

Alumni Spotlight: Maryanne Andrus

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After finishing her undergraduate degree in history at USU, Maryanne Andrus enrolled in a graduate program in American Studies with a dual emphasis in American folklore and museum studies. When she told her parents she was pursuing a degree that would enable her to find work on a living history site and dress in period costume, they were somewhat suspicious. But that's exactly what she did.

Her first professional position was as team leader for the women's history program at The Homeplace 1850, a historic site located in Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area. For five years she worked as a lead interpreter of both natural and cultural history, describing the local iron industry and yeoman agrarian culture of western Kentucky and Tennessee. She was then promoted to Director of the site, where she served for another five years, wrapping up a decade in the Upper South.

In Cody, Wyoming her career took a different path. Over another decade, from 2002-2011, she served as the Director of Education at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center, now known as the Buffalo Bill Center of the West. The move to an indoor, traditional museum was a major shift

for her yet she felt prepared for this work by her graduate work with its heavy emphasis in Museum Studies. Her team brought in programs, festivals, and tours across the five museums of the BBHC: Buffalo Bill Museum, Plains Indian Museum, Whitney Western Art Museum, Cody Firearms Museum, and the Draper Museum of Natural History.

After this rewarding time in Cody, she made one final move in her career in 2011, this time to Salt Lake City, where she continues to lead the Exhibition and Programs team at the Church History Museum of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Looking back at a beginning history student who blossomed under the guidance of the history program at USU, Andrus is amazed and grateful for the meaningful opportunities that have unfolded throughout her career. She wants to thank the faculty in the Department of History whose classes opened her eyes to see life through the lens of history.