

**ETHEYLE
R. PARRY
BRADFORD**
1889-1962



**JUANITA
C.
PARRY**
1890-1917

**STUNT
HORSEBACK
RODEO
STARS**

At the turn of the 20th century, Etheyle and Juanita Parry became two of the greatest women stunt horseback riders in the nation. They performed from 1907 to 1918 as part of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, the Miller Brothers' 101 Ranch Show, and Barnum and Bailey's Circus.

Etheyle was born in April 1889 and Juanita in September 1890 in Riverhead, New York. Etheyle was named after the chemical compound ethyl-chloride that her father, veterinarian Archer Parry, had been experimenting with the substance for use on horses. He thought the word ethyl would make a good name.

His daughters inherited Dr. Parry's love of horses. As a youth, he had worked on a ranch roping cattle and became friends with other men working there – Theodore Roosevelt and William F. Cody. He helped his daughters become exceptional horseback riders. Their talent was recognized by Bill Cody, who often visited the Parrys. In 1907, Cody invited them to join his Wild West Show.

Etheyle and Juanita honed their riding skills, becoming a part of a sizeable cast of thrill-seeking women who captivated audiences. Some of the trick-riding routines they presented involved the pair riding side-by-side into an arena and leaping from one horse to the other at full gallop. The sisters were called the Cossack Girls by the cast because they performed all the reckless and daring feats of horsemanship attributed to the Russian Cossack cavalrymen.

After Cody retired, the sisters signed with the Miller Brothers' 101 Ranch Wild West Show outside of Ponca City in 1911. Cowgirls were an important part of the show, including many well-known riders, ropers, and crack rifle shots. Etheyle often competed with Lulu Parr and Tillie Baldwin for the title of best rider of bucking horses.

While performing, the sisters – often mistaken as twins – kept their routine fresh with new tricks. They perfected a trick that involved picking up items scattered across a performance arena, while leaning over their saddle. When the trick ended, with Juanita sitting on the ground, Etheyle would charge her horse toward her sister, picking her up and tossing her on the back of her saddle before she was trampled.

In one of their most famous tricks, Etheyle would leap off a runaway stagecoach onto a horse running alongside. Juanita would rope a fixed object from the driver's seat of the stage, then bring the team of horses to an abrupt stop. When they weren't performing, they spent time at the Miller Brothers' ranch performing in silent westerns with Broncho Billy and Tom Mix, and becoming friends with Mary Pickford, Hoot Gibson, and Will Rogers.

In the fall of 1916, the Parrys signed with the Barnum and Bailey Circus for its wild west show. They were not only celebrated for their daring horsemanship, but also for the elaborate velvet costumes they wore. Their hats, neckerchiefs, gauntlet gloves, and beaded armbands were equally impressive.

On September 7, 1917, while performing in Chicago, Juanita was executing a double somersault on the back of her horse, when it stumbled and fell. She was pinned underneath, with her neck broken and skull crushed. She died two days later at age 26. Etheyle never completely got over the loss of her sister, retiring from show business not long after the accident.

On February 28, 1921, Etheyle married Cody's nephew William Cody Bradford, whom she had known since childhood, in Casper, Wyoming, where he was a well-respected executive for Northwest Railroad. As an artist, Etheyle's paintings were featured in exhibits through Wyoming. In September 1933, William, suffering from depression, shot himself at age 60. Etheyle would eventually settle in New York City, where she died in May 1962 at age 73. She was buried next to her sister Juanita and father.