



An American Tour:
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Cheyenne's Frontier Days

[I was actually in Cheyenne for the Frontier Days celebration in 1974, but I had no idea of the long and fascinating history behind the event...]

In 1897, Frederick W. Angier, Traveling Passenger Agent of the Union Pacific Railroad, suggested to the editor of the *Cheyenne Daily Sun-Leader*, a festival similar to Greeley, Colorado's "Potato Day." As a result of that suggestion, plans for the first "Frontier Day" were formulated in the Tivoli Saloon. (The Saloon now houses the Chamber of Commerce.) On September 23, the first Frontier Day was held. The town was flag bedecked and a special excursion train brought in a band and visitors. The *Sun-Leader* waxed enthusiastically about the "thousands of visitors from all over the state and from Colorado and Nebraska."

Frontier Days over the years continued to present ox teams, vigilantes, and stage holdups as major parts of the presentation. In short, the early committees did not take themselves too seriously. In the first rodeo, Bill Jones won the saddle bronc contest. The only marring incident was when bleachers were smashed by wild horses which had broken loose as spectators fled for safety. By the following year, Wm. F. Cody's "Wild West Show and Congress of the Rough Riders of the World" attracted an audience of 6,000. The festival was such a success that the following year, the event was expanded to two days. Although the event became a multiple day program, it continued to be referred to as "Frontier Day" in the singular until after 1910. Teddy Roosevelt was there for the 1910 festivities, as well as lots of other VIPs and celebrities over the years.

[<http://www.wyomingtalesandtrails.com/frontierdays.html>]

Today, Cheyenne's Frontier Days is the world's largest outdoor rodeo and western celebration.

Ox Team, 1922 Frontier Days Parade, Capital Ave. Photo by Ralph Doubleday.

