

Lyman Rice, Artist

Irene Mollard's notes –

George W. Rice –

Born 9 Jan 1835 in Georgetown, near Vermillion, Illinois

Married Phoebe Agnes (Morse) or (Morast)

Son – Milton John Rice. Born 8 June 1860 – Mahomet, Ill.
(Sometimes John Milton)

Died 22 Nov. 1943 – Kearney, Ne

Buried Kearney Cem.

Milton married Lulu Nettie Detamore in Sidney, Ill.

She died 25 Sept 1960 – Oakland, Calif.

Buried Kearney Cem.

The couple married 28 Jan 1886 on farm at Sidney, Illinois

They had seven children, Lyman A. Rice being the sixth

Lyman – Born 1 March 1906 – Amherst, Ne

Died 26 Feb 1979 – Billings, Mt.

Buried at Billings

Graduated from Amherst, Ne. H. S. in 1922 (10th grade)

Married Lottie Maril Zimmerman

2 June 1929 in Kansas City Mo.

(divorced)

Lyman & Lottie had one son

Laurie Wallace Rice born 22 Nov. 1930 at Amherst, Ne.

Letter from L W Rice, Worden, MT 59088, Postmarked Jul 26 2001

Mrs. Mollard

I hope this letter will be of some help to you.

The magazine dad mentioned seems to have been misplaced over the years.

Many of the train paintings are still on display in the Metro building at Yellowstone county fair grounds

Thank you

L W Rice

[two page typewritten letter signed by Lyman A. Rice, undated but apparently written in late 1978]

Lyman A. Rice was born in BUFFALO COUNTY, Nebraska in Mar. 1906 and was commissioned to paint a large painting of a Buffalo for the Buffalo Co. Courthouse at Kearney, the County seat in the year of 1935.

A large Buffalo was owned by a Rancher near Elmcreek, Nebr. and this animal was used for the model. The landscape was chosen in the northern part of Buffalo County and is an old wallow Hole that is still there and probably always will be there.

The Old Oregon Trail was just south of Kearney, along the Platte River so a Companion Painting depicting the Pioneers Heading West along the south side of the river was commissioned and painted that same year.

Both Paintings are 5 feet high and 8 feet long, each and I am told by friends of mine that they are now in the NEW COURTHOUSE BUILDING.

I have not seen the New Courthouse Building as I have not been to Kearney, Nebraska for several years.

Mrs. Rice and our son moved to Billings with me in 1950 and we have been residing in Billings since then.

I attended the Kansas City Art Institute in Kansas City, Mo. in 1928 then the National Art school in Chicago, the Menhennitt School of lettering in Toronto, Canada also the Famous Artists Course of Westport, Conn.

I have finished many paintings of Buffalo as they might have been in the early days, and an artist can use almost any landscape except mountains for a Buffalo Painting and come up with something that would not be too far wrong, as all books and stories that I have read on the early day population was estimated to be around 60,000,000 head.

Only 26 years before I was born the white hunters started their annihilation of the Montana Herds and I have lived in Billings for 28 years so it hasn't been too long ago.

Then in 1963 I was commissioned to do the 14,000 square feet of mural paintings that were mounted on a 25 car train with 308 Montana Boosters aboard that went to the New York World's Fair in 1964 and ~~1-065~~1965.

We visited 17 major cities on this trip and carried all of our own horses and buggies and wagons and put on large parades in each city giving the city audiences a look at Montana.

The large paintings on both sides of this 25 car Train if set end to end would have been almost a half mile long and they depicted the early history of Montana from the Indiana, Buffalo, Outstanding Scenery, Industry, sports, Hunting, Fishing, Early Day Churches, missions, Mining and many present day activities.

Five cars of this train formed the Montana Exhibit at the World's Fair and we won 3rd Prize of all of the State exhibits and 9th prize of all of the whole fair grounds.

I have Finished many paintings of Buffalo and they are all gone, SOLD

There are also 4 large murals in the Kearney Presbyterian Church [“in Kearney” ~~in~~ Kearney was crossed out] Two of them are 16x10 feet and two are 5x15 Feet that I did in 1935. One of the large ones is the birth of Christ, the second large one is Christ and the Doctors at the age of 12 years, and one of the smaller ones is The Good Shepherd and the other smaller one is Christ knocking at the Door.

They are still in the Church, because they are painted directly on the plaster walls, and I have been told that they are as fresh in color as ever.

The Minister of this Church, Reverend David A. Johnson, was a great fellow for dramatics and put on The Passion Play, with over a thousand people in the cast, and women donated their hair one winter and he made false beards from their hair for many of the men in the play. He worked one whole winter making these beards. Then he posed (12 business men from Kearney, and the

man that took the part of Christ, was from Minden, Nebraska .) With their beards and robes in front of a background that was painted like the background in the famous Di Vinci Painting of the Last Supper. A photograph of them in this same pose was taken and then I made a 3x6 feet painting from this photo. The Painting was attractively framed and a special trailer was built to haul it all over the state to advertise The Passion Play. [~~“About”~~] There was a large outdoor background made that was 30 feet high and 44 feet long, also a 16x20 ft. background of Pilate's Judgement Hall. All of this was in 1935 or 1936 I don't remember just which year for sure.

Then about one or two years later He put on another large play entitled THE EXODUS, A story of the Children of Israel under the bondage of the Egypt and their passage through the Red Sea. It too had well over a thousand people that took part. I still have some of the beautiful Vases and urns that were used by the women water carriers.

I have done much interior decoration in Nebraska and other states and have made my way through life by painting. 50 years on June 2, 1979.

Now I do Landscape, Portraits, and Buffalo Paintings, as you will note, I am better at painting than I am at typing.

I am enclosing a magazine , and on pages 76 and 77 is the story of the Montana Centennial Train, also some slides, and two larger photographs of the Kearney Courthouse Paintings. Also a few slides of some of my Portraits and a photo of myself, as Buffalo Bill taken in 1964 the way I looked when I went to the New York World's Fair. Now I am about 15 years older.

I will appreciate it ever so much if you want to use any of this material in a copy of your BUFFALO Magazine. Please return all of these slides and photographs in the two stiff boards provided so they will not be damaged in the mail as they are the only pictures that I have left of some of these Paintings.

We Planned on coming to South Dakota this last summer to see the herds of Buffalo, and then the couple that was coming with us, the husband fell and broke three ribs, and that put a stop to that trip. Maybe NEXT YEAR.

If you ever come to Billings be sure to come to see us and I will show you my *ORIENTAL ROOM*. A collection of carved Chinese furniture that date back to the Ching Lung Dynasty over 300 years ago. Over a thousand people's signatures are in my Guest Book and I would love to have yours.

I guess I have rattled on about enough and if you can rearrange a lot of this prattle for a story. then it's your baby.

Thank you so much for letting me tell you of my experiences.

Love ya,

Lyman A. Rice.

824 Yellowstone Ave.

Billings, Montana 59101

[handwritten in the bottom left corner of the second page]

Lyman Rice was
born 1 March 1906 at Amherst
died 26 Febr. 1979- Billings, Mt.