MONTANA OUTDOOR HALL OF FAME 2020 INDUCTEES | 7

eorge Bird Grinnell was born in Brooklyn,
New York, to a privileged family in
September 1849.
He grew up in Audubon Park, once the farm
of renowned ornithologist John James Audubon.
There he was taught by Lucy “Grandma” Audubon, who likely encouraged Grinnell's interest in the natural world.
Grinnell graduated from Yale in 1870 and earned his Ph.D. there in 1880. He’d go on to reshape the national consciousness and become “The Father of American Conservation.”
There is little doubt that his travels about

Montana often triggered Grinnell’s unique understanding of the world around him. Grinnell made his !rst expedition to Yellow-stone National Park in 1875. President Ulysses S. Grant christened the area as the nation’s !rst national park in 1872. Between 1885-98 Grinnell explored and mapped what would become Glacier National Park. Beginning in 1891, he promoted, and later led the effort to create the national park. The unprecedented protection of Yellowstone— and creation of Glacier National Park in 1910—are in no small measure due to Grinnell’s exploration and advocacy.
Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks are forever in his debt, as is the American bison.
In the late 19th century, as wildlife poaching continued unabated, Grinnell wrote an article

for Scribner’s Magazine that lamented “The Last of the Buffalo.”
Likewise, Grinnell’s Forest and Stream maga-zine called for more buffalo protection. Additionally, in May 1894, the Boone and Crock-ett Club—acting through Grinnell and Theodore Roosevelt (MOHF 2014)—in"uenced the federal Yellowstone Park Protection Act.
Author Michael Punke suggests in Last Stand: George Bird Grinnell, the Battle to Save the Buffalo, and the Birth of the New West, that Grinnell’s park and bison advocacy was the !rst battle over the environment in the U.S. and represented the birth of the conservation movement as a political force.
Grinnell is the founder of the !rst Audubon Society in 1886 and co-founder with Theodore Roosevelt of the Boone and Crockett Club, which named him president for life in 1927.
In 1925 President Calvin Coolidge said that
few had done as much as Grinnell, and no one did more to preserve American wilderness.
The occasion was the presentation of the Roosevelt Medal for Distinguished Service.
“In Yellowstone National Park,” Coolidge said, “you prevented the exploitation and, therefore, the destruction of the natural beauty. The Glacier National Park is particularly your monument.” Grinnell married Elizabeth Curtis Grinnell
in 1902. ✮

G

2020 INDUCTEE

George Bird Grinnell 1849 - 1938