidence points to 1871. See diary entries for February 24 from 1928 through 1930, CLC. There appears to be a typographical error under the 1927 reference. See also "Author Caroline Lockhart Dies," *Billings Gazette*.

6. Lockhart, "Autobiographical Notes," CLC.

By 1900 Lockhart had advanced in the newspaper world to become a member of the *Philadelphia Bulletin* staff. Although the *Bulletin* was a more conservative paper, Lockhart's personal mold as a reporter had already been cast and she continued her exploits. So successful was her candid and humorous style that she soon had her own column and the pen name "Suzette."⁷

In 1904, one of her assignments took her to Montana, where she was to write a story on the

tion of the event and providing humorous sketches of many local residents, some of whom her readers would see again in her western stories and novels.

The holdup took place in midafternoon on the first day of November. Guests sitting on the Hotel Irma's wide veranda were watching a dog fight in the street and paid little attention to the two horsemen who rode casually into town and held up the bank. When the alarm was given, the cashier, I. O. Middaugh, was killed in the

Lockhart in the early 1890s, when she became the first woman to dive in Boston harbor.



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Blackfeet Indians. She decided to return to Philadelphia by way of Cody, Wyoming. Not long after her arrival in Cody, a bank holdup gave Lockhart the opportunity to write about many of the town's characters for the first time. As Suzette, she covered the holdup as if she were on the scene, giving a shot-by-shot descrip-

melee. Townspeople organized a posse, but the bank robbers had headed toward Thermopolis, a town frequented by members of the Hole-in-the-Wall gang and a known haven for outlaws. The robbers found fresh mounts there and disappeared into the Badlands near the Owl Creek Mountains.⁸

Using her characteristic style, Lockhart skillfully described the actions of the townspeople

7. Ibid. Her notoriety spread to the extent that a cigar manufacturer decided to capitalize on her fame and named one of his cigars after her. Records of the Bureau of the Census show Lockhart boarding at the residence of Harry and Nina Pebbles in Philadelphia in 1900.

8. "Murder Most Foul Committed at Cody," *Meeteetse News*, November 2, 1904. See also Patrick, *Best Little Town by a Dam Site*, 78-79.

during the holdup. The clerk of the Irma, for example, “leaped nimbly over the office desk and leaped nimbly back,” while the “stately and reserved” Englishman, Captain Corfield, “who came out to see what the West was like,” hid behind the safe but said that he “was merely guarding it.” Dr. D. Frank Powell, Buffalo Bill’s

Caroline Lockhart in about 1900, with roses she received from Jay Cooke.



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former scouting companion who was managing Colonel Cody’s interests in the Bighorn Basin, “saw the holdup from the windows of his room on the second floor of the Irma.” Despite being seriously ill, he grabbed his revolvers (“neither of which happened to have a cylinder in it”) and ran out on the veranda brandishing them about.

“Dad” Pierce, “fearless Colonel of the Forest Rangers, hid behind the radiator, panting in his

9. “Suzette Tells About the Man Hunt and Hold Up at Cody,” Box 11, CLC.

10. Eldridge, “Woman on Horseback,” CLC.

frantic attempts to squeeze behind the pipes.” Dibble, “the fiery baker . . . wiped his doughy fingers on the door jamb and reached under the counter for his gun. But his wife, proving to be the better man of the two, took it from him and sat on it until the trouble was over.” Jacob Schwoob, the young mayor, offered a reward for the outlaws’ capture, and George T. Beck, son of “Senator” G. Beck of Kentucky, upped the ante. Suzette concluded her action-packed article: “A reward of \$2750 is offered for their capture, dead or alive, but the Codyites will have to ride faster and shoot truer than they do at present to get it.”⁹

One might have thought that as a newcomer Lockhart would have been a bit easier on her neighbors, but this was merely a hint of what was to come. Cody’s residents were destined to see themselves time and again in various literary guises. And although the townspeople might have disagreed, outsiders considered her novels and short stories to be “accurate, if humorous, depictions of the town’s characters and their idiosyncracies, which gave an added tinge of red to the town’s composite 21” ‘neck.’ ”¹⁰

Within a short time, Lockhart gained a national readership, primarily because of her variations on the basic western formula and the universality of her characterizations. With Cody and its environs providing local color, she turned out five novels in eight years. Her first book, *Me-Smith*, was hailed as a true western in the mold of Owen Wister. Published by Lippincott in 1911, *Me-Smith* brought her immediate national recognition; it demonstrated her potential as a regionalist and revealed her talent for recreating western dialect and cowboy lingo. As one reporter wrote: “[*Me-Smith*] is not a vivid painting in words of the West. It is more. It is a photograph of the actual life of the West. You see and grasp the life of this country as you read *Me-Smith* as if you were part of the Rocky Mt. Section.”¹¹

Lockhart was adept at writing geographic descriptions, but she chose to paint her most

11. Caroline Lockhart, *Me-Smith* (Philadelphia: Washington Square Press [J. B. Lippincott Company], 1911). See also Morris, “Young Wyoming Girl,” CLC.

12. Morris, “Young Wyoming Girl,” CLC.

vivid literary portraits of the West through characterization. "Smith is one type of Western 'Bad Man,'" wrote one reviewer, "an unusually powerful and appealing character who grips and holds the reader through all his deeds, whether good or bad."¹² Lockhart patterned her memorable anti-hero after Wyoming outlaw James Smith, otherwise known as "The Squaw Man."

The novel has two main female characters: tomboyish sixteen-year-old Susie MacDonald and refined schoolmarm Dora Marshall. Susie, a courageous, defiant young westerner who wears her hair in a single blond-streaked braid, resembles Lockhart in her early years. Smart and saucy, she recognizes Smith for what he is: a thief and a killer. Dora, a "provincial from a small midwestern town," has high ideals and hopes to influence the badman to turn from his life of crime. A subordinate but integral character is Susie's mother, an Indian woman named Prairie Flower, who becomes part of a love triangle featuring Smith and Dora.

In the novel, the incorrigible Smith professes love for Prairie Flower in the hopes of stealing her money, shoots an Indian in the back to get his blanket, and, lowest of low, abuses a horse. The Indians are left to conjure up a fitting end for Smith. With a hint of symbolism, Lockhart has them slowly drop the outlaw into a den of rattlesnakes. But even an evil westerner must make a final show of strength and courage: "Tell her, you damned Injuns—Tell the Schoolmarm I died game, Me-Smith!"¹³

The book catapulted Lockhart into the category of Western Novelist. A *New York Times* reviewer wrote: "The author has humor and dramatic force, an infallible ear for local vernacular and a keen eye for types. As a delineation of western life at once realistic and picturesque, it compares favorably with Mr. Wister's 'The Virginian.'" The *Chicago Daily News* reviewer considered *Me-Smith* "the strongest, most consistent story of the West which has appeared in years, and in many points excels *The Virginian*. It marks the author as the possessor of unquestioned literary genius." The *Philadelphia Public Ledger* reviewer was equally enthusiastic and also compared Lockhart to Wister: "Not since the publication of *The Virginian* has so powerful a cowboy story been

13. Lockhart, *Me-Smith*, 315.

14. In *Book Review Digest*, 1911; *New York Times*, March 19, 1911, 155. See excerpts from reviews in front matter and addenda to Caroline Lockhart, *The Lady Doc* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1912).

told."¹⁴ Years later, Albert Payson Terhune admitted to Lockhart:

Not only do I remember most clearly and pleasantly your few visits to the Evening World Office [sic], but I have vivid memories of Me-Smith. A powerfully compelling book and with a most unique hero, Smith's character stays fresh in my recollection after all this gap of time. And the climax scene, on the ledge, with the rattlesnake is something, not to be forgotten.¹⁵

By giving a slightly different twist to the basic formula western, Lockhart had discovered an approach that separated her novel from the stack and caught the public's eye.

During the following year, 1912, she published her most controversial novel, *The Lady Doc*. For this book, Lockhart reverted to her training as an investigative reporter. She had discovered that Frances Lane, a local woman doctor who was supposedly a graduate of a "medical mill," had teamed up with another doctor and negotiated a government contract to provide medical care for laborers on the Shoshone dam. When one of the men died and others testified of poor treatment, Lockhart wrote a newspaper exposé and recorded the story in *The Lady Doc*. As she later admitted, "I drew as accurate a picture of Cody as I could and keep out of jail."¹⁶

Lockhart depicted Frances Lane as a small-town quack whose major character traits are jealousy, hate, greed, and dishonesty. In the course of the novel, the *Lady Doc* destroys lives and love affairs with callous insensitivity. Exhibiting a literary courage unusual for the time, Lockhart hints at a homosexual relationship between Lane and the book's heroine. When Lockhart was threatened with a libel suit, she obtained official affidavits to support her case. "She knew I had the goods on her," Lockhart claimed.¹⁷ With the town divided between sup-

15. Albert Payson Terhune to Lockhart, February 17, 1935, Pompton Lakes, New Jersey, Box 5, CLC.

16. Caroline Lockhart, *The Lady Doc* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1912); T. A. Larson, *History of Wyoming*, 2d ed. rev. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), 355.

17. "Affidavits," Box 9, CLC. See also Mary Shivers Culpin, "Lockhart Manuscript," written for National Park Service and generously loaned to the author, and "Author Caroline Lockhart Dies," *Billings Gazette*. For the best coverage of the *Lady Doc* controversy, including excerpts from affidavits, see Dominick, "An Introduction to Caroline Lockhart," 32-49, CLC.

porters of Dr. Lane and supporters of Lockhart, local residents eagerly purchased copies of the book. Nevertheless, the book was eventually banned in Cody's public library and burned in the town's back alleys.

The Lady Doc met a better reception outside the local area. The *Chicago Tribune* lauded it as "a compelling book—one so absorbing that

male writer would have been able or willing to present so unchivalrous a view of even one member of the gentler sex." He added: "Evidently Miss Lockhart is one of the few American writers of fiction who are not afraid to depict life as they find it."²⁰ Lockhart was particularly fond of *The Lady Doc*, and in the 1950s she had the book privately reissued. "Sort of wanted a

Caroline Lockhart with Buffalo Bill in Cody, Wyoming, in about 1910.



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hours slip by unnoticed until the end is reached."¹⁸ Cody residents also found the book compelling, and before long they began to identify themselves in the novel's thinly disguised characters. To make certain that there was no question, Lockhart gave out a list with the reprint of the book telling people who was who.¹⁹

Like the caricaturist who accentuates the most homely or unusual physical traits of a subject, Lockhart accentuated her characters' personal foibles, sketching unmercifully accurate and sometimes exaggerated portraits of the town's residents. As one reviewer observed of *The Lady Doc*: "It is doubtful if any modern

new fur coat," she said, "but decided I would get more fun out of this."²¹

Cody residents still talk about the book, and some speculate that Lockhart's muckraking instincts were motivated by competition between Frances Lane and herself for the affections of John R. Painter, a local married man. Lockhart's acquaintance with Painter dated back to her Philadelphia days and continued after they both moved west. "J. R.," as he was called, was the type of man that Lockhart preferred—handsome,

18. Quoted in frontispiece to Caroline Lockhart, *The Full of the Moon* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1914).

19. Interview with Francis Hayden, Cody, Wyoming, July 15, 1982. Mr. Hayden showed the author this list.

20. "Daring," *New York Times*, October 27, 1912.

21. Interview with Hayden. See also "Author Caroline Lockhart Dies," *Billings Gazette*.

22. Interviews with E. L. Goppert, Sr., Cody, Wyoming, July 12, 1982; Ray and Electa Prante, Cody, Wyoming, July 7, 1982; Margaret Sylvester Martin, Cody, Wyoming, July 12, 1982. Bill Painter (grandson of J. R.) indicates that the relationship was talked about in family circles; Painter to author, Millis, Missouri, April 1, 1983, March 31, 1984. See also Caroline Lockhart, "The Wildest Boat Ride in America," *Outing Magazine* 59 (February 1912): 15-24, Box 6, CLC; *The Man from Bitter Roots* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1915).

intelligent, polished, and an outdoorsman. While Painter's wife and children were conveniently absent on trips to the East, Lockhart gathered "atmosphere" for her novel, *The Man from Bitter Roots*, during extended visits to the Painter ranch in the Sunlight Basin and later to his hunting lodge on the Salmon River in Idaho.

Using the primitive beauty of the Salmon River country as a backdrop, Lockhart told the story of Bruce Burt (Painter), a courageous mining man, and Helen Dunbar (Lockhart), a newspaperwoman from the East. Together, they battle a crooked financier, a German saboteur, and the rapids of the Salmon River to find love in the Bitterroots.²²

Full of adventure, the novel, published in 1915, inspired one reviewer to call it "an exciting book, whose conflicts and struggles are at the point of overpowering the reader." To Lockhart, who experienced some of the episodes firsthand—including riding the rapids of the Salmon River—the story probably seemed little more than fiction-based-on-fact. The reviewer observed that Lockhart's characterizations reminded him of "an excellent gallery of mining men reminiscent of Bret Harte and Jack London."²³

Lockhart's relationship with Painter continued on a friendly basis until near the end of his life. An entry in her diary indicates that after he was divorced Painter proposed marriage, but it was not in Lockhart's character to be monogamous. Throughout her life, she would enjoy many suitors, from cowboys to bankers to mining men.

Although Lockhart was liberated ahead of her time, she occasionally questioned her chosen way of life. *The Full of the Moon*, published in 1914 not long after the *Lady Doc* controversy, represents the nearest thing to a printed autobiography that Lockhart would produce. The novel served as a catharsis for her and allows readers to see something of how she regarded herself.

The novel's heroine, Nan Galbraith, not only resembles Lockhart physically, with her "sun-

streaked brown hair," "vivacity," and "high spirit," but she also holds the same attitudes toward life. Nan's family expects her to teach Sunday school and marry a socially acceptable suitor, but she rebels. "I am not sure that I am going to be married at all," she announces, adding "I'm going to have my fling." She explains: "I want to go out West—by myself—and have adventures and be independent and . . . meet a different kind of people from those I've ever known."²⁴

Once out West, Nan has adventures patterned after Lockhart's own experiences, and she learns to appreciate western values and western men. Her behavior may appear to be tame by today's standards, but shortly after the turn of the century such rebelliousness was viewed as incorrigible, unladylike, and a source of heartache to her family. One reviewer expressed this perspective: "Our heroine has the joy of sending 'gleefully' home a cryptic telegram, which aged the family by years," he wrote. "The young lady who holds centre stage . . . as Richard Watson Gilder once said, 'one gets up in the night to hate,' and it is disconcerting to perceive that she finds favor in the eyes of her creator."²⁵ But Nan found favor in the eyes of her creator, because Lockhart had treated her own family in a similar manner. Her departure from tradition made her a woman misunderstood—out of time and out of place, yet a person with a keen sense of appreciation for the region she claimed as home.

Lockhart's appreciation for westerners is apparent in *The Fighting Shepherdess*, a book about the "Sheep Queen of Wyoming." "Of all the extraordinary characters I have met in my unconventional life," Lockhart wrote, "none stands out more clearly."²⁶ The Sheep Queen, Lucy Morrison Moore, owned twenty bands of sheep, managed her own outfit, and was worth approximately a million dollars. Sensing a good novel, Lockhart set out on a 150-mile ride on horseback to find this rugged individualist and induce her to tell the story of her life.

To gather the material for her book, Lockhart worked side-by-side with the sheepherders and shared a bunk with the Sheep Queen's "Amazon" daughter. The heroine of *The Fighting Shepherdess* is a product of this firsthand

24. Lockhart, *The Full of the Moon*, 7-10.

25. *New York Times*, March 1, 1914, 101; *The Nation*, May 7, 1914, 529.

26. "Autobiographical Draft," Box 9, CLC. This portion of the draft constitutes one of the few numbered sections. The Sheep Queen episode is recorded on pp. 92-99.

23. D. Engelstoft to Lockhart, Copenhagen, Denmark, March 17, 1922, Box 5, CLC. Engelstoft sent Lockhart two copies of the foreign publication of the book, which was issued in shortened form and included quotes from foreign reviewers.

research. Katie Prentice, daughter of Jezebel of the Sand Coulee Road House, is depicted as a distinctive and powerful character who carries on a remorseless struggle to make her mark in the sheep business. As one reviewer wrote about the book, published in 1919: “*The Fighting Shepherdess*, . . . in our judgment, is her best novel and Katie Prentice her finest character.

She saw that the cowboys, miners, and sheepherders had been joined by a new breed that had a special appreciation for the West in its natural state—the “dudes.”

As latter-day pioneers, dude ranchers brought a new industry to the West, an industry that stimulated the region’s economy and promoted the conservation of the region’s resources and

Caroline Lockhart posed for this Cody Stampede postcard in 1921.



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The story holds one’s attention from the moment Katie, a mere child, leaves her disreputable mother and becomes a shepherdess, until her day of triumph in Prouty, which had scorned her.”²⁷

To the student of western culture, the novel is valuable not only for its portrayal of the strong woman of the West, but also for what it reveals about small-town rivalries and society. In the novel, the town of Prouty is much like Cody, Wyoming. While writing *The Fighting Shepherdess* and after nearly fifteen years of observing western life and culture, Lockhart came to realize that there were many facets to the West.

27. “Caroline Lockhart’s Best Novel,” newsclipping in Hebard Collection, B-L911-c, University of Wyoming, Laramie. See also *New York Times*, May 11, 1919, 271.

scenic beauty. Cody and its environs, located near the gateway to Yellowstone National Park, proved to be a natural location for the dude-ranching business.

One of the most famous dude ranches, Valley Ranch, purchased in 1915 by I. H. Larom and Winthrop Brooks, is a spread of spectacular beauty situated on the South Fork of the Shoshone River. During the early 1920s, Cody and its residents were still a source of material for Lockhart’s literary endeavors, so it is not surprising that she used Larom’s success story as a prototype for a novel on the subject. In *The*

28. Lawrence R. Bourne, *Welcome to My West: Dude Rancher, Conservationist, Collector* (Cody, Wyoming: Buffalo Bill Historical Center, 1982), 1-23; Caroline Lockhart, *The Dude Wrangler* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page, and Company, 1921), 170.

Dude Wrangler, Lockhart analyzes the sociological temper of the postwar era and explains how dude ranchers, capitalizing on this discontent, lured dudes to the West with advertisements that spoke of the “invigorating air,” the breathtaking scenery, the big game, and the salt baths “that made the old young again.”²⁸

In this novel, her sixth, Lockhart makes a literary statement that records how she saw the West changing. When she had first arrived in Cody, she had carried with her a mixed cultural baggage that enabled her to look at the small town and its residents from the cosmopolitan perspective of one who had been a world traveler and an eastern city dweller. Combined with her extraordinary experiences as a reporter, this background had provided her with the insight and expertise necessary to produce six novels featuring a panorama of pioneers that illustrated the cultural evolution and settlement of the West. In retrospect, Lockhart saw the Me-Smiths, the sheep queens, the mining men—if not displaced—being forced to move aside for the newest pioneers, the dudes from the East. In the transition, not only the places but the people were changing.

Lockhart’s last novel, *The Old West and the New*, published in 1933, illustrates this change beautifully. In typical humorous style, she wrote of a West where the old-time cowboys had to resort to wrangling dudes or running filling stations as they watched the primitivism of an older era being transformed by the encroachment of “civilization.”²⁹


Lockhart’s final literary statement on the transformation of the West was also her benediction. Unable to adapt to changes occurring in the American literary climate, she found that editors considered her manuscripts too tame to sell. Her writing was still full of graphic descriptions of violent encounters and hair-raising adventures, but she re-

fused to spice up her writing with four-letter words and passionate love scenes. Although she led an unconventional and liberated life, she was not prepared to follow those on the “frontier of free speech,” such as Hemingway, Faulkner, and the tribe of younger writers who were making their mark on the American literary scene.³⁰

When she was not writing, Lockhart actively tried to preserve the traditions of the West. In 1920, she was instrumental in founding the Cody Stampede, an annual Fourth of July celebration that memorialized some of the colorful aspects of the Old West—the cowboys, broncbusters, and Indians who were being displaced by modern times. She wanted to show the old-timers how to counterattack.³¹

Never able to give up the freedom of expression afforded her in newspaper work, Lockhart purchased the *Cody Enterprise* in 1920. She used it to express her views on everything from the city sewer system to prohibitionists. Armed with her Remington portable typewriter, an old-style linotype, a caustic wit, and a refreshing irreverence for almost everyone, Lockhart became the “Voice of Cody.” As such, she championed the “Wets” against the “Drys,” made fun of the “better element” and small-town hypocrisy, and helped keep the politicians honest.

Even after she sold the *Enterprise* in October 1925 and retired to develop her own Lockhart Ranch in the Dryhead country of Montana, she contributed to the Lovell, Wyoming, newspaper. Eventually, ill health forced her to return to her white frame house in Cody, where she continued to record autobiographical notes about her colorful and controversial life.

By the time of her death in 1962 at the age of ninety-one, she had accumulated a significant literary legacy.³² Her books and articles still provide an accurate portrait of a way of life, and the Cody Stampede continues to attract tourists who want a glimpse of a bygone era. The only thing missing is the familiar sight of the Stampede’s first president, Caroline Lockhart, impressive in leather gauntlets and Stetson hat, riding her horse at the head of the opening parade. 

29. Caroline Lockhart, *The Old West and the New* (New York: Double Doran, 1933).

30. Eldridge, “Woman on Horseback,” CLC.

31. Ibid. See also “From the Start the Cody Stampede Was a Success,” *Cody Enterprise*, n.d.; Mrs. G. E. Livingston, “Cody’s First Stampede Barred Flying Machine, Featured ‘Poison Bite’ Man,” *Billings Gazette*, June 29, 1947.

32. Eldridge, “Woman on Horseback,” and diary entry, October 11, 1925, CLC.

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