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# The Cover Photograph

## “Cowboy Dinner, Laramie County”

Photograph by J. E. Stimson

Collections of the Wyoming State Archives,

Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources, Cheyenne

*Cheyenne photographer J. E. Stimson shot scenes from throughout Wyoming. Born in Virginia and trained in photography in Wisconsin, he came to Cheyenne in 1889 and remained there the rest of his life. Many of his photographs, including this cover picture, were made from glassplate negatives. In 1953, the 7,560 glassplates, along with pictures made from other forms of negatives, were purchased by the State of Wyoming. The Stimson photographs became the foundation for the superb photographic collection held by the Wyoming State Archives, Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources, Cheyenne. The cover image dates from the beginning of the 20th century.*

### Information for Writers

The editor of *Annals of Wyoming* welcomes manuscripts and photographs on every aspect of the history of Wyoming and the West. Appropriate for submission are unpublished, research-based articles which provide new information or which offer new interpretations of historical events. First-person accounts based on personal experience or recollections of events will be considered for use in the “Wyoming Memories” section. Historic photo essays for possible publication in “Wyoming Memories” also are welcome. Articles are reviewed and refereed by members of the journal’s Editorial Advisory Board and others. Articles previously appearing on the internet or in other publications will not be accepted. Decisions regarding publication are made by the editor. Manuscripts (along with suggestions for illustrations or photographs) should be submitted on computer diskettes in a format created by one of the widely-used word processing programs along with two printed copies. Submissions and queries should be addressed to Editor, *Annals of Wyoming*, P. O. Box 4256, University Station, Laramie WY 82071, or to the editor by e-mail at the following address: [philr@uwyo.edu](mailto:philr@uwyo.edu)

# Annals of WYOMING

The Wyoming History Journal

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*Annals of Wyoming*. The Wyoming History Journal is published quarterly by the Wyoming State Historical Society in association with the Wyoming Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources, the American Heritage Center, and the Department of History, University of Wyoming. The journal was previously published as the *Quarterly Bulletin* (1923-1925), *Annals of Wyoming* (1925-1993), *Wyoming Annals* (1993-1995) and *Wyoming History Journal* (1995-1996). The *Annals* has been the official publication of the Wyoming State Historical Society since 1953 and is distributed as a benefit of membership to all society members. Membership dues are: single, \$20, joint, \$30, student (under 21), \$15, institutional, \$40, contributing, \$100-249, sustaining, \$250-499, patron, \$500-999, donor, \$1,000+. To join, contact your local chapter or write to the address below. Articles in *Annals of Wyoming* are abstracted in *Historical Abstracts* and *America: History and Life*.

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# Studying History through Biography: Life Stories of Wyomingites

Biography increasingly is gaining acceptance from historians as a legitimate means of writing about history. Not only will a well-written biography describe and analyze a single individual's role in history, but also place the individual into the context of the times.

Few Wyomingites have been the subjects of full-length biographies, although the dearth of such studies has begun to change in recent years. For example, in the next year or so, full-length biographies will be completed on Nellie Tayloe Ross and Thurman Arnold, both Wyoming figures who became nationally prominent in the 20th century.<sup>1</sup> Irrigation pioneer Elwood Mead, rancher John Clay, editor Asa Mercer, photographer J. E. Stimson, druggist/collector Jim Gatchell, geologist Samuel Knight, and botanist Aven Nelson are among the subjects of recent monograph-length studies.<sup>2</sup> Articles about lesser known Wyoming figures have appeared in recent issues of *Annals of Wyoming*, including pieces on restaurateur Harry Hynds, Jackson Hole resident Verba Lawrence, sisters Amalia and Annie Simons, Buffalo merchant Robert Foote, Natrona County sheepman Marvin Bishop, Sr., German publisher F. W. Ott, schoolteacher Glendolene Kimmell and outlaw Geneva Collett, and rancher R. S. Van Tassell.<sup>3</sup> Aspects of the careers of attorney Arnold and Supreme Court Justice Fred Blume were featured in recent issues of the *Wyoming Law Review*.<sup>4</sup> Several compilations of biographies have appeared over the years, containing the brief sketch "biographies" of many hundreds of Wyoming residents--many with just the essential facts in a person's life without examining much more while others are rich sources of little-known information no longer available elsewhere.<sup>5</sup>

In this issue, *Annals* presents a series of article-length biographies of several Wyomingites--some famous and some lesser known. At least two are "no-

torious," while the others drew the interest of historians through good works and memorable deeds. While each article is billed as "biography," the approaches taken in each work are quite different. Two are "chapters" of longer

<sup>1</sup> Teva Scheer is completing the first full-length biography of Ross, tentatively set for publication next year, and Spencer Weber Waller's biography of Thurman Arnold will be published the following year. See also Lori Van Pelt, "Discovering Her Strength: The Remarkable Transformation of Nellie Tayloe Ross," *Annals of Wyoming* 74 (Winter 2002), 2-8; and the introductory biography in Gene M. Gressley, *Voltaire and the Cowboy: The Letters of Thurman Arnold* (Colo. Assoc. Univ. Press, 1977).

<sup>2</sup> James Kluger, *Turning on Water with a Shovel: The Career of Elwood Mead* (Albuquerque: UNM Press, 1992); L. Milton Woods, *John Clay, Jr.: Commission Man, Banker and Rancher* (Spokane: Arthur Clark, 2001); and Woods, *Asa Shinn Mercer: Western Promoter and Newspaperman* (Spokane: Arthur Clark, 2002); Mark Junge, *J. E. Stimson, Photographer of the West* (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1986); Gil Bollinger, *Jim Gatchell, The Man and the Museum* (Buffalo: Gatchell Museum Assoc., 1999); Frederick W. and JoAnn B. Reckling, *Samuel Howell "Doc" Knight, Mr. Wyoming University* (Laramie: UW Alumni Assoc., 1998); Roger Williams, *Aven Nelson of Wyoming* (Boulder: Colo. Assoc. Univ. Press, 1984).

<sup>3</sup> See, for example: Robert V. Goss, "A Tale of Two Sisters: Pryor and Tischman in Yellowstone in The Best and Worst of Times," *Annals* 74 (Spring 2002); Paul Richardson Fleming, "Ridgway Glover, Photographer," *Annals* 74 (Spring 2002); Murray L. Carroll, "Robert Foote: A Forgotten Wyoming Pioneer," *Annals* 74 (Winter 2002); Larry K. Brown, "Murdered by Madness: The Case of Geneva Collett," *Annals* 74 (Winter 2002), 24-35; Shirley E. Flynn, "Cheyenne's Harry P. Hynds: Blacksmith, Saloon Keeper, Promoter, Philanthropist," *Annals*, 73 (Summer 2001), 2-11; Miguel A. Rosales, "A Mexican Railroad Family in Wyoming," *Annals* 73 (Spring

2001), 28-32; Carol L. Bowers, "School Bells and Winchester: The Sad Saga of Glendolene Myrtle Kimmell," *Annals* (Winter 2001), 14-32; Carl Hallberg, "Finding His Niche: F. W. Ott, A German Publisher," *Annals* 72 (Spring 2000), 2-13; D. Claudia Thompson, "Amalia and Annie: Women's Opportunities in Cheyenne in the 1870s," *Annals* 72 (Summer 2000), 2-9; Gil Bollinger, "The Gatchells: Frontier Newspapermen," *Annals* (Autumn 2000), 12-17; Jefferson Glass, "Marvin Lord Bishop, Sr., Pioneer Sheep Rancher," *Annals* 72 (Autumn 2000), 27-35; Shirley E. Flynn, "Renesselaer Schuyler Van Fassell," *Annals* 71 (Summer 1999), 2-7; Sherry L. Smith, "A Jackson Hole Life: Verba Lawrence," *Annals* 71 (Summer 1999), 35-43; Mike Mackey, "Thomas Harrison and the Search for Oil in Northwest Wyoming, 1908-1916," *Annals* 70 (Autumn 1998), 32-45.

--Phil Roberts

<sup>4</sup> Michael Golden, "Journey for the Pole: The Life and Times of Fred H. Blume," *Land and Water Law Rev.* 28 (1993), 195-270; 511-592; Spencer Weber Waller, "The Short Unhappy Judgeship of Thurman Arnold," *Wyoming Law Review* 3 (2003), 233-256.

<sup>5</sup> H. H. Bancroft, *History of Nevada, Colorado and Wyoming* (San Francisco: The History Co., 1890), was among the first of this genre with biographies appearing in extensive footnotes. I. S. Bartlett, *History of Wyoming* (Chicago: S. J. Clarke, 1918), and Frances B. Beard, *Wyoming from Territorial Days to the Present* (Chicago: American Historical Society, 1933), each contained two volumes of profiles and portraits of Wyomingites. For a few recent examples of biographical compilations, see: Mabel Brown, *First Ladies of Wyoming* (Cheyenne: Wyo. Commission for Women, 1991); Jean Mead, *Wyoming in Profile* (Boulder: Pruett, 1982); and Lori Van Pelt, *Dreamers and Schemers: Profiles from Carbon County, Wyoming's Past*. (Glendo: High Plains, 1999).

# ROSEMARY QUINN: Profile of a Teacher

By William R. Dubois

*Rosemary Quinn came to Cheyenne in 1923 to teach art in the junior high school. Her sister Grace Marie arrived in 1924 to teach fourth grade. Rosemary also taught fourth grade for many years. Both of them taught more than 40 years, departing in 1967.*

*The Quinn sisters were born in Arkansas and reared in Morrilton. For a time, they lived in Vian, Oklahoma. Their father was a freight agent for the Missouri Pacific Railroad. Grace Marie died in 1987. Rosemary, at this writing in 2003, is still in excellent health. She is 104—her birth date was Jan. 4, 1899. At the age of 97, she made eight tapes telling of her life, and this article deals with her years in Wyoming. The tapes and a transcript of them are available at the American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.*

Both of the Quinn sisters graduated from Northeastern College in Oklahoma. Rosemary was two years older. Both were under five feet and many thought they were twins even though Rosemary had auburn hair and Grace Marie was brunette. Rosemary said she was offered a job in Miami, Okla., but when they discovered she was Catholic, the school officials said they could not use her because “society” in that town did not accept Catholics. Instead, she moved to Sapulpa, Okla., and taught there for two years. Her mother told her she had to stay in a contract for two years, so it was after that when she moved to Nampa, Idaho, where she taught for two more years. After graduation, Grace Marie taught in Nampa, but for just one year. The two planned to be “tramp teachers” and move from place to place.

## Stories About Travel

En route to Nampa, they passed through Cheyenne for the first time. They arrived from Colorado and it was almost night. It had been raining and she said the viaduct was “rickety and frightening to cross.” They

saw the sign for the Plains Hotel and managed to get a room there for the night. They decided Cheyenne eventually was where they wanted to teach—even though their friends “threw up their arms in horror” at hearing the plan.

Rosemary tells of crossing Wyoming—passing the tree-in-the-rock, seeing the wildflowers and the many animals along the road such as antelope and rabbits. They were fascinated by Ames Monument. She told of staying overnight in Rock Springs when en route to Nampa. While she said they enjoyed their time in Idaho, they still wanted to return to Cheyenne to teach.

Tourist courts were in fashion then—little individual houses with one room equipped with a small stove. Linens were furnished as well as pots and pans for cooking. The Quinns always chose to eat at cafes or in the hotels. Roads in those days were mud and gravel, but in a few years, governments began oiling them and travel became easier. The Quinns always returned to Arkansas in the summers to help care for relatives there. They always drove, but at Christmas, when they returned for the holidays, they took the train.

In the early years, a driver needed a “little blue book” to tell how far to go and where the next stops were. Highway markers came at a later date, she said. One time their car got stuck in a puddle of mud. The sheriff came along and told them he had a prisoner in the car and that the prisoner would help them get out of the mud. Neither of the men would accept any money for helping. Rosemary mentioned that truck drivers were “always helpful in telling you information” and which towns not to stop in—where to stay and eat.

One time they were returning from Vedauwoo west of Cheyenne when they were flagged down by the game warden. He needed to use their spare tire because two of his tires had been ruined. He gave the sisters some beautiful trout which they distributed to their friends in Cheyenne who wondered where they had caught them. They said they had “caught them with a spare tire” and never explained further!

On one trip, the car lights failed as they were driving

along the highway. A train stopped and the trainman told them he could take a message to Cheyenne. The Quinns told him to go to Walton Motors and the firm would send out a "service battery." A short while later, the service person arrived with the battery and the Quinns were not charged for the service.

One time the Quinns were going "home" for Christmas on the train. They went with a friend to the Plains Hotel for dinner. They planned to walk over to the depot, just a block away. A senator from northern Wyoming stopped them and invited them to come to his room for a drink. They said they couldn't because they had to catch the train. They found out, however, that the train was going to be at least 1 1/2 hours late so they went back and had the drink. In the interim, the train made up time. By the time they returned to the depot, the train had already left. They had to stay in Cheyenne for the night. That meant getting Dinneen's to get their car out of storage, take them home, and come back for them the next morning. (Car dealers stored cars in those days and Dinneen's was one garage that did that for customers). Rosemary said that when they got to Arkansas, their father "gave them the works" about missing the train.

During World War II, it was not always easy to get a train ticket. She said the soldiers were always very nice

and helped them to get on. Many times, the two sisters just stayed in the observation or club car.

Rosemary and her sister enjoyed going to Little Bear Inn which, at that time, was about 25 miles north of Cheyenne. It was owned by Larry and Helen Murray. One night, a terrible blizzard came up and their car got stuck between two trees. Murray arranged for strangers to take them back to Cheyenne. The sisters heard the sound of gurgling coming from the back of the car and they concluded that the driver was taking whiskey to a nearby "dry" state. They told the driver to drop them off two blocks from their apartment because they did not want the strangers to know where they lived. On another occasion, they had to stay overnight at the Brown Palace in Denver because of the weather. Another time, they went to Laramie for a baby shower and had a terrible return trip through a storm. One time, they were stranded on a bus coming from Denver. A truck filled with fruits and vegetables stopped and the driver gave everyone in the bus something to eat.

### The Community and Social Events

The Quinn sisters loved Cheyenne (*and, I might add, Cheyenne loved them*). They enjoyed horseback riding and became capable riders. They often went out to Ed McCarty's ranch. (McCarty provided the stock for



State Parks and Cultural Resources Dept.

*Cheyenne Apartments, home to the Quinn sisters when they lived in Cheyenne.*

Cheyenne Frontier Days, the Denver and Fort Worth stock shows, and the Pendleton Roundup). The sisters would go out to watch the stock being unloaded. They saw famous bucking horses there including Midnight, Five Minutes to Midnight, and the Brown Bomber.

In the winters, the Quinn sisters took up snow-shoeing and skiing. They loved the outdoors and enjoyed seeing the wildlife.

She said they always enjoyed the cocktail parties and dances—even during Prohibition. The sisters often went to “the Fort”—than Fort Russell, but after 1930, Fort Warren and now Warren Air Force Base—but after 1930 known as Fort Warren. There, they attended parties and rode horses. One ride got Rosemary into trouble. She rode the colonel’s horse named “Hamish” and fed him sugar cubes with her toe. The colonel rode the horse for review one day and Hamish wanted a sugar cube. When he did not get it, he threw the colonel off. After that, Rosemary was forbidden from giving the horse any more sugar.

In Cheyenne in those days, big parties were held about twice a month and the Quinns also liked to give smaller parties in their home at the Cheyenne Apartments where they lived. (The apartments are now known as The Landmark). The Quinns were popular young women. Rosemary once dated Milward Simpson, who many years later became Wyoming governor and senator. She said that “he found out I was a Democrat and a Catholic and that was the end of our dating.” The Quinns were especially fond of dancing at the Officer’s Club. All of the women wore long dresses. One time, the entire party was stranded overnight at the club by a blizzard. Rosemary said they “looked pretty funny coming to breakfast in their evening clothes.”

The Quinns enjoyed dances at the Elks Club and also at neighboring ranches where dances were held in the barns. Hay bales were placed along the sides for seating. People would bring their babies, lay them on the bales where the children would sleep. Fiddles and guitars furnished the music and they danced waltzes, two-steps, tangos, and the Charleston. They did not square dance. Dances often were held on Saturday nights because they could last until 2 or 3 in the morning. Rosemary said they often went to Mass at noon after a night on the town.

As teachers they associated with townspeople as well as their fellow educators. They dated airline pilots—ones who carried the mail across the United States. The pilots stopped in Cheyenne and flew to Salt Lake City or Omaha. Some of the pilots would party with them and “they always had good whiskey.” The pilots got it while laying over at various stops for rest days.

They would fly in a load of Canadian whiskey and give it to friends or sell it. One time, a pilot thought he was going to crash so he threw the whiskey out of the airplane. He would have been fired if he had lived and they found out he had the whiskey. Rosemary said that before the runways were lighted, the planes flew only in the day time. If a plane came in late, people were asked to drive out to the runway and turn the car lights on to make the field bright enough for the plane to land. A pilot living in their apartment building was killed. The Quinns asked the apartment manager to let them in so they could retrieve several empty liquor bottles from the apartment. She said he was Mormon and they did not want his parents to think he had drunk all of the liquor. He was not a drinker but only a bottle collector.

When they were in college, the Quinns learned how to make wine—from dandelions. Oklahoma was a “dry state” at that time. Rosemary said that during Prohibition in Cheyenne, they made wine from chokecherries. It was quite delicious, she said. Also, they made the chokecherries into a liqueur that was like cherry her- ring.

They liked a southern fruit called red haws—berries from hawthorn bushes. One time they saw some near Wheatland when they were there for a teachers’ meeting. They were afraid to ask the landowner if they could pick a few of them so they waited until after dark and then went gathering.

While living in Cheyenne, they once attended an Irish wake. Even though they were half Irish, they were not familiar with the custom. They went to one for a man whose son and wife were friends who lived in the same apartment house. The place had to be cleaned and the curtains washed and ironed. A huge feast was prepared with lots of food and drink. The deceased was in one room with no furniture except for chairs around the room and the casket in the center. “You could go in and kneel down by the casket and say a prayer, and then you went over and sat in one of the chairs.” Rosemary said. Each person told of all of the nice things they could about the deceased. As the chairs vacated, more people came in. “After you went in and said a prayer, you would go eat and drink and stay as long as you cared to.” Some people even stayed the entire night. Everyone laughed and talked. They would then have the funeral the next day.

### Teaching

Rosemary said she found teaching fourth graders to be quite different from teaching junior high students. She told of a little girl in her class whose grandmother ran a house of prostitution in Cheyenne. (It was illegal,

but they existed in Cheyenne, often catering to soldiers). One day, while teaching the class, Rosemary looked out of the window and saw the little girl sauntering along. It was almost time for the bell to ring—the tardy bell—and the principal “had a fit when children were tardy.” Rosemary yelled to the little girl to run, but she acted as though she hadn’t heard the teacher. At recess, Rosemary asked the little girl, “Why did you not run?” The little girl told her she was “too tired to run.” She explained that it was “all she could do to get up and go to school” that morning. She said, “My grandmother had an awful busy night last night. There were cars all around and people coming and going....and the neighbors thought someone had died.” Then the little girl told Rosemary, “it was so busy that if you had made up as many beds as I did last night, you’d be too tired to run, too.”

One time Rosemary decided to have a pet show for her class. Each child was to bring an animal. One little boy brought a lamb. The lamb had ticks on it and the children were having a great time pulling ticks from the lamb instead of looking at the other animals! Not all children had pets so the next time, Rosemary changed the plan and had a foreign doll show. In the social studies class, they studied different countries. Each child would choose a county and study it, dress a doll to represent the country, and write something about the country. The student could get all the help they wished in making the doll clothes. Even the boys participated in the show.

Eventually, Rosemary added a Wyoming history unit and it became one of the most popular subjects. She said that one of her students became a history teacher and taught Western history at Central High School in Cheyenne. He said his interest in history came from her in the fourth grade. (That story is true—I am the person).

In Rosemary’s classes, students learned to combine art skills with history. Each Christmas, the girls would make sagebrush pins for their mothers for presents. The boys would make sagebrush candles. Rosemary said she was pleased that Clarice Whittenberg wrote a book on Wyoming history that was useable by fourth grade students. She said the only part she had to embellish was the ranching unit. One time she told a story

about how a man cured a cow by splitting its tail and pouring salt and pepper on it and wrapping it up. The cure would get rid of “doodlebugs.” A Cheyenne rancher did not believe her, but later, he was in Texas and found out that it was true.

One time her principal thought the children needed more entertainment and organized a dance. She said the teachers enjoyed it more than the students so that ended that plan! Since she had a southern accent, she said sometimes students would say they missed spelling words because they could not understand her. Many times, they just asked her to repeat words since they liked to hear how she pronounced them.

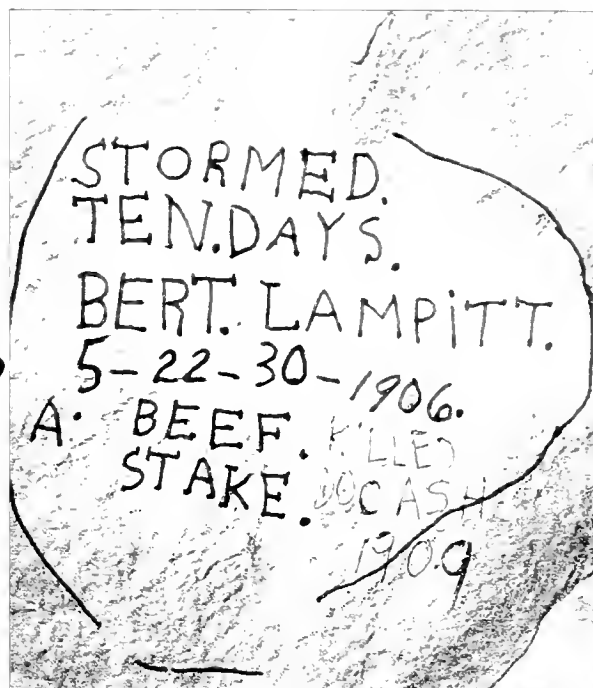
*Rosemary Quinn’s stories of growing up in the South and her family life are interesting for further reading. Certainly, she and her sister left a wonderful legacy with many young people in Cheyenne. When she celebrated her 100th birthday, six of us from Cheyenne attended her party. One former student, Ruth Finch Powers, was nearly 92 years old when she died in spring 2003. When she had her 90th birthday, she said she found it hard to believe that she got a card from a former teacher!*

*William R. “Bill” Dubois III taught American and frontier history in the Cheyenne schools for 37 years. He has a baccalaureate degree from Northwestern University and a Masters in history from the University of Wyoming. He helped to write *The Magic City of the Plains* in 1967 and *Landmarks of Cheyenne* in 1976. He recently published a book on the Plains Hotel, co-written with Shirley Flynn. His grandfather was the architect of the hotel. Dubois serves on the board for Cheyenne Historic Preservation, the United Medical Center, the Historic Governor’s Mansion, the Cheyenne Concert Association, and the American Heritage Center. He is past president of the Wyoming State Historical Society and the Laramie County chapter. Director of the board that created the Old West Museum, he also has served on the Centennial Commission and the board of the State Parks and Cultural Resources Department.*



# Bert Lampitt and Big Horn Basin Murders, 1909 and 1921

By Ester Johansson Murray



The chiseled words

Author's photograph

“**S**TORMED” is one of eleven cryptic words chiseled in Mesa Verde sandstone on a mountainside near Cody, Wyoming. The carvings on a south-facing cliff are at the comfortable height for a fairly tall man to stand and pound them carefully out of the firm rock probably tapping a small chisel with a stone or hammer.

These eleven words and two dates have been preserved by being on private land with limited access.

The blocky print capitol letters average about four inches high. At the top of the group is the one word “STORMED” and directly under that are two words, “TEN. DAYS.”, with a period after each word. Then the rock carver’s name appears, “BERT LAMPITT”. Beneath the man’s name are dates: “5-22-30-1906”. Presumably, it stormed from May 22 to 30, 1906.

To place these words in context of the weather of that time, the Cody newspaper, the *Stockgrower and Farmer*, mentions how mild the winter had been at the Wapiti ranger station. But snow fell in April. The May 9, 1906, edition of the paper had two items about the breaking drought. The first stated, “Soft snow storm occurred last Friday moistening the range in good shape and insuring a speedy growth of grass.” And it was important enough to repeat in another column: “A recent rain and soft snow did untold good to the country.” But on May 24, 1906, the paper again mentioned the weather, noting that a terrible windstorm had come up on Sunday evening caused cancellation of the young people’s Epworth League meeting at the Methodist church. And it was during the above ten-day period

that the “bad weather” caused cancellation of the wild west rodeos at Marquette.<sup>1</sup>

After ten days of late May moisture, one can imagine the flourishing growth of grass on the range. This fact provides meaning for the last three words of this six-line message—words that do not seem to make sense or have been misinterpreted by viewers through the years. The words are “A. BEEF STAKE.” As guidance to its meaning, one must consider the old-time phrase, “Grub Stake,” which could be used both as a verb and as a noun. A grubstake was money and/or supplies furnished to someone as an investment or to provide a start in some endeavor such as mining. Would it not make sense then that knee high range grass lushly growing after ten days of moisture could be a Beef Stake for a stock grower?

This is not the end of the chiseled words, nor the end of the story. There are three more words and one more date. These are located to the lower right and added an unknown number of years after the above inscription. The incised printing is similar but not exactly the same as the work produced above. It has the look of less precision. Another person probably did it.

These words are ominous with meaning. The word “KILLED” is just above the name “DOC ASH” and lastly the year “1909” with no periods.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The filling of the Shoshone Reservoir with water in 1910 covered the settlement at Marquette.

<sup>2</sup> The above photograph of the inscription has been highlighted to bring out the carvings.

**O**n the frigid, snowy night of December 6, 1909, a man was murdered in Cody.<sup>3</sup> The main characters involved in the incident were the murder victim, Seth Arthur Ash, known as “Doc” Ash; the accused, (Albert) Bert Lampitt; and Dorothy “Dot” Newton.

Born on a farm near Storm Lake, Iowa, on December 3, 1869, Ash aspired, persevered, and graduated from Highland Park College, Des Moines, Iowa, as a pharmacist and analytical chemist. Everyone called him “Doc” but he was not a medical doctor. Earlier in life he had married and, in 1902, divorced in Storm Lake. He moved around, settling for a time in Anoka, Minnesota. From there, he moved to Cody, overcoming health problems by spending time in the mountains. Later, he worked for Cummins Store, a general merchandise store that included a drug store.<sup>4</sup>

Ash had no family in Cody, but he was not entirely a stranger in town.<sup>5</sup> He had known Justice of the Peace C. W. Dibble when both men lived in Storm Lake. By 1909, Dibble had known Ash for some twenty years. In Cody, “Doc” lived in a small ten-by-twelve foot cabin just behind the Dibble bakery on the south side of Rumsey Avenue in the block between 2nd and 3rd streets, (as the town grew the streets were renumbered 12th and 13th). About 1905, Dibble had “moved his Little Gem restaurant to Lot 5 in Block 50,” later turning the business into a bakery.<sup>6</sup>

After a few years in Cody, Ash bought a one-third share of the Western Drug Store which stood in the 200 (later changed to 1200) block, west of the (old) Shoshone Bank on the north side of Sheridan Avenue. It was but a short distance from the back door of the Western Drug, across the east-west alley to Ash’s cabin. Dallas A. Tinkcom owned the other two-thirds of partnership he and Ash had formed in 1907. Tinkcom had been an Ash schoolmate in Storm Lake.

At the time, the growing town of Cody provided plenty of jobs. Some of these new businesses included the sulfur reduction plant across the river, south of DeMaris Springs; the Roller Flour Mill at the northwest corner of present-day 12th Street and Wyoming Avenue; and most of all, the federally-funded Bureau of Reclamation Dam in the Shoshone Canyon, where workmen blasted out a road through the Canyon and filled a narrow wedge in the canyon with concrete, resulting in the world’s highest dam.

By 1909 Doc Ash, at the age of 40, tended toward middle-aged stoutness. Nonetheless, Cody residents considered him good-looking with a fashionable black moustache. As a Main Street businessman, he usually wore a three-piece suit and tie. He hunted successfully



“Doc” Ash and his trophy grizzly bear hide

and a studio photograph shows him with a trophy grizzly bear hide.

In the late 19th century, the northern Big Horn Basin had been “cattle country.” After the great die-off of cattle during the winter of 1886-1887, sheep-raising gained in popularity. The Wyoming Woolgrowers had

<sup>3</sup>The account of the Ash murder comes from contemporary newspaper reports in the *Cody Stockgrower and Farmer*; the *Northern Wyoming Daily News* (Worland); the *Basin Republican*; and undated and unidentified newspapers in the file on Ash held in the Park County Historical Archives. The murder, not altogether unusual in the annals of the West, provided materials for a fictional murder—that of Mormon Joe in Caroline Lockhart, *The Fighting Shepherdess* (Boston: Small, Maynard & Co., 1919). The Cody author not only used the technique, location, and the weather at the time, but also colorful details of the case in her popular Western tale.

<sup>4</sup>Biographical information is drawn from the files on Ash held in the Park County Historical Archives.

<sup>5</sup>Besides relatives in Iowa, he had a brother, Dr. Eugene Ash, in government service in the Panama Canal Zone, and a sister, Alice Calhoun, living in Boston.

<sup>6</sup>In 2002 the City of Cody owned Lot 5 which is now a narrow parking lot, just east of an old north and south alley. Cody Eagle Lodge owned the property east of the rectangular parking lot. Martha Marston Newton bought the little cabin and moved it north across Rumsey Avenue to its present location behind 1232 Bleistein when she owned that property. Where the Dibles lived at that time has not been ascertained, but in April 1909, Charles W. and Stella A. Dibble bought property, Lot 16 in Block 9, from Harry B. Robertson.

gained considerable clout in Wyoming, and the Big Horn County Woolgrowers in 1909 urged its members to attend the 6th Annual Convention in Cheyenne. The State Board of Sheep Commissioners was active in the fall of 1909, and at one meeting, William L. Simpson spoke out to end the quarantine of sheep for "lip and leg ulceration," later called hoof and mouth disease.<sup>7</sup>

By the first decade of the 20th century, sheep raising surpassed cattle ranching in the area.<sup>8</sup> Many sheepmen had become prosperous and prominent. A. C. Newton, Santford C. Watkins, Henry D. Fulton, Reuben Hargraves, were some of the nearby sheep raisers. The Chapmans of the Two Dot and Dave Dickie had herds farther afield.

The Newtons had two children. Their daughter, Dorothy Deane Newton, had been born in Johnson County, Nebraska, on December 12, 1891, and brought to Cody at the age of 14 months. In 1906, a Cody newspaper, noted that "The pretty daughter of Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Newton, won a contest of most popular young lady in Wyoming."<sup>9</sup> The 14-year-old Dorothy Newton won the state-wide contest, sponsored by the *Cheyenne Tribune* and, with it, the first prize of a \$450 piano and a gold watch. In reporting the story, newspapers called her father, A. C. Newton, a "wealthy flockmaster."<sup>10</sup>

The third individual involved in the drama was Bert Lampitt, born in 1883, who had come from Plainfield, Nebraska, to the Big Horn Basin in 1900. Lampitt, an experienced shepherd, worked in Cody for six months in 1906 for Roger McGinnis of the Cody Lumber Company. Through his many years of previous experience, Bert knew all of the area sheepmen and their families.

In Cody during the decade, people worked hard and socialized. During the spring of 1906, the local paper advertised a great many dances: the Military ball; a Mask Ball; Bachelor Club dance. There is no evidence that 15-year-old Dorothy Newton attended these public dances, but she would have danced in homes and informal gatherings. It is doubtful if eccentric shepherd Bert Lampitt, a loner, went to dances. It could have been about this time that Lampitt worked briefly as camp tender for A. C. Newton and when he developed an infatuation with the "pretty and popular" Dorothy Newton. (While the date is uncertain, the date he recorded on stone indicates that he was working north of Cody in May, 1906).

The marriage of A. C. and Flora (Flo) Newton, parents of Dorothy (Dot), was on the rocks by 1909. (It was not terminated, however, until April 15, 1911). About the time that Dorothy Newton reached marriageable age, she had been singled out by "Doc" Ash as a possible wife. Doc was significantly older than Dorothy, but he was considered one of Cody's most eligible bachelors.

<sup>7</sup> Simpson, the father of Gov./Sen. Milward Simpson, is credited with ending the rift between the flockmasters and agriculturalists. Before 1910 Big Horn County included Washakie and Park Counties and the towns of Ten Sleep and Cody. No problems occurred in the west end of Big Horn county, the cattlemen set a "deadline" between upper Rattlesnake Creek and Trout Creek Basin to keep Newton's sheep east of it and they did not cross the line. T. A. Larson wrote, "Detectives employed by the Wyoming Woolgrowers Association were a deterrent to raids thereafter, and cattlemen quit murdering sheepmen and herders." Larson, *History of Wyoming*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press), 1965, 371

<sup>8</sup> In April, 1909, the so-called Spring Creek raid near Ten Sleep resulted in the deaths of three sheepmen. Sheriff Felix Alston and Prosecuting Attorney Percy Metz "began a thorough investigation" and the culprits were tried, convicted and sentenced. See John W. Davis, *A Vast Amount of Trouble: A History of the Spring Creek Raid* (Niwt, Colo. Assoc. Univ. Press, 1993).

<sup>9</sup> *Cody Stockgrower and Farmer*, June 7, 1906.

<sup>10</sup> How could a 14-year-old girl in a remote corner of Wyoming win a state popularity contest promoted by a Cheyenne newspaper? According to a telephone conversation with Dorothy's daughter Jeanne Kuiper on January 31, 2002, Jeanne said, "The contest was actually between the cattlemen and sheepmen of Wyoming. Dorothy was the daughter of a sheepman and her main opponent was the daughter of a cattleman in the southern part of Wyoming." Jeanne further explained, "The piano was one of the best Kimball oak pianos with elaborate hand-carved oak leaves adorning the frame. It was shipped out to Cody on a flatcar from Chicago." She did not know what became of the watch, but she still had the piano in her home in Denver.



Ash's cabin, viewed from the east. In 2003, it was located at 1232 Bleistein.

Ash had become friends with Flo Newton, Dot, and Dot's younger brother Brownie. At this time Flo and A. C. were estranged, so when Ash sought Dorothy's hand in marriage he talked it over with Flo instead of Dorothy's father. Plans had been laid for a coming-of-age birthday party for Dorothy at which time her betrothal to Doc Ash would be announced. (She would turn 18 on December 12). At that event, "Doc" would present her with the diamond engagement ring.

The winter of 1909-1910 turned out to be extremely cold. Newspaper accounts reported the death of sheep; even some herders froze to death.<sup>11</sup>

On Monday evening, December 6, 1909, six days before Dot's birthday, her prospective fiancé was murdered. Local newspaper accounts vividly describe the story. Near Second Street (12th) and Rumsey Avenue, shortly after 11:30 p.m., a gun shot blast was heard, followed by piercing screams. The commotion awakened at least one man, G. A. Pulley, the Iowa-born owner of Cody's "Iowa Store," who threw on outer garments and went outside to investigate. Pulley lived north of 12th and Rumsey and when he stepped outside, he saw a man staggering down the alley toward the house of Frank Campbell (now 1320 Bleistein Avenue) and formerly occupied by Dr. Louis Howe.<sup>12</sup> Another neighbor, Jakey Allen, joined Pulley just as the victim fell on Howe's porch. The two men were horrified to recognize the fallen man as Doc Ash of the Western Drug.<sup>13</sup>

As he laid on the porch, Ash was holding his hands tightly across his stomach and groaning with agonizing pain. He explained an assassin had shot him as he entered his house. Joe Isham, night policeman, and two Perry boys joined the group. The assembled men decided to carry the stricken man across the alley to the Waples Hospital, a three-story building (now 1321 Rumsey Avenue).<sup>14</sup> They aroused Dr. Waples and carried Ash inside and up the stairs to the operating room on the second floor. Barely ten minutes had passed. They sent for another doctor, W. S. Bennett, and Ash's friend, Charles W. "Sandy" Dibble. After examining the victim it became obvious his end was near. The buck shot had struck him just below the diaphragm, liver and spleen were lacerated, his intestines were cut to ribbons and part of these intestines protruded from the gaping hole in his stomach; it was that which he was attempting to hold in when first found.

One of the physicians asked, "Who shot you?" "Some son of a bitch in my house," Ash answered. About this time, his close friend Dibble rushed into the room and shouted, "My God, Ash, what has happened?" He re-

peated the previous answer and told Dibble that he tried to escape the assassin whom he believed was still in his cabin, but he tripped over the woodpile, leaving a bloody trail as he staggered eastward. When the doctors tried to minister to him he stopped them. "Never mind me, I want to make a will," Ash told them.

Someone grabbed a sheet of Waples Hospital stationery and someone scrawled the words:

<sup>11</sup> Lockhart emphasized the cold and snowy weather at the time of the murder of Mormon Joe in her novel. Lockhart based Kate, the heroine of the book, on a combination of Caroline herself and Dorothy Newton Efner. See Lockhart, *The Fighting Shepherdess*, 88, 89, 97.

<sup>12</sup> Dr. Louis Howe had been treating Ash for "appendicitis" during 1909 and later presented a sizeable bill to the Ash Estate. Dr. Howe later reduced the bill by two thirds to \$33.

<sup>13</sup> Which alley is difficult to ascertain because at present in the 1200-1300 blocks of Rumsey, Bleistein, and Salsbury Avenues, the alleys run east and west as well as north and south.

<sup>14</sup> This three-story building in 2002 was owned by Ann Simpson, wife of Alan, who is grandson of William L. Simpson.



Dorothy Newton holding a cat. This may be Dorothy's graduation picture.

I hereby will all my property to Dorothy Newton, S. A. Ash. [Illegible scratches apparently were Ash's attempt to sign.]

Witnessed by: C. W. Dibble W. S. Bennett Chas. H. Stump. [signatures]. Made at 12:36 a. m. (Dec. 7, 1909).

Ash gasped his last words to his friend Dibble, "Sandy, I'm done for." A few minutes later, he was pronounced dead, having lived one hour and twenty minutes after the gun shot blast.

Immediately the next day, the county coroner empanelled three men for an inquest. Designated were rancher A. J. Martin of the Southfork; Ash's partner Dallas Tinkcom; and young Harry Thurston, Forest Ranger. Prosecuting Attorney Percy Metz and Deputy Sheriff Ed Cusack of Basin attended the inquest.

The verdict of this jury on December 7, 1909, declared S. A. Ash died by a trap set gun. Examination of the cabin revealed the manner of his death. A single-barrel twelve-gauge shot gun, using a Winchester shell, had been placed on the stove and aimed directly at the door. Attached to the trigger were three pieces of cotton cord tied together, so arranged and fastened to the knob of the door that its opening caused the weapon's discharge. An open window from which the screen had been removed showed the route of entrance and exit. Extensive tramping in the snow around the cabin obliterated any incriminating tracks.

They held the funeral Thursday under the direction of the Odd Fellows (IOOF) and Eagles (FOE) lodges. The townspeople turned out to pay their respects to the well-liked citizen and he was laid to rest in Riverside Cemetery.<sup>15</sup>

Ash's spur-of-the-moment death bed will was to cause lengthy litigation that took years to settle. A month after the funeral, on January 8, 1910, Ash's brother and sister filed a legal objection to the death bed will and contested it on grounds the "decedent was not of sound mind" when it was written. They hired William L. Simpson as their lawyer. Dot Newton did not turn 18 until a few days after the murder. Consequently, Flo Newton, her mother, had to act as her legal guardian. She hired C. A. Zaring of Basin as her attorney.<sup>16</sup>

About the same time, Dot placed an ad in the *Stockgrower and Farmer* offering a reward for apprehension of Ash's murderer. She said she would sell everything he had left to her, except the keepsakes, for the reward. But there were no takers.

Townspeople wondered who could have committed such a cowardly assassination. It didn't take long for a suspect to be found. Bert Lampitt was suspected for three reasons: it was known he was infatuated with

pretty Dot Newton; he was known to be adept at setting trap guns (at one time, he had killed a bear with a set gun); and he had been hanging around town that evening, leaving between 11 :30 and midnight. When he came to town earlier that day, he had tied his horse to the support of a large signboard at the top of the Mill Hill near what is now 12th and Wyoming Avenue about three blocks from the location of Ash's cabin.<sup>17</sup>

After leaving town that night, Lampitt rode down off the two benches between Cody and the river, his horse thumped across the wooden bridge and climbed the matching hills north of the river. He then rode northeast across the Hargrave Bench to the Hargrave's Ranch on Cottonwood Creek, a distance of four miles from Cody. A well-known trail ran from Cottonwood Creek on to Eagle Nest and Powell, at that time, unimpeded by any fences.<sup>18</sup> Many people chose that route to Powell and it is possible that Lampitt rode on to his wagon and sheep at Eagle Nest, even though it would have been a long, cold and risky ride. He most likely stopped at

<sup>15</sup> His grave lay neglected and mostly forgotten until 1925 when a nephew had the body removed to Storm Lake, Iowa. His good friend, C. W. Dibble, was appointed special administrator of the estate, estimated to be about \$2000. His personal items were meticulously itemized, including some 37 books, cribbage board, clothing, down to how many of handkerchiefs were white and how many were blue. He had kept some of his property at Newton's Trail Creek Ranch, including a phonograph and records, field glasses, a buggy, a watch, and various other items including the diamond engagement ring he planned to give to Dot at the party planned for December 12. During the author's telephone interview with Jeanne Newton Kuiper, when asked if she knew what had happened to the engagement ring, she replied, "I'm wearing it on my finger right now." Jeanne is Dorothy's daughter. On November 12, 1910, the court appointed Victor Lantry administrator of the Estate and Dibble turned over the legal matters to him. On May 28, 1912, V. G. Lantry died and on January 7, 1914, Dorothy Newton was appointed to succeed Lantry. On April 18, 1915, Dorothy married George Bonaparte Efner. On October 11, 1915, the Ash estate was finally settled. Dorothy received \$25 as administratrix and \$144.51, all that remained of the Ash Estate. Legal bills had eaten up the rest of the approximately \$1700 in five years, including for some reason, bills for Victor Lantry's last illness. Dorothy gave birth to twins July 17, 1918, a boy and a girl, but only the girl, Jeanne, survived. George Efner died April 2, 1919, and Dorothy died July 23, 1919. Their child, Jeanne Efner was adopted by her grandfather, A. C. Newton, and called Jeanne Newton.

<sup>16</sup> William L. Simpson "read for the law" under Douglas Preston of Lander and passed the State Bar examination. He moved his family to Cody in 1907 and lived in the red brick house at the northwest end of Bleistein Avenue. C. A. Zaring graduated from the University of Indiana Law School in 1896 and came west to Basin in 1901. Park County Historical Archives.

<sup>17</sup> Caroline Lockhart described the murderer in her story as wearing a mackinaw coat and a cap with ear flaps, and carrying a coil of rope, axe, and gun in a gunny sack. Lockhart, 87.

<sup>18</sup> Louis Moore, interview by author, March 1, 2002

Hargrave's ranch and then settled into his herding routine the next day.

Big Horn County Sheriff Felix Alston sent Deputy Sheriff Rice Hutsonpillar and Town Marshal Tom Kane after Lampitt on Saturday morning. They arrested him at Eagle Nest as he was coming back from Sand Coulee. When one of the officers told Lampitt, "You are under arrest," Lampitt asked, "What for?" The officer answered, "You can guess can't you?" He did not answer. The officers brought Lampitt to Cody and jailed him.

Proving the owner of the set gun would provide key evidence. It was a cheap, single-barrel shotgun with rubber stock pistol grip. Many witnesses remembered that young Willard Rucker had been given the gun by his father, W. W. Rucker of "The Wonder Store." The Rucker family had moved to Portland, Oregon, but before leaving Wyoming, had sold off much of their household and personal effects, including the gun. No one but Rucker knew to whom he sold the gun, but when Sheriff Alston traveled to Portland to question him, the man refused to talk.

As Lucille Patrick later told the story in *Best Little Town by a Dam Site*, "After a week in jail, with rumors flying and talk of lynching prevalent, Lampitt's father arrived in town accompanied by his own lawyer, C. E. Lear."<sup>19</sup>

The preliminary hearing went forward before Sheriff Alston returned from Portland. Without solid evidence, the county attorney had no case. They released Lampitt to go back to herding Hargrave's sheep, much to the relief of Hargrave who had taken over the job himself while Lampitt was in jail.

Despite the evidence pointing to Lampitt as Ash's murderer, the man had a clean record. Many people couldn't believe he had set the gun and some testified that he was frugal, had a bank account, neither smoked or drank or used profane language.<sup>20</sup>

As years went by, the folk tales of Bert Lampitt faded.<sup>21</sup> How long Lampitt continued to herd sheep around Cody is not known.<sup>22</sup> It is clear that by 1918, he had changed careers and was working for the Ohio Oil Company. He worked in 1919 in the Kirby Oil field. Despite the distance, he returned to Cody often. At some point, he had become infatuated with a friendly waitress at the Standard, a short order restaurant. And this was to figure into the next criminal incident in Lampitt's life.

**A**t 1:30 a.m. May 7, 1921, a loud detonation and terrific explosion destroyed the Ohio Oil Camp bunkhouse at Grass Creek, Wyoming. The fairly new bunkhouse consisted of six small single apartments. Harry Foight occupied apartment #1, and his friend W. C. Seaton had apartment #2. J. A. Crandle, Charles Wilcox and Edward Schroeder occupied 3, 4, and 5. Apartment #6 was unoccupied. Explosives had been placed directly beneath the room occupied by Harry Foight and his dog. The detonation tore off the dog's head and legs and disintegrated Foight's body. The blast also killed and dismembered Seaton who had been in his apartment next door. The three other men, Crandle, Wilcox and Schroeder, were badly injured. Knocked unconscious by the blast, the men's bodies were dropped to earth 100 feet from where the bunkhouse stood.<sup>23</sup>

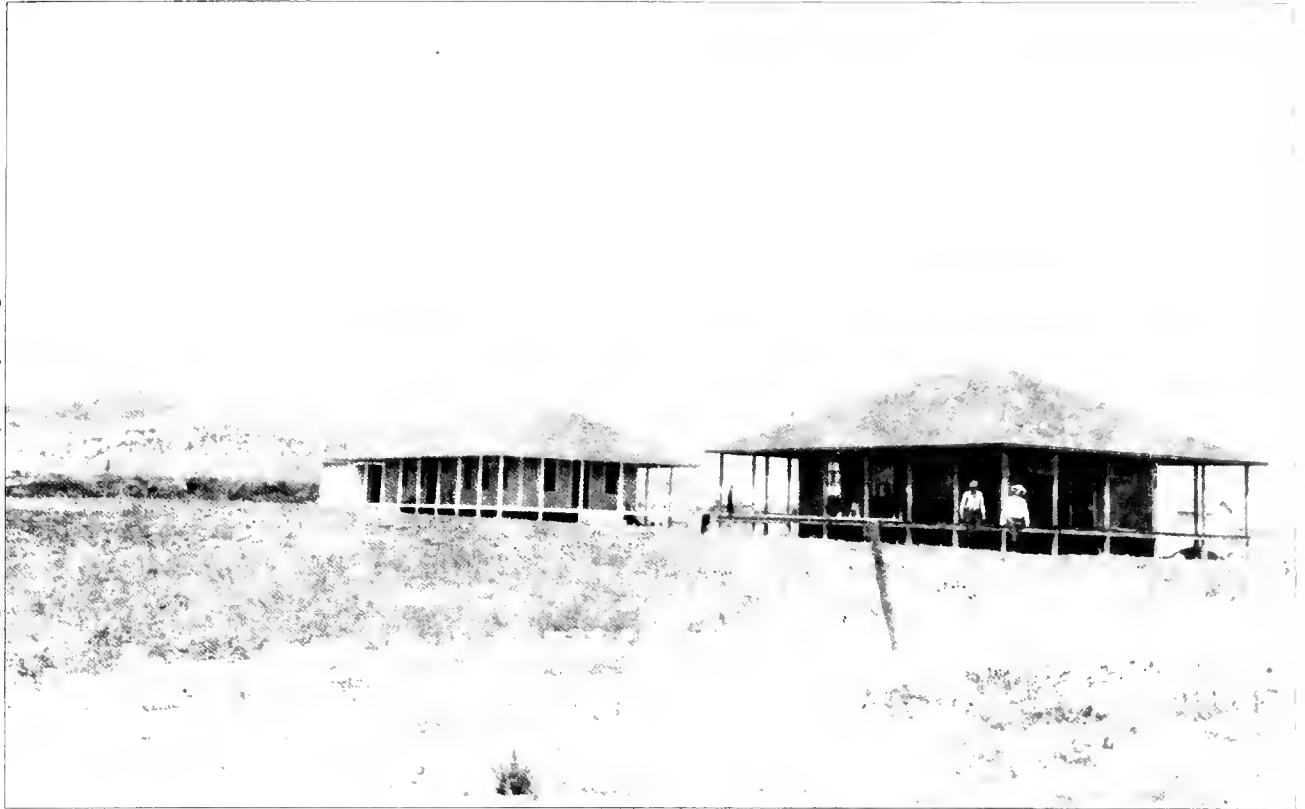
<sup>19</sup> Lucille Nichols Patrick, *Best Little Town by a Dam Site* (Cheyenne: Flintlock Publishing Co., 1968), 259.

<sup>20</sup> This was not the belief of author Caroline Lockhart who used the mechanism of the set gun in her novel, *The Fighting Shepherdess*, 89. Nowadays Lampitt probably would have been convicted by using "behavioral profiling" and "signature analysis," methods investigators use for "getting into the mind of offenders." Lampitt's responses would now classify him as "emotionally flat", and he would be labeled a "stalker." Caroline Lockhart called him "mentally subnormal." For explanation of these methods, see John Douglas and Mark Olshaker, *Mind Hunter*, (New York: Lisa Drew Pocket Books, 1995), 259. Lockhart also recalled in her newspaper in 1921, that during the Ash murder case Torn Kane, Cody's Town Marshal, worked hard to prove the ownership of the cheap, single-barrel shotgun, but was unsuccessful. In frustration Kane "threw down his badge on the table before Mayor Frank Houx and resigned." In her fictional story of the murder of Mormon Joe in *The Fighting Shepherdess*, Mayor Tin Horn Frank calls Sheriff Lingle off the case because he said continuing to speak of it would hurt the town's image. Potential settlers would be afraid to come. Lockhart, 150.

<sup>21</sup> One year after the murder, C. W. Dibble wrote a memorial piece published in the *Park County Enterprise*. It was directed "To Honest People" and brought out the fact the crime had gone unpunished. *Enterprise*, December 7, 1910. For a later reference to the case, see *Cody Enterprise*, May 11, 1921.

<sup>22</sup> Louie Moore of Cody, who turned 90 in 2002, recalled a story handed down from his parents. Mrs. Charles (Neva) Stump had parked her car on Main Street and was standing on the sidewalk holding her arm when Bert Lampitt came along. He asked, "What's the trouble?" Neva answered, "This damn Ford broke my arm." These cars were started by using a front end crank, and had a terrible kick, the crank had flipped back striking her arm. Instead of helping her get to a doctor Lampitt was going to teach the Ford a lesson. He grabbed the crank and actually lifted the front end of the Ford off the street. Louie said, "Lampitt was exceedingly heavy built." Moore interview.

<sup>23</sup> John C. Thompson, in his "In Old Wyoming" column, in an undated *Wyoming State Tribune*, wrote, "Lampitt, unsociable of disposition and shunned because of evil reputation, lived alone in a little shack nearby." Actually, the shack was nearly a mile from town.



*Ohio Oil Company camp, Grass Creek, Wyoming, c. 1922*

Just as in the Ash murder 12 years earlier, the motive apparently involved a love triangle. Harry Foight, who had died in the explosion, was one of the three. He was a World War I veteran who had been working as a tool dresser at the Grass Creek field, working for driller George McGrady of Ohio Oil.<sup>24</sup>

The second person in this triangle was Mrs. Grace Lee, waitress in the cookhouse and caretaker of the bunkhouse. It was well-known that Grace Lee preferred Foight over the many other admiring unattached males in camp. All stepped aside except for one—Bert Lampitt, who had quit sheepherding and gone into oil field work.

Grace Lee had known Lampitt from the time she worked as a waitress in the Standard Restaurant in Cody. She admitted in the preliminary hearing that she had had a platonic friendship with Lampitt. The two had gone to Yellowstone Park on one occasion, but the friendship waned when Lampitt started showing an ugly streak. Grace complained to her sweetheart. Lampitt and Foight exchanged words and threats. In the verbal exchange, Foight accused Lampitt of the Ash murder. Lampitt replied, "They didn't get me for it."

After the verbal encounter, Lampitt's anger continued to fester. He went out to the oil well where McGrady and Foight were working. According to Elizabeth Nuhn, McGrady's daughter: "Bert Lampitt came to the drill-

ing rig in the afternoon and quarreled with Harry Foight. My dad said to Lampitt, 'Bert, this is no place to fight. We are on company time. Solve your problems after hours.'"<sup>25</sup>

That night, explosives placed directly beneath Foight's apartment exploded. The 1:30 a.m., blast brought every uninjured resident of the camp to the spot—except Lampitt. Someone called the Hot Springs County Sheriff George W. Holdridge and county coroner Peter H. Knight in Thermopolis. Rain had fallen most of the night and the 40 miles of muddy roads slowed their travel.

Because Lampitt was conspicuously absent from the crowd, the Sheriff went to Lampitt's shack, nearly a mile from town, and knocked. Lampitt opened the door rubbing his sleepy eyes. The coroner led him to the crime scene where he was shown the dismembered bodies. "Here are the men you killed last night," the coroner told him, but Lampitt showed no interest or emotion. After a preliminary investigation, Lampitt was arrested and jailed.

The evidence was circumstantial, but seemed conclusive. The tire tracks at the crime scene were the same as those made by Lampitt's car and footprints

<sup>24</sup> Elizabeth McGrady Nuhn, "Memories of an Oil Field," *Annals of Wyoming* 58 (Spring 1986), 3.4.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*





mony is to be believed, he had been hanging around his old herding territory.

The prosecutor asked Lampitt point blank in the trial, "Did you cause the explosion on May 7?"

Lampitt answered, "No." Nonetheless, the circumstantial evidence continued to grow.

Caroline Lockhart, writing in the *Cody Enterprise*, reported: "When Bert Lampitt testified, he proved he was a man of iron nerve."<sup>28</sup> She described him as "changing from a burley, sandy haired youth to a haggard middle-aged man." Another comment, "...for twelve years this fiend has been at large..." and further descriptions included, "mentally subnormal" and of "morose and sullen nature." The consensus of opinion of him in Grass Creek agreed, "He was not of the disposition to make many friends, was well known, and although considered eccentric was a man of industrious habits." Although apartment #6 was vacant in the men's bunkhouse, Bert preferred to live alone in his shack away from the town.

The case went to the jury at 5:30 p.m., on February 10, 1922, and the jury returned with the verdict at 9:25 p.m. Lampitt had already returned to his cell and had gone to sleep. He was summoned, dressed, and appeared in the courtroom. Lockhart wrote, "He looked sleepy." He retained his coolness and seemed to have no concern for his fate. Judge Metz read the jury's verdict. The jury found him guilty of first degree murder in the deaths of Foight and Seaton.

The next day Bert Lampitt appeared before Judge Metz for sentencing. The judge gave him life imprisonment with hard labor and fined him \$900 and court costs.

After the sentence was announced, Judge Metz asked, "Have you anything to say?" Lampitt answered, "No sir, your honor." He was delivered to Rawlins on Friday, February 18, 1922.<sup>29</sup>

**B**ert Lampitt remained in prison for 25 years for the brutal, premeditated murders. In 1947, when he was 63 years old, Bert Lampitt was released from prison.<sup>30</sup> He left the Wyoming State Penitentiary and drove north to Montana and obscurity.

<sup>28</sup> Lockhart owned the *Cody Enterprise* in 1922. She had a great interest in the trial and covered it in detail.

<sup>29</sup> Most of Lampitt's prison records are, unfortunately, restricted. The only records available were front and side photograph of prisoner 3303, clean shaven showing heavy set, stolid, expressionless face, slightly bulging eyes and heavy head of hair. Brief statistics supplied information on "Lampitt, Albert, No. 3303. Crime: First Degree Murder; Age: 38; Height: 5 ft. 10 3/4 in.; Weight: 173 1/2. Build: Large; Hair: Lt. Red, Sandy; Eyes: Yellowish Slate; Complexion: Florid; Born: Dec. 15, 1883, Nebraska; Occupation: Auto Mechanic; Received from Big Horn County; Sentenced Feb-11-1922-Life." The records are held in the State Penitentiary prisoner files in the Wyoming State Archives, State Parks and Cultural Resources Department, Cheyenne.

<sup>30</sup> In his report to the Secretary of the State Board of Charities and Reform, the warden wrote: "I have to report as follows as to Convict LAMPITT, ALBERT, No. 3303 discharged May 5, 1947, by reason of Expiration of sentence while at prison." Typed in middle of page: "Using his own automobile for transportation he stated that he was going up into Montana. "Convicts Discharged or Removed - State Penitentiary, Rawlins," record held in the Wyoming State Archives, Cheyenne.

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# Traces of George Harper:



Wyoming  
State  
Archives

George Harper



Author's photo

Site of George Harper's homestead, Carbon County

## Laramie Plains Rancher

By Richard Walle

### Discovery and Obsession

*On a clear blue-sky morning in the Medicine Bow Mountains, I was in the woods, on a flat spot, in a clearing, next to a creek, just two days before the 100th anniversary of the man's death, whose life had become my obsession. According to a map from the early 1900's at least two structures once stood here, but shards of glass, smashed and rusted tin cans, rifle cartridges, and odd pieces of metal scattered on the ground were all that remained. I had come to this place after seeing it labeled on a General Land office map from the 1870's: Harpers Mill, it read. Harper? Who was Harper?*

*I was born at least two centuries too late. I should have been born during the Age of Discovery, but I compensate for my tardy birth by perusing historic maps and reading pioneer journals. It makes me feel like an explorer of old, but such exploring loses meaning unless one goes out to find those places that begin as names in diaries or on maps. That sense of exploration took me to Harper's Mill, and after finding the spot, it became imperative that I discover Harper's story.*

*I had no clue where to begin my quest for Harper until by luck I found a map that not only had Harper's Mill on it, but also Harper's Ranch. I*

*searched land ownership records at the county courthouse under the township and range of the ranch. George Harper (figure 1) was the first name entered at the top of the first page. Several weeks later, I found Wyoming Place Names by Mae Urbanek, on a bookshelf at the Carbon County Museum in Rawlins.<sup>1</sup> I turned to the index and scanned the listings under the letter "H": "Harper - a station house named for George Harper stockman and mayor of Laramie 1895."*

*I reasoned that if Mr. Harper was the mayor of Laramie, he was likely buried there. I was correct; the cemetery records showed that George Harper died on June 24, 1897, and was buried in Laramie's Greenhill Cemetery on June 28.<sup>2</sup> The date of his death, naturally, led me to his obituary, which was quite lengthy, a statement of his position in the Laramie community. Subsequently, I consulted other sources--books, maps and information from other researchers such as the diligent Elnora Frye and the helpful people from St. Matthews Episcopal Church, the Wyoming State Archives, the American Heritage Center at UW, and the Bureau of Land Management in Cheyenne. What follows are my findings.*

In the five years since the research began, I found a line here and there, just traces of George Harper. He was born in Yorkshire, England, on March 10, 1831, and married Elizabeth Leaman in 1852.<sup>3</sup> The couple had five children, but only three are identified in the record. Perhaps the other two children died as infants in England. The three living children were: Ann Aliee (who later married Robert Marsh, another prominent rancher on the Laramie Plains) who was born in 1853; Edward, born in 1855; and Ellen, born in 1858.<sup>4</sup> Because Harper was able to study medicine, becoming a physician and surgeon, it is likely that his family was financially well off.<sup>5</sup>

George Harper came to the United States in 1859 as a physician on a ship called the *Bellwood*.<sup>6</sup> Elizabeth and the children, however, stayed in England until 1863 when they moved to New York.<sup>7</sup> George began practicing medicine in Brooklyn after his arrival in the United States, but when the Civil War started, he enlisted in 1861 in the Union Army.<sup>8</sup> Harper initially was a member of the First Long Island Volunteers, in Company E under the command of Henry Ward Beecher. This company eventually became part of the 27th Army of the Potomac. Harper saw a great deal of battlefield action. His obituary provides the best narrative of this phase in his life:

Mr. Harper was wounded six times during the war, and was wounded three times at the battle of Fair Oaks, Virginia, which was fought on the 31st of May, 1862, and where 6,000 men on each side lost their lives. He was then with McClellan's corps. Mr. Harper was on one of the flanks there which was repeatedly assailed and was one of the fighters who prevented it being turned by the enemy and contributed much to the success of the government arms in that memorable engagement, of which McClellan is said to not have made the most. After first being wounded there, he was taken to the rear and cared for and again went to the front and was wounded in the back. He was this time taken to the rear and placed in a wood shed, an improvised hospital, with little hope that he would live. For two years after the war, he was a practical invalid from his wounds, which failed to heal and continued to discharge pieces of his canteen and clothing. Mr. Harper was all through the hard fought battles of the wilderness, and was among Mead's forces at Gettysburg, where the swell tide of the confederacy beat against the impregnable bulwarks of the north, and where for three days the carnage resulted in a loss of more than 20,000 Union soldiers and more than the same number of confederates. During most of this fight, Mr. Harper was on the hill where is now the national cemetery, where a great monument and a magnificent statue

of Lincoln overlook one of the most peaceful and beautiful scenes today and can be found in all the battlefields of the war. He saw that magnificent charge, unsurpassed in military history, by Pickett's confederate division, when twenty thousand men marched forth as though they were on dress parade and centered on the union line, while hundreds of guns of the opposing armies belched forth death.<sup>9</sup>

At the end of the war, Harper was promoted to major and offered a regular army commission. He declined, and continued to practice medicine until moving west in 1868.

Harper and his young family lived briefly in Nebraska where he found work as a freight clerk with the Union Pacific Railroad.<sup>10</sup> This job likely led to his first job in Laramie as cashier in the Union Pacific freight house.<sup>11</sup> He arrived in Laramie in May 1868 with the first wave of passenger trains to travel the newest section of Union Pacific track.<sup>12</sup> Harper's wife and children arrived by November 1868, at the latest, because the entire Harper family, two adults and three children, was baptized into St. Matthews Episcopal Church in November 1868.<sup>13</sup> This family baptism implies the Harpers intended to stay in Laramie longer than they had in Nebraska.

In its early days, Laramie and the surrounding plains were filled with opportunity for those willing to work and invest. The railroad kept expanding, bringing new people and goods to the area. A lumber industry began in the town's surrounding forests, mining operations developed in the mountains, and the plains were recognized as some of the greatest grazing lands in the west. In this environment George Harper departed his role as soldier and doctor and began his life as an entrepreneur of the frontier.

On October 1, 1871, George and 14 other Laramie men formed the Vulcan Silver Mining Company of

<sup>1</sup> Mae Urbanek, *Wyoming Place Names* (Boulder: Johnson Publishing, 1967), 94.

<sup>2</sup> "Harper George," Green Hill Cemetery Records, Laramie.

<sup>3</sup> Harper biography, Coutant Collection, Folder 16, Box 2, Wyoming State Archives, State Parks and Cultural Resources Department, Cheyenne, Wyoming, hereafter cited as Coutant Collection.

<sup>4</sup> Coutant Collection.

<sup>5</sup> *Laramie Daily Boomerang*, June 25, 1897.

<sup>6</sup> *Laramie Daily Boomerang*, June 25, 1897.

<sup>7</sup> *Laramie Daily Boomerang*, July 10, 1897.

<sup>8</sup> *Laramie Daily Boomerang*, June 25, 1897.

<sup>9</sup> *Laramie Daily Boomerang*, June 29, 1897.

<sup>10</sup> Coutant Collection.

<sup>11</sup> Coutant Collection.

<sup>12</sup> *Laramie Republican Boomerang*, June 30, 1928.

<sup>13</sup> *Parish Register*, September 13, 1868-August 21, 1881, St. Matthews Cathedral, Laramie.

Laramie, which proposed mining and smelting in the Ferris Mining District of Carbon County, Wyoming Territory.<sup>14</sup> George Harper was designated treasurer.

Harper gave the Union Pacific four years of diligent work, then in May 1872, Harper and Harry Thomas, one of his mining partners, were "going into business raising stock and manufacturing lumber at Rock Creek, and quitting the freight business."<sup>15</sup> On July 17, 1872, Harper moved from Laramie "out to Rock Creek where his mill and ranch" were located.<sup>16</sup> The location of Harper's Ranch is described differently in the researched literature. Some sources refer to Rock Creek, some state he lived near Lookout.<sup>17</sup> A historic map from 1872 shows the ranch on Three Mile Creek. The latter is believed the true location.

The proximity of Harper's Ranch and Mill to the Overland Trail suggests Harper had a good sense of business and planning, as his ranch was a short ride north of the Overland Trail and his mill is roughly the same distance south of the well-known track, optimal positions for the transport of goods.

Harper was not only involved in the traditional industries of lumber and ranching, he was also willing to take a chance on new endeavors, such as wheat farming in the Laramie Basin. "We congratulate ourselves that we are going to get the wheat raising experiment thoroughly and fairly tried this season. Mr. Johnson is going to sow some up at Red Buttes; Mr. Harper over on Rock Creek."<sup>18</sup>

In 1876 the Harpers encountered some trouble from Native Americans. Though the details are unknown, the family apparently lost some property, likely livestock.<sup>19</sup> The Harpers and several others filed claims against the government for damages, but the cases did not go to court until January 1892. George Harper's original claim amounted to \$17,000, suggesting he possibly lost a great deal of stock and property. When the case finally reached the courts, however, Harper's claim was only \$9,000, and it was stated, in the *Daily Boomerang*, that he might only receive half that amount. Ultimately, Harper may have had to return whatever he received because a suit was

filed on August 29, 1894, as advised by the State Examiner, proclaimed that some money paid to those claiming damage to property was not authorized by law.<sup>20</sup>

In February 1879, Harper's abilities as a rancher and businessman received a vote of confidence from C. S.

<sup>14</sup> "Corporation Files," Wyoming Secretary of State, records held in the Wyoming State Archives.

<sup>15</sup> *Laramie Weekly Sentinel*, May 17, 1872.

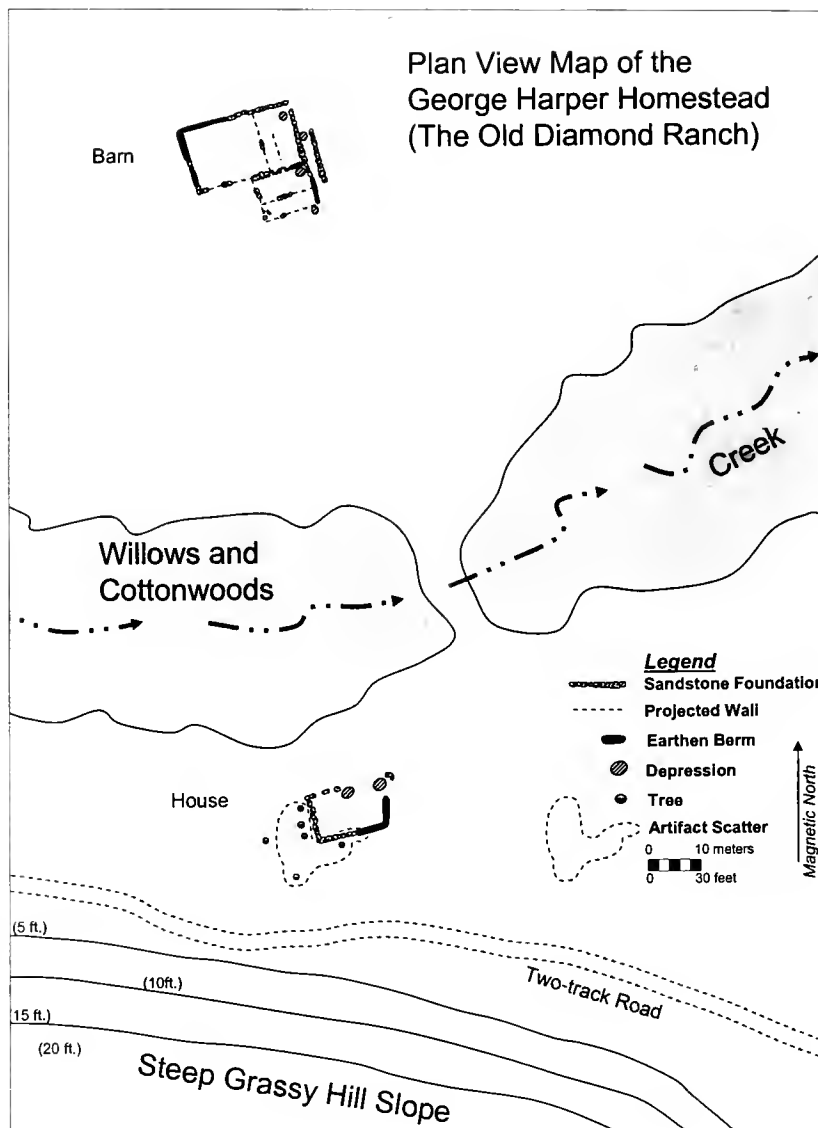
<sup>16</sup> *Laramie Weekly Sentinel*, July 17, 1872.

<sup>17</sup> The 1880 Wyoming Census Index lists the Harpers on Seven Mile Creek, but this is believed a census precinct rather than the location of his ranch. The ranch is also referenced in survey notes from 1872 though the surveyor mistakenly called it the "John" Harper Ranch. The reference to other locations, such as Lookout and Rock Creek, are a product of how people in a frontier environment view time and space, which was less precise in those years when the nation was wide open and young.

<sup>18</sup> *Laramie Weekly Sentinel*, February 14, 1877.

<sup>19</sup> *Laramie Daily Boomerang*, November 17, 1891.

<sup>20</sup> *Laramie Daily Boomerang*, August 29, 1894.



Morey and C. A. Sprague of the Chicago-based firm, Sprague, Warner, & Co. Together, the three created George Harper and Co., a "large scale" cattle firm that would operate for at least five years.<sup>21</sup> Morey reportedly searched the western United States for five years to find the best stock raising investment possible; his search brought him to the Laramie Plains. Harper himself stated the company intended to go East for the best blooded bulls, but in April 1879, Harper ventured to southern Colorado and purchased 2,700 head of the "finest blooded" cattle.<sup>22</sup> Whether this cattle included bulls and the plans to go East fell through, or if the Colorado purchase made up the bulk of the herd, minus the bulls, is unclear.



General location of Harper's ranch

Confusion exists as to George Harper's role as founder and owner of the "old" Diamond Ranch. In the book, *Wyoming's Pioneer Ranches*, a list of brands shows a diamond with an "H" inside for George Harper (registered 6-29-1872) and an open diamond for George Harper and Co. (registered in 1880). The book also states that a man named Ed Harper settled the "old" Diamond Ranch on Three Mile Creek, sold out to Marsh and Cooper before 1882, but continued to manage the ranch for the new owners.<sup>23</sup> Giving Ed Harper credit for settling the ranch, however, is an error. The diamond brands were registered to George Harper, so it is more likely George settled the "old" Diamond Ranch.<sup>24</sup> Ed Harper, George's son, made an attempt at settling homestead No. 337, which amounted to 160 acres in the McFadden area, but died on March 3, 1888, apparently before the patent was granted.<sup>25</sup>

George Harper purchased other property that year. On May 29, 1888, he bought lots 5, 6, and 7 of Block 6 in the town of Rock Creek from Mary Garrett. The sum of the purchase was five dollars; the reason for the purchase is unknown.<sup>26</sup>

George Harper had been through several changes in his life and it changed again after his daughter Ellen died from heart disease on January 29, 1887, and his son Edward died of Bright's disease thirteen months later. According to his obituary, George Harper stopped ranching approximately 1889 and moved back to Laramie.<sup>27</sup> Perhaps the loss of two children in two years left Harper with little interest in ranching, and town life was a comforting option.

When the Harpers came back to Laramie, they lived at 503 University.<sup>28</sup> He began working for Dunbar Mercantile and Banking approximately 1889 or 1890, al-

<sup>21</sup> *Laramie Weekly Sentinel*, February 21, 1879.

<sup>22</sup> *Laramie Weekly Sentinel*, February 21, 1879.

<sup>23</sup> Robert Bums, A. S. Gillespie and W. G. Richardson, *Wyoming's Pioneer Ranches* (Laramie: Top-of-the-World Press, 1955), 418.

<sup>24</sup> This ranch should not be confused with the Diamond Ranch Company on Rock Creek, which operated in the early 1900's or the Diamond Cattle Company, which apparently rose from the old 7L ranch owned by Marsh and Cooper. See Bums, 418. The order of events described here are supported by a biographical sketch in the Wilkerson Biographies, Wyoming State Archives, which says George Harper began managing the Marsh and Cooper ranch in 1881.

<sup>25</sup> The *Laramie Weekly Sentinel* records that George Harper--not Edward--filed a "notice of intention final proof of claim" on August 25, 1888. The result of this attempt to claim Edward's old homestead is not clear, but according to the BLM patentee database, the elder Harper's only patent was an 1885 claim on 160 acres surrounding his original ranch. See, United States of America, Homestead Certificate no. 168. If he had been successful in claiming Edward's land, it should be in the database. There is no Ed Harper in the BLM database for Wyoming patentees.

<sup>26</sup> Book II, Deed Record, Albany County, Clerk's Office, Laramie.

<sup>27</sup> *Laramie Daily Boomerang*, June 29, 1897.

<sup>28</sup> A search of Title Abstracts at the Albany County courthouse showed Robert Marsh owned several lots in the vicinity of 5th and University Streets. The records also show that Edward Harper bought lots 7 and 8 of block 162 from Marsh in 1883. Six years later, in 1889, the year following Edward's death, the district judge awarded these same lots to Elizabeth I. Harper, Edward's mother, George's wife. This is about the same time George Harper gave up ranching, according to his obituary. There is other evidence suggesting the Harpers resided in this area of town. The *Directory of Cheyenne and Laramie Wyo. Territory 1888-89*, compiled by the Wyoming Publishing Co., lists Mrs. George Harper as being at Fifth and University (p. 24). Her obituary says she died at "her home on Fifth Street." *Laramie Daily Boomerang*, July 10, 1897. George Harper's cemetery record gives the same location, Fifth and University, for his place of death. A newspaper article from 1928 stated that Alice the eldest child moved with her family to 5th and University after her husband, Robert Marsh, died in 1893. *Laramie Republican Boomerang*, June 30, 1928.

though his exact position with the firm is not known.<sup>29</sup> He started selling his ranching properties. Frank Harrison bought Harper's 160 acres on Three Mile Creek in June 1890.<sup>30</sup> Three years later, he purchased the rights to the "diamond" brand once used by George Harper and Company.<sup>31</sup>

Throughout the early 1890s, the Harpers were very active socially and assumed a stronger role as grandparents.<sup>32</sup> The Harpers likely cared for Ellen's child, who was only six months at the time of her mother's death, while the father, John Guenster returned to his family in New York and got settled:

George Harper, wife and baby and Master George Marsh leave for Jamestown, New York, in the morning to visit John Guenster and family who were former residents of this city. They will be absent about four months.<sup>33</sup>

After this visit to the East, the elder Harpers made at least two more trips to New York in 1892 and 93, staying for the entire summer on both occasions.<sup>34</sup>

Although Harper was no longer involved in large cattle operations, his organizing and managing talents were still in demand. In 1895, George Harper was elected mayor of Laramie as a Republican and subsequently served as Deputy County Clerk.<sup>35</sup> On January 24, 1896, Harper became a trustee of an organization called the "Mining Exchange"—the Laramie Mining and Stock Exchange—an organization of the area's best businessmen dedicated to the "development of the mineral and other natural resources of southern Wyoming."<sup>36</sup>

Harper was 66 years old and he was a busy man in 1897. That summer, however, he suffered a stroke on June 22. He was "comatose" for two days before he died on June 24.<sup>37</sup> According to news accounts, his wife Elizabeth Harper "expressed hope that they (she and George) would not be long parted." The day after George Harper was buried, his wife contracted bronchitis. The press reported that the woman decided this illness would be the end of her and "manifest a desire to die at the same hour" as Harper. She missed that precise moment by only 45 minutes; she was 67 years old.<sup>38</sup>

George and Elizabeth Harper and their children are buried at Green Hill Cemetery in Laramie.

### *Another Visit*

*On a clear, blue-sky Wyoming morning with early season snow on the highest peaks, I drove up the interstate. This was a much anticipated day; I finally received permission to visit where I believed*

*George Harper's homestead once stood. While doing my research, I pondered this opportunity and wondered what I might find. My obsessive side even planned a pedestrian access route to the suspected location should my curiosity force me to trespass. I discovered, however, that if one is respectful and takes time to call the appropriate persons, closed doors can open wide. The land owner offered to take me to the property; and the lessee admitted knowing of an old foundation on the land, then spun a great story about multitudes of cattle dying in the blizzard of 1886 such that one could walk from the old homestead for two miles on frozen stock and not touch the ground!*

*The homestead was right were the old maps and the lessee said it would be. On the flood plain of a creek washing out of the Medicine Bows with high grassy bluffs on each side, I found two foundations made of unshaped but roughly tabular sandstone: one representing a habitation and the other an out building, likely a barn. The habitation consisted of one complete wall, a partial wall, an isolated corner, an earthen berm and two depressions. Together the sandstone and earthen berms formed a rectangle, 60 feet east-west by 25 feet north-south, with no visible interior walls. Lying on the earthen berm was a section of fence or a gate made from narrow diameter logs and limbs. The wood was severely deteriorated but was held together by some fairly recent looking wire and bolts. River cobbles and pieces of quartz protrude from the berm and I wondered if the mounded earth and gate were from a more recent use of the area, perhaps as a corral. Livestock had definitely been there because in bare patches around the foundation's southeast corner were numerous dime-sized fragments of purple glass manu-*

<sup>29</sup> *Laramie Daily Boomerang*, June 25, 1897.

<sup>30</sup> Book R. Carbon County Deed Index, 213. Carbon County Clerk's office, Rawlins.

<sup>31</sup> Burns, 418.

<sup>32</sup> Numerous indexed entries in the *Laramie Daily Boomerang*, 1890-1893, indicate they frequently attended local social events and entertained visitors as well.

<sup>33</sup> *Laramie Daily Boomerang*, May 2, 1891.

<sup>34</sup> *Laramie Daily Boomerang*, May 18, 1892; June 3, 1893.

<sup>35</sup> *Laramie Daily Boomerang*, March 29, 1895; June 25, 1895.

<sup>36</sup> *Laramie Daily Boomerang*, January 24, 1896; Laramie Mining and Stock Exchange, *Albany County, Wyoming Mineral Resources* (Laramie: Republican Book and Job Printing, 1896), copy held in the collections of the American Heritage Center, UW.

<sup>37</sup> *Laramie Daily Boomerang*, June 25, 1897.

<sup>38</sup> *Laramie Daily Boomerang*, July 10, 1897.

factured between 1880 and 1917. One glass shard had "QUART" embossed on it.

Two different types of ceramic, one with a porous white past and one with yellow paste. Those with white past were both rim sherds, one with the curvature of a plate and one with the curvature of a cup. The yellow paste fragments were merely body sherds. There were 29 pieces of plate glass, 2mm thick; a first rib - from a juvenile bovine showing chop marks near the top end. Two fragments of clear glass embossed with "sure"; a crockery rim; 6 large, severely pitted and rusted nails with square shanks but lopsided, possibly hand-wrought heads; numerous small pieces of coal and cinder; the top (proximal) end of a bovine radius, also chopped; and a leg bone (femur) from an small, unidentified animal.

The barn foundation, north of the house and across the creek about 300 feet, was another arrangement of sandstone, earthen berms, and shallow depressions. These elements, however, formed an L-shaped floor plan and comprised at least 4 internal divisions (rooms). Some "rooms" were possibly open livestock stalls. The long segment of the structure's L-shaped floor plan was roughly 72 ft. long and 40 feet wide. The short part of the "L" was 40 feet east-west and 30 feet north-south. The only material items at the barn were a piece of plate glass and three metal teeth from a hay cutter, rusted and pitted like the square nails. Down stream a couple hundred feet, I discovered part of a cast iron wood burning stove, also weathered and pitted.

The artifacts I found may not seem like much to some, but I thought it was spectacular. I like history with a bit of imagination. What's the point of researching a person if one does not take the time to walk where they walked and touch what they touched; it was great to stand within that sandstone foundation and see the Harpers gathered around a table and a kerosene lamp. I could extend this imagining to Laramie for after doing this research, I see past the town's automobiles and modern buildings, and I recognize the houses and buildings contemporary with George Harper's life. I see the remains of Alice Harper Marsh's home and the grotesque

cinder block additions now attached to each end. There are the homes of Simon Durlacher, Edward Iverson, and Ora Haley. I envision the Laramie Club, Old Main standing alone on the plains, and the wide dirt streets of Laramie City. Historic research has heightened my interest and appreciation for history and historic preservation.

There is little doubt that George Harper was one of the first ranchers and residents of the Laramie Plains.<sup>39</sup> He was in Laramie in 1868; his Diamond H brand was one of the first registered in the county.<sup>40</sup> George Harper helped bring large-scale ranching to the Laramie Plains and he was very respected. He was one of the "kindest-hearted old gentlemen" as well as being a man of "active intelligence" and one of the "most competent men in the ranching industry."<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup> He was included in the Wilkerson Biographies, described by Hubert Howe Bancroft. *History of Nevada, Colorado, Wyoming 1540-1888*. XXV. (San Francisco: The History Company, 1890), as one of the county's "earliest settlers," and included in a paper by C. W. Bramel titled, "Laramie's Old Timers--The Pioneers Who Founded the City of Laramie," *Laramie Daily Boomerang*, December 19, 1889.

<sup>40</sup> Burns, 418.

<sup>41</sup> *Laramie Daily Boomerang*, June 23, 1897. Coutant Collection.

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Richard Walle came to Wyoming 19 years ago with "a cardboard box full of clothes and a cotton sleeping bag." He has been in the contract archaeology profession for that entire period of 19 years, working not only in Wyoming, but in North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Nevada, Arizona, and New Mexico. He is presently an archaeologist for the U. S. Forest Service and a graduate student in the Department of Anthropology, University of Wyoming.

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# Wyoming's Estelle Reel:

*The First Woman Elected to a Statewide Office in America*

*By Sarah R. Bohl*



Marceau Photographer, New York.  
Wyoming State Archives

*Toward the end of her successful term as Laramie County Superintendent of Schools, Estelle Reel traveled to Casper to attend the Wyoming Republican Party caucus. What transpired there was reported differently in various papers, but when all was said and done, Reel had accepted the party nomination as the Republican candidate for State Superintendent of Public Instruction for the election of 1894.*



Reel's campaign was hard-fought, but it paid off when Reel ended up receiving the largest number of votes a candidate in the state had ever seen. This was not the only notable result of the election, for upon winning Reel became the first woman in the United States to hold a statewide office. Though she did not know it at the time, the results of this election would put Reel on the fast track in the political arena.<sup>1</sup>

Themes that would become recurrent in both Reel's private and public life began to develop during this time, such as Reel's role as a beacon for the woman's suffrage movement and her personal feelings of exhaustion and depression. However, despite the prejudice and other distractions Reel faced, she proved that a woman was not merely capable of juggling the multiple roles that came with holding public office, but also could do it with skill and success.

Though Reel would eventually receive the largest vote in state history in the election of 1894, her nomination for State Superintendent almost never happened. At the Republican caucus in Casper, both Reel and Theresa Jenkins, another county superintendent, were being considered as nominees for State Superintendent. The party, which was trying to avoid a heavy southeastern bias, attempted to spread the nominees throughout the state. Knowing this, Laramie County resolved to heavily lobby two positions, leaving the rest to fend for themselves. After reviewing the slate, the county decided their strongest candidates were those for auditor and treasurer, so Reel was left with few supporters.

As newspapers reported it, Reel decided to circumvent the situation by seeking support elsewhere to break the slate and push through her nomination. Whatever the inside politics actually were, Reel ended up as a nominee from Uinta County, even though she was from Cheyenne. The newspapers did not mention it, but Reel's brother Heck owned a large ranch in Uinta County; whether this was significant or not is questionable since Heck was strong Democrat. Regardless of how these events actually unfolded, the fact that Reel thus wheedled her way into the her nomination angered many people, and subverted the party goal of avoiding a heavy southeastern bias.<sup>2</sup>

## Campaign

Despite the controversy surrounding her nomination, Reel was determined to prove she was the right candidate for the job. Often described as having boundless energy and enthusiasm, Reel took immediately to the campaign trail against her opponents, Democrat A.J.

Matthews and Populist Sarah Rollman. As a candidate for a statewide position, Reel was determined to visit all corners of the state despite the hardships that this incurred. This vigorous campaign would eventually pay off, though not for the reasons some newspapers would later report.

Soon after her victory at the polls, Reel wrote a newspaper article titled "Campaign Impressions." In it, Reel recounted the vast distances she covered in her campaign in traveling to all corners of the state, both "settled and unsettled." As she stated, this was all done by railroad, stagecoach, and ranch wagon, and even by horseback.<sup>3</sup> At one point Reel even descended into a mineshaft in Rock Springs to campaign among the miners, an intelligent move that garnered her many votes in her opponent Matthews' hometown. One newspaper reported that Reel "stumped the state twice," once riding 150 miles in a stagecoach to reach a small town. The article pointed out the peculiarities of electioneering in Wyo-

<sup>1</sup>Even though she was the first woman in America to be elected to a statewide office, Reel's life and career have received relatively little scholarly attention. This article is extracted from a monograph-length biography of Reel, in preparation. Except for biographical sketches in contemporary biographical compilations, her three years as State Superintendent of Public Instruction has been mostly ignored. See *Progressive Men of the State of Wyoming* (Chicago: A. W. Bowen and Co., 1903); Cora M. Beach, *Women of Wyoming*, I (Casper: S.E. Boyer and Company, 1927). Her career in the federal service is the subject of K. Tsianina Lomawaima, "Estelle Reel, Superintendent of Indian Schools, 1898-1910: Politics, Curriculum, and Land," *Journal of American Indian Education*, 35 (May 1996): 5-32. The main sources for this article on her Wyoming career are from the Wyoming State Department of Education Letterpress Volumes, held in Collection #579, Box 1, Wyoming State Archives; and Reel's personal papers held in the Estelle Reel Meyer Collection, H60-110, Wyoming State Archives, State Parks and Cultural Resources Department, Cheyenne. Also of value was the Estelle Reel Administrative File, H54-91, also held in the Wyoming State Archives.

<sup>2</sup>Scrapbook, "Personal, Political, Misc., 1890-1896," 77, Estelle Reel Meyer Collection #H60-110, Box 3, Wyoming State Archives. Hereafter cited as Scrapbook, "Personal, Political, Misc."

<sup>3</sup>An article in the *New York Mail and Exchange* later questioned Reel about the peculiar riding gear she wore while campaigning among ranchers. Because of the barbed wire fences, Reel said a woman in an ordinary clothing would have it ripped to shreds in only a few days, so she had an entire riding habit made of leather to protect her from barbed wire. Scrapbook, "Personal Political Misc.," 24. For Wyoming politics during the period and Reel's role in it, see T. A. Larson, *History of Wyoming* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965); Lewis L. Gould, *Wyoming: A Political History, 1868-1896* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968). See also W. Lurrentine Jackson, W. Lurrentine, "The Wyoming Stock Growers' Association: Political Power in Wyoming Territory, 1873-1890," *Annals of Wyoming* 20 (January 1948), 61-84, and T. A. Larson, "Wyoming's Contribution to the Regional and National Women's Rights Movement," *Annals of Wyoming* 52 (Spring 1980), 2-15.

ming, noting that in every town, there was first a campaign address, which was always followed with a ball. The paper also claimed that Reel admitted her tactic was to seek out the Democrats and dance attentively with them all evening.<sup>4</sup>

Speaking as a true politician, Reel said that her "mission" to meet as many Wyomingites as possible taught her "what a wonderfully energetic and intelligent population Wyoming possesses and how certain it is that our state is bound to take the lead in wealth and good citizenship."<sup>5</sup> Reel was impressed by the natural resources of the state, especially oil. Also, as a strong proponent of arid land acts, she believed in the great agricultural potential of the state if only water could be brought to the land, specifically advocating irrigation bills in the state legislature.<sup>6</sup>

One of the most important obstacles that Reel had to overcome in her campaign was the idea that a woman could not fulfill the numerous duties of the office. Most people had little problem with a woman as state superintendent since women were already accepted as leaders in educational arenas; it was the other responsibilities the office entailed that concerned them.<sup>7</sup> The Superintendent of Public Instruction in Wyoming had many duties prescribed by the Constitution in addition to the

primary educational component. The holder of this office was one of five elected officers of the state, and as such was Secretary of the State Board of Land Commissioners and Secretary of the State Board of Charities and Reform. However, most men overlooked the fact that, despite all these responsibilities, the officeholder in actuality had very little power or influence. Though the state constitution directed the legislature to define the duties of the office, this was never done, in effect leaving the superintendent with much responsibility but little or no authority in any of these roles.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup>"A Charming Lady Office Holder." in Scrapbook, "Personal-Political, Misc., 1894-1896." 35.

<sup>5</sup>Scrapbook, "Personal, Political, Misc.," 209.

<sup>6</sup>Scrapbook, "Personal, Political, Misc.," 209.

<sup>7</sup>Of the twelve county superintendencies at the time, ten were held by women. In a letter written to Reverend W.H. Sweet in Salina, Kansas, Reel noted that even in the first election in which women were allowed to vote, two women were elected as county superintendents. Therefore, men were accustomed to women holding office; the real problem was the level at which the office was held. Letterpress Book 4, p. 413. State Department of Education, Box 1. Collection 579, Wyoming State Archives.

<sup>8</sup>Terrence D. Fromong, "The Development of Public Elementary and Secondary Education in Wyoming, 1869-1917." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. University of Wyoming, 1962. 158.



Richardson Collection, State Parks and Cultural Resources Dept.

*Heck Reel and the Old Alert Hose Company Mandolin Band. Heck Reel was Estelle's elder brother.*

Perhaps the role that caused the most opposition from voters was the position of Secretary of the State Board of Land Commissioners, a job for which many felt a woman was unsuited.<sup>9</sup> The fulfillment of the duties of this office were essential to the success of schools in the state since all funding was derived from land rentals or sales. Reel's campaign brochure assured the public that "Reel has shown more than ordinary interest in public questions, especially those affecting our public lands," and noted that she had been a delegate to the Trans-Mississippi Congress in San Francisco, where she spoke intelligently on the necessity of irrigation in the West as well as laws restricting speculators and reserving the land for homesteaders and ranchers. Reel also noted that, in her opinion, the best of the papers presented at the conference was delivered by a woman, Miss M.A. Hamm, an opinion she believed was shared by many since it was the only one printed in full in many newspapers. She also noted that she had heard some of the "ablest men in the West" discuss these issues and that, while they were complicated, any woman who studied them could understand them as well as any man.<sup>10</sup> Reel favored the Carey Land Act, saying that the state had potential for growth if it could only find the capital needed to get the immense water resources to the land that needed it, and get people to the state once it was irrigated.<sup>11</sup>

Many people were still not convinced. The editor of the Newcastle *Democrat* felt that putting someone with no experience in land transactions was irresponsible, saying that if a woman were elected to the office it "might as well remain vacant."<sup>12</sup>

Reel felt confident in her prior experience and ability to fill this office, yet convincing the public of this was her biggest challenge. Reel had never given a speech prior to her nomination other than at educational institutions, though the paper noted that her campaign speeches were "sharp, business-like little speeches."<sup>13</sup>

Reel's campaign speech was simple and brief: she said it would be "egotistical" of her to try to "enlighten" the crowd on issues of tariffs or free silver, two major political issues of the day, and instead she had come "to meet you in a social way and to get acquainted." She then went on to outline the duties of the office as set forth in the State Constitution and noted her experience as county superintendent.<sup>14</sup> In her speeches, promotional circulars, and newspaper advertisements, after outlining the responsibilities of the state superintendent, Reel repeatedly made the point that "any intelligent woman can perform these duties."<sup>15</sup> The speech's brevity and content indicates that Reel understood her audience and what she needed to do in order to gain votes.

Though equal suffrage had existed in Wyoming since territorial times, this did not mean that all the men (or women) of the state felt comfortable with electing a woman to public office. One of the greatest fears of both sexes was the masculinization of women, a transformation to which many felt suffragettes were particularly susceptible because of their desire to participate in the man's world of politics and public life. By first convincing her audience that she apolitical, and then presenting herself simply as making a social call, Reel's feminine identity was preserved; she appeared less threatening and above party politics to the men, and as a friend to the women.

Reel also was aided by numerous endorsements from newspapers and prominent Wyomingites. A campaign brochure for her statewide campaign noted that "she is particularly well fitted for the State Superintendency... [she] has always taken a deep interest in everything pertaining to education and has kept in the front rank in the advanced ideas upon educational matters of the present day..." The brochure also stated that Reel was "one of the most popular candidates in the State, having been elected County Superintendent by two of the finest majorities ever given." This brochure included an article by the Cheyenne *Tribune* praising Reel: "Her ability to successfully perform the duties of State Superintendent cannot be questioned. In administrative capacity, knowledge of educational matters, and attention to details, Miss Reel has shown superior abilities." The sitting state superintendent, S.T. Farwell, also commented favorably on Reel's abilities.

The state Republican committee insisted that "the office of Superintendent of Public Instruction is one which should be filled by a woman. Educational work is peculiarly that of a woman," since 95 percent of teachers and all but one of the county superintendents were women.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Pamphlet in Administrative File H54-91, Estelle Reel Meyer collection, Wyoming State Archives, hereafter Administrative File. This brochure includes an interview from the *Denver Republican* in which Reel notes that men feel she cannot perform these duties, going on to refute them by saying that she had heard many speeches concerning these issues at the Trans-Mississippi Congress, and while they were complicated she felt that any woman who studied them could understand them as well as a man.

<sup>10</sup> Pamphlet, Administrative File.

<sup>11</sup> Pamphlet, Administrative File.

<sup>12</sup> Scrapbook, "Personal, Political, Misc., 1890-1896," 92.

<sup>13</sup> "A Charming Lady Office Holder," in Scrapbook, "Personal-Political, Misc., 1894-1896," 35.

<sup>14</sup> Scrapbook, "Misc.," 369, Reel Collection, State Archives.

<sup>15</sup> Scrapbook, "Misc.," 369; Promotional circular, Administrative File.

<sup>16</sup> Pamphlet, Administrative File.

Reel received numerous endorsements from media around the state.<sup>17</sup> The Rock Springs *Miner* reported that Reel "is one of the best educated and most brilliant women in the state, equal to every duty that will be required of her in her official capacity and it behooves every man and woman in the state to vote for her."<sup>18</sup> The Saratoga *Sum* informed readers that Reel "can think and act for a dozen ordinary men. She would make a most admirable state superintendent."<sup>19</sup> The Sheridan *Journal* happily reported that "There is nothing of the 'strong mined [*sic*] cranky woman' about her. On the other hand she is intelligent, vivacious, and lady-like in deportment. She is a lady of refinement and eminently qualified to fill the position which she is seeking."<sup>20</sup>

Not all newspapers in the state supported Reel; the Laramie *Boomerang* criticized people who were putting so much emphasis on her charm and her dancing at political balls. The *Boomerang* reporter noted that "if the contest of votes is dancing vs. dignified, scholarly bearing, [Matthews] will certainly win when the leading educational office of Wyoming is concerned."<sup>21</sup> The Carbon County *Journal* mentioned Reel's position on the "land question" and her support of Carey's land bill, making its position clear by stating, "It will be seen from Miss Reel's attitude and her official position, should she unfortunately be elected, that she would be as plastic as putty in the hands of the Cheyenne ring. The only safe thing is to defeat her with the rest of the gang ticket."<sup>22</sup> The *Journal* was not the only newspaper concerned with Reel's susceptibility to party influence; the Wyoming *Bee* also stated "She is the tool, pure and simple, of the Cheyenne gang, and as such secured the nomination over the head of Mrs. Therese Jenkins..."<sup>23</sup>

Rumors about Reel's campaign also circulated around the state. One rumor held that she had agreed to marry her opponent, A. J. Matthews, if he won the race, a proposition she said was ridiculous since Matthews was already married. Perhaps the most persistent story, which followed Reel for years to come, was one stating that she had sent "perfumed letters" bearing her picture to all the "lonely cowboys" in the state, so that they rode over 100 miles to vote for her and "[waved] six-shooters in the faces of those who voted against [her]."<sup>24</sup> According to one report, Reel's picture was "preserved with care and is now a prominent feature in the decorations of hundreds of cabins..."<sup>25</sup> Though these rumors were false, chauvinism was prominent among both sexes, and they continued to plague Reel throughout her political career.

Much of the press's criticism of Reel during her campaign was harsh and biting, some of it even calling into question her moral character. In a letter to the editor of

the Carbon County *Journal*, an anonymous source (who was later speculated to be Governor Osborne), asked "Will someone please state who is acting as Miss Reel's chaperone, and, if she has one, whether it is a male or female?" The letter stated that Reel was traveling over the state chaperoneless with the five male statewide candidates, of course insinuating that Reel's morality was being compromised.<sup>26</sup> The Newcastle *Democrat* also questioned her character, noting that the state superintendent "directs and moulds the education of our children. Now let me ask you mothers and fathers who have seen Miss Reel, or who have heard of her, how would you like your daughters to take pattern after her and have her as a pattern to follow?"<sup>27</sup>

Despite the criticisms and personal attacks, Reel continued to campaign among all demographics. As a final thought in her campaign brochure, the state Republican committee encouraged voters that "Miss Reel should poll the full vote of the intelligent Republican party and receive also the suffrages of the most liberal and discriminating Democrats."<sup>28</sup> Apparently those receiving this brochure took the admonition to heart. When the ballots were counted, Reel had won by a handy plurality; in fact, Reel received the largest number of votes of any state candidate and carried every county in the state, even Johnson County where every other Republican candidate lost.<sup>29</sup> She became the first woman in the United States to hold a statewide office.

Newspapers described Reel's inauguration in detail, noting how she took off her hat before being sworn in,

<sup>17</sup> Reel, who in several letters of correspondence mentioned her appreciation for the press and its contribution to her campaign, returned the favor. In one letter she noted that she had expended more than \$60 in subscriptions to Republican newspapers in the state. Letterpress Book 7, p. 693.

<sup>18</sup> Scrapbook "Personal, Political, Misc., 1890-1896."

<sup>19</sup> Scrapbook, "Personal, Political, Misc., 1890-1896," 11.

<sup>20</sup> Scrapbook, "Personal, Political, Misc., 1890-1896," 77. In another article, the *Sheridan Journal* editor coyly wrote "[Matthews] may be all right to dance the Virginia reel but he will find that the Wyoming Reel will dance him such a lively whirl that he will not be able to work himself out from the November land slide, even by algebra." Scrapbook, 82.

<sup>21</sup> Scrapbook, "Personal, Political, Misc., 1890-1896," 18.

<sup>22</sup> Scrapbook, "Personal, Political, Misc., 1890-1896," 18.

<sup>23</sup> Scrapbook, "Personal, Political, Misc., 1890-1896," 90.

<sup>24</sup> Scrapbook, "Personal, Political, Misc., 1890-1896," 18, 35, 40.

<sup>25</sup> Scrapbook, "Personal, Political, Misc., 1890-1896," 18.

<sup>26</sup> Scrapbook, "Personal, Political, Misc., 1890-1896," 92.

<sup>27</sup> Scrapbook, "Personal, Political, Misc., 1890-1896," 92.

<sup>28</sup> Pamphlet, Administrative File.

<sup>29</sup> "Election Result in the State," in Scrapbook, "Personal, Political, Misc., 1894-1896," 149.

American Heritage Center



MISS ESTELLE REEL.

Candidate  
for  
Superintendent  
of Public Instruction,  
Wyoming.

**Duties of Superintendent of Public Instruction, briefly compiled from Wyoming State Laws.**

The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall make a biennial report of the condition of the public schools of the State

The Superintendent of Public Instruction is Secretary of the State Board of Charities and Reform, and as such shall keep a record of the proceedings of the board; shall countersign all documents made or approved by the Board; shall make an annual report to the Governor.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction is Secretary of the State Board of Land Commissioners, and as such shall make out and countersign all leases of State lands, and keep a record of the same, shall file

and preserve the bonds or leases given by purchasers to secure deferred payments, shall make out and deliver Certificates of purchase to purchasers; shall keep the seal of the Board; shall keep the minutes of the Board; shall receive the rental of State lands, and receipt for same, turning over the money thus received to the State Treasurer.

Any Intelligent Woman can perform these duties.

*Reel, at the time of her election, and extracts from her campaign literature, 1894.*

kept her eyes "modestly" downcast, and afterwards received an "ovation" that made her blush.<sup>30</sup> Despite these descriptions of shy femininity, Reel would prove to be dedicated and effective in her public role.

Unfortunately, even after her election, rumors perpetuated during her campaign continued to mar her accomplishment. Anti-suffrage newspapers continued to report that Reel had only won because she circulated pictures of herself to all the "young, lonely cowboys" in the state. Reel attempted to set the record straight, responding to one eastern newspaperman who asked about these allegations that "the editor of whom you speak has been misled by a wild-West story...In common with other candidates on both state tickets my picture was printed in state newspapers, on campaign literature, etc., but it had no more perceptible effect on the voters than the picture of the other candidates."<sup>31</sup> Still, this story would follow her for the rest of her life and continue to tarnish her political career.

*Educational Duties*

Some of the major problems Reel faced during her term in office were awaiting her when she arrived. Most prominent among these were the need for a standard-

ized curriculum, the debate over whether the government should provide free textbooks, and the issuing of teaching certificates. Of course, people from all across the country also wrote to Reel asking for a woman's perspective on many lesser issues as well.

One of Reel's main goals while in office was creating a standardized curriculum that could be implemented throughout the state, especially in the poor rural areas, so that students from these schools would be able to merge with urban students if they wished to pursue higher education. Reel often expressed a particular interest in methods for improving country schools. In an interview, Reel told the St. Louis *Democrat and Journal* that the only way to improve rural schools was to improve the quality of teachers, and increase funding so that rural schools could purchase the same supplies and equipment as urban schools; if this were done, Reel believed, rural students would surpass students in city schools.<sup>32</sup> Reel therefore wrote to rural teachers throughout the state asking for suggestions on what curriculum would be useful in systematizing teaching with a minimum of

<sup>30</sup> Scrapbook, "Personal, Political, Misc., 1894-1896," 103.

<sup>31</sup> Letterpress Book 3, p. 122, Letter to "Mr. J.J. Kendall"

<sup>32</sup> Letterpress Book 7, p. 694.



State Parks and Cultural Resources Dept.

*Cort Meyer met Estelle and married her, years after her Wyoming service as state superintendent*

training.<sup>33</sup> She combined these suggestions with her own ideas, publishing the *Outline Course of Study for Wyoming Public Schools* in 1897. This pamphlet was so popular that Reel and her publisher soon exhausted all their copies, but Reel could not have any more printed due to the lack of appropriations for her office.<sup>34</sup>

In her introduction to the course of study, Reel assured the teachers of Wyoming that she intended the course of study to serve as a guideline at first, though she hoped it would eventually be adopted in its entirety. Reel advocated arranging schools by grade and only teaching one subject at a time. Her intention was to assist the rural schools in rising to the standard of city schools, so that a student transferring from anywhere in the state would be able to continue studying the same material at the same level without losing any time.<sup>35</sup> Also, keeping in mind the tenuous situation over textbooks, Reel arranged the course of study so that it could be utilized without reference to textbooks. Reel urged teachers to cultivate in their students "self-control, concentration, endurance, application, appreciation, insight, receptiveness and responsiveness," for she believed these traits were much more important than memorization of specific facts or trivia. As Reel says, "facts are means, not ends...it is what they suggest, make possible, inspire, that has value."<sup>36</sup>

After this introduction, Reel suggested a curriculum based on the subjects of reading, arithmetic, language, geography, history, physiology and hygiene, writing, drawing, and nature study. For each grade from first

through eighth, Reel gives a suggested course of study on each subject for the entire year. Many of these suggestions seem based in Reel's belief that children should not learn by memorization but rather by expression of their own thoughts.<sup>37</sup> Many of Reel's proposals were also practical; for instance, the eighth grade curriculum in math is focused on teaching brokerage, stocks, profit and loss, and insurance, as well as assignments focusing on checks, bonds, bank notes, and commercial principles involved in financial transactions.<sup>38</sup> In each subject, Reel gave suggestions of books for teachers to read to familiarize themselves with all these subjects.

Particularly interesting is the curriculum for physiology and hygiene. These courses were meant not only to teach children proper personal care and habits, which were believed to improve both the physical and moral health of the children, but also posture and gracefulness, especially in comparison to the movement of animals. This was to be accomplished by examining animal joints and human bones, "being careful not to horrify pupils with a ghastly human skeleton all at once." An important issue taught in this subject throughout the grades was the effects of tobacco, alcohol, and drugs. The curriculum for this subject was again practical in nature; students were taught what to do in emergencies such as "fire, water, poisons, bites from snakes and rabid animals."<sup>39</sup> Though Reel's course of study was accepted throughout the state and was beginning to be implemented, provisions listed under an 1899 law requiring free textbooks destroyed many of the benefits of Reel's program.<sup>40</sup>

Another major problem with the educational laws of the time was the problem with teacher certification. Provisions for issuing certificates had been in place since

<sup>33</sup> Fromong, 260-262.

<sup>34</sup> Letterpress Book 7, p. 542. One of the most interesting items discovered in Reel's scrapbook was a letter from P. Mejeuf of Petersburg, Russia, thanking Reel for sending him a copy of her biennial report and the school laws. Scrapbook, "Misc.," 169.

<sup>35</sup> Estelle Reel, *Outline Course of Study for Wyoming Public Schools*. (Laramie: The Republican Book and Job Print, 1897), 3.

<sup>36</sup> Reel, *Course of Study*, 4.

<sup>37</sup> Reel, *Course of Study*, 30, 47-48.

<sup>38</sup> Reel, *Course of Study*, 17.

<sup>39</sup> Reel, *Course of Study*, 38-41. Reel seemed particularly worried about the effects of tobacco and alcohol on youths. A letter written to Jason Hammond of Lansing, Michigan, noted that, while there was a city ordinance prohibiting the sale of tobacco products to minors, Reel expressed a hope that a similar statewide law soon would be passed. Letterpress Book 6, p. 313

<sup>40</sup> Fromong, 263-264.

<sup>41</sup> Fromong, 183-184. In 1886 the legislature mandated the teaching of temperance in all public schools. Teachers were also supposed to be specifically knowledgeable in the effects of alcohol, stimulants, and narcotics on the body.

1873, but not until 1886 were the first requirements made as to the content of the exams.<sup>41</sup> However, teacher examinations were by no means standardized in terms of how they were conducted or graded, or what subjects could be included. Interestingly, the law did require that county superintendents must be satisfied that the candidate was of good moral character in order to receive a certificate; Reel described one case where a certificate was annulled once the moral character of one teacher was determined to be "bad."<sup>42</sup> Reel received numerous inquiries concerning teaching certificates, and in each one she had the same reply: Wyoming laws did not provide for statewide issuance of certificates; each candidate had to pass examinations given by county superintendents in the county where they were applying before they were allowed to teach.<sup>43</sup> County certificates were only valid for one year, and only in the county in which it was issued. They had to be renewed yearly by retaking the exam, and there was no appeal process for rejected exams.<sup>44</sup> Though Reel lobbied for a change in this system, she again was disappointed at her lack of results; again, no major alterations were made until 1899 when certificates began to be divided into four classes, allowing for statewide certificates to be issued as well as standardization of county superintendent exams.<sup>45</sup>

Much of Reel's correspondence concerning educational matters was written either in response to job seekers in other states or to recommend Wyoming teachers for positions in other states. Reel responded to most job inquiries by noting that the supply of teachers was greatly in excess of demand, and suggesting that the inquiring individual put in his/her resume with county superintendents. Reel repeatedly mentioned the low wages paid to educators in Wyoming and the resultant lack of exceptional teachers willing to come west.<sup>46</sup>

Reel was unwilling to recommend friends for positions in Cheyenne for several reasons; one was that she had an ongoing feud with a member of the Cheyenne School Board, Professor Churchill. Churchill had angered many in the educational community by refusing to follow the law requiring renewal of teaching certificates though still continuing to teach. In response to one request for a recommendation, Reel explained to Alice Higgins of Illinois that, "my influence with the school board here is very slight as the members who manage affairs and the City Superintendent have been and are politically opposed to me and would keep out rather than help any friends of mine who should apply for places."<sup>47</sup> Also, Reel often pointed many of these applicants elsewhere; as she advised Higgins, "If you should decide to come west I think you could do better

in Portland, Oregon, than any other place in the west I know of at the present time. I spent a week there last summer and found the conditions, work, wages and expenses, better for teachers than any place I have ever been."<sup>48</sup>

One of the most important educational issues during Reel's tenure was a debate that had been raging since territorial days over whether the state should provide free textbooks. Both the territorial superintendent and governor in 1888 recommended that funds from the leasing of state school lands be earmarked for textbooks, and in that year a law was enacted providing for uniformity of textbooks for an investigative five-year period. When this law expired in 1893, nothing was done to renew it, though Superintendent S. T. Farwell did suggest books as a basis for study.<sup>49</sup> Two years later, when Gov. W. A. Richards made his first address to the third legislative assembly, he asked for a free textbook law, citing precedents in other states. Unfortunately no new laws concerning textbooks were passed until 1899, the year after Reel left office.<sup>50</sup> Though Reel was not able to effect the change herself, she believed in the good of uniform textbooks. Dozens of textbook publishers sent her numerous copies of textbooks in an attempt to get her to recommend them for use in schools. Even though Reel could not mandate their use, she still wrote reviews of them for the publishing companies.<sup>51</sup>

Wyoming schools were also lacking quality school libraries. Katharine Sharp of the Armour Institute in Chi-

<sup>42</sup> Letterpress Book 6, p. 219.

<sup>43</sup> Letterpress Book, unnumbered, 73, 182.

<sup>44</sup> Fromong, 184-185.

<sup>45</sup> Fromong, 186-187.

<sup>46</sup> Letterpress Book, unnumbered, 93, 97. A letter to Lottie Sellon of Kansas City, Missouri, and one to Nina Johnson of Oklahoma City, noted that teachers in the city received between \$50 and \$75 a month as a salary, "though the price of living is very expensive." Letterpress Book, unnumbered, 255. In a letter to Helen Worthington of Barry, Illinois, Reel noted that rural teachers received only \$45 to \$50 per month, and that all teachers faced a reduction of \$10 to \$15 per month for the coming year. Letterpress Book 4, p. 490. This is compared to a letter to May Higgenbotham of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in which Reel described the yearly salaries of county superintendents as ranging from \$600 for first class counties to \$300 for fourth class counties; apparently these salaries were in addition to the normal teacher's salary.

<sup>47</sup> Letterpress Book 7, pp. 417, 257; Scrapbook, "Personal Political Misc., 1890-1896," 46. Several items of correspondence refer to Reel's problems with school boards in Cheyenne. For additional examples, see Letterpress Book, unnumbered, 93, 255.

<sup>48</sup> Letterpress Book, unnumbered, 257. For additional examples, see pp. 93, 97.

<sup>49</sup> Fromong, 258-260.

<sup>50</sup> Fromong, 168-169.

<sup>51</sup> See letter to S.M. Ingles, Letterpress Book, vol. 4, p. 336.

cago wrote to ask Reel about library administration, funding, and selection in the state. Reel replied that there was no organization or authorization in the state for libraries.<sup>52</sup> Reel often complained about the poor state of school libraries, noting that some schools did not even have the rudiments of one, especially those in rural areas. She advocated building libraries in every school in the state, suggesting 84 books to form the basis of every school library (many of which were mentioned in her course of study), though she had no authority or funding to enforce this plan.<sup>53</sup>

Faulty school laws were another troublesome issue about which Reel received many complaints from parents. For instance, one concerned mother wrote to Reel asking if the district could compel her children to attend school even though there were none within a reasonable distance (the answer was no). On this occasion, as on many others, Reel noted that "Our school law is very defective" and that the only way to effect changes in the district was to get a large number of friends and neighbors together at the annual meeting to vote for whatever reform was desired.<sup>54</sup>

An issue that caused Reel numerous headaches was the legislatively required biannual fiscal reports. Each county was required to send in an account of their expenses each year. Due to the poor quality of many clerks, these reports often had to be changed and amended several times. For almost every county, Reel was forced to return the original submitted report at least once because of discrepancies, both large and small.<sup>55</sup>

Conversely, Reel had her own problems getting funding from the legislature. Wyoming was in the midst of an economic downturn in the 1890s and one of the last areas considered for funding was education. In a letter to Mrs. Jennings in February 1895, Reel despondently wrote, "The prospects are that my contingent fund will be almost all taken away from me as the politicians seem determined to make my office of as little importance as possible."<sup>56</sup>

Reel lobbied legislative members for much-needed reforms in educational laws, though because of other more pressing matters, the state legislature often neglected to consider these issues. As Reel noted, school legislation was often left until the very last, by which time the legislature was so rushed with work they had no time to consider educational bills.<sup>57</sup>

Even when legislation was introduced, it was often not to the benefit of the teachers; for instance, in 1897 House Bill 13 was presented as a measure to raise the salaries of county superintendents, but the same bill proposed that they then be forced to pay all their expenses, which would lead to a pay decrease.<sup>58</sup>

Despite all the problems Reel faced, she was able to make some progress in some areas. A big problem with the educational laws was the lack of regulations concerning school attendance. Attendance was particularly a problem in rural areas where school sessions themselves were intermittent and based on seasons or harvests.<sup>59</sup> Children were required by law to attend school from the ages of six to eighteen for a time equivalent to three years, though the timing of this was never clearly defined.<sup>60</sup> Still, enforcement of compulsory attendance improved during Reel's term; in 1893 the average number of days school was in session was 89.21, while in 1898 the average reached a high of more than 100 days.<sup>61</sup>

Another major change that was initiated during Reel's term in office was the growth of secondary schools, a reflection of the nationwide trend as the country switched from agriculture to industry, necessitating new kinds of training. In his address to the third legislative assembly, Governor Richards recommended a law authorizing the development of secondary schools in larger towns for older students to obtain mechanical training.<sup>62</sup> Growth was slow but significant. In 1894 only two high schools existed in the state; by the end of 1895 that number had jumped to five.<sup>63</sup>

### *Land Board and Politics*

Though Reel faced much skepticism during her campaign over whether she was capable of performing the duties pertaining to land questions, she soon proved that these concerns were unfounded. The duties of the State Superintendent in regard to the Land Board were essential. As historian Terrence Fromong pointed out, the amount of money available for schools "depends upon the efficiency with which (and the rate per acre at which) the State Board of Control keeps the unsold school sections leased, and the efficiency with which the money in the Permanent School Fund is kept invested." In-

<sup>52</sup> Letterpress Book 4, p. 374.

<sup>53</sup> Fromong, 263.

<sup>54</sup> Letterpress Book 4, p. 487.

<sup>55</sup> For only a few examples, see Letterpress Book 6, pp. 93-97; Letterpress Book 7, pp. 424-425, 458, 466.

<sup>56</sup> Letterpress Book, unnumbered, 23.

<sup>57</sup> Letterpress Book 6, p. 200.

<sup>58</sup> Letterpress Book 6, pp. 330, 331, 335.

<sup>59</sup> Fromong, 257.

<sup>60</sup> Fromong, 173.

<sup>61</sup> Fromong, 248-249.

<sup>62</sup> Fromong, 177.

<sup>63</sup> Fromong, 249.



come from the permanent school fund continued to increase during Reel's tenure, amounting to a sum of "considerable proportions."<sup>64</sup>

The Wyoming Constitution provided for two school funds: the permanent school fund and the common school fund. The permanent school fund received money from two sources, proceeds from the sale of school lands and 5 percent of the proceeds from the sale of all government lands in the state. The common school fund received its money from interest paid on the permanent school fund as well as rentals of school land.<sup>65</sup>

The original land grant for Wyoming public schools was three million acres. In 1897, during the middle of Reel's term, Congress granted Wyoming permission to select more than 300,000 additional acres in lieu of school sections located in federally protected areas. The Public Land Commission had located and selected these "indemnity lands" by 1898, which likely had no small part in Reel's success in increasing school revenues.

Reel had her own ideas on how to increase income from school lands. A biography written by Reel's friend Cora Beach stated that Reel made a "thorough study of the land leasing system" which allowed Reel to make changes that led to unprecedented success. As Beach noted, Reel's handling of the system led to an increase in revenues from hundreds to thousands of dollars collected from these lands within months of her taking office.<sup>66</sup> In 1895 the legislature directed that this money be distributed to the counties on the basis of enrollment as reported by each county superintendent, and this practice was continued throughout Reel's term.<sup>67</sup>

In a letter written in January 1896 to W. H. Wolfard of Saratoga, Wyoming, Reel indicated that school land could be rented annually for five percent of their appraised value, and that not less than a legal subdivision could be leased except inside city limits.<sup>68</sup> Reel proposed relaxing the conditions for leasing state-owned lands that were being used for open range; she felt that this would not only cause the land to be utilized in such a way that it would make a profit for the state (that would of course be funneled to the schools), but that it would also be valued more by stockmen and ranchers. Reel also believed that if the state showed initiative by promoting the use of state lands, the government might also turn over federal lands to the state. In her view this would transform Wyoming from one of the poorest to one of the richest states in the nation.<sup>69</sup>

She wrote of her impressions of the campaign. The "strongest and most lasting impressions" were that the state's "latent" resources needed to be developed so that Wyoming could be transformed into the "rich and prosperous state she deserves to be instead of the strug-

gling commonwealth she now is." Reel promoted irrigating the "fertile land" throughout the state by utilizing the Green, North Platte, and Big Horn river systems. For her the lack of railroads in the state was not a reasonable impediment to its agricultural development, citing the agricultural prosperity of the Star Valley. "There is no state in the union in which the opportunities are better than in Wyoming for a profitable combination of farming, stock-raising and mining," she wrote. It could not be done by private initiative; success depended upon the support of the legislature. If the state could achieve agricultural success, the development of other resources would be rapid, especially industrial activities.<sup>70</sup>

She favored irrigation legislation such as the Carey Act and the Desert Land Act, and opposed "corruption" in land claims. Her views brought her between the Republican split in the state between those who followed Senator F. E. Warren's leadership and those who followed ex-Senator Carey. Following the 1894 election, Carey tried to gain reelection to the U. S. Senate but the legislature, influenced by Warren, dumped him in favor of an Evanston Republican--with Warren in the other Senate seat. It began the long-lasting Carey-Warren feud that influenced Wyoming politics for the next quarter century.

Warren forces continued to find fault with Carey's activities while the Carey forces reciprocated. Land was one battleground issue. As an article in the *Casper Derrick* reported, Carey had applied for a large tract of government land to be allotted to the state between Casper and Glenrock and had begun to fence it off. When the five-member state land board, of which Reel was secretary, found out about this, they prevented the granting of his application. According to Warren proponents, Carey immediately stormed down to Cheyenne to rant before the board, where the *Derrick* reported, he was told the rejection of the application "was purely political and done to hold him down politically."

As part of the Republican apparatus put together by Warren, Reel showed no support for Carey. According to press accounts, however, the land issue was the reason. The *Derrick* reported that upon hearing the reason for the board's action, Carey raved some more. This supposedly caused Reel to become disgusted with

<sup>64</sup> Fromong, 211-212; 223-224.

<sup>65</sup> Fromong, 218-219

<sup>66</sup> Cora M. Beach, *Women of Wyoming* (Casper: S. E. Boyer and Company, 1927) I, 40.

<sup>67</sup> Fromong, 225.

<sup>68</sup> Letterpress Book 5, p. 183

<sup>69</sup> Box 2, Scrapbook, "Misc. F. Reel," 390.

<sup>70</sup> Scrapbook, "Personal, Political, Misc., 1894-1896," 209.

his actions and drop her formerly "astute" friendship with him. In fact, the *Derrick* reported that Reel afterward had choice words to speak about Carey, calling him the author of the "land grab law" among other things.<sup>71</sup> This put her solidly in the "Warren camp" and set the stage for future political rewards.<sup>72</sup>

Reel's ordinary land duties brought her notice in the newspapers. When Reel brought in \$370 from a land sale she conducted on the courthouse steps in Cheyenne, it was the first time on record, according to an article from June 1895, titled "Miss Reel as Auctioneer," that a woman officiated as a public auctioneer. As the article noted, "It has often been said that this was one of the things a woman could not do, but Miss Reel proved not only that a woman could, but did it in as expeditious and thorough a manner as any man could have done."<sup>73</sup>

Even after she had been in office for some time, her auctioneering still drew attention. In an auction of school lands, an article in the *Cheyenne Tribune*, April 16, 1897, noted that Reel "cried the bids so sweetly that lots of fellows who got to thinking about it afterward felt real sorry that they didn't wink the prices away higher."<sup>74</sup>

### *Board of Charities and Reform*

The least amount of correspondence and press during Reel's term came from her duties as the Secretary of the State Board of Charities and Reform. Apparently during Reel's tenure many of Wyoming's charges were "cared for and educated" in Colorado, since they could provide better care and treatment there than in any facilities in Wyoming.<sup>75</sup> The Colorado Institute for Deaf, Dumb, and Blind in Colorado Springs held four charges at Wyoming's expense because there was no facility in Wyoming for them. This expense went toward room and board, washing, medical attention, books, and general care at an annual cost of \$1000, which Reel estimated at far below the cost were they kept in Wyoming. Three Wyoming girls were held in a Denver school for female juvenile delinquents. This school was intended to transform women into productive members of society by teaching them how to do housework and needlework, read literature and practice writing.

Reel visited the institution at Golden for male juvenile delinquents, which held seven Wyoming "pupils." Boys here made and mended all their own clothes, took care of livestock, and raised crops. They were also made to produce a weekly newspaper, do blacksmith and carpentry work, and run a brickyard, along with having four hours of lessons each day. As Reel reported,

charges were allowed to choose their profession; for instance, one Wyoming boy was training to become a baker, two were learning to be tailors, and another was studying scientific farming and irrigation. In her report, Reel concluded that Colorado should be allowed to continue to care for Wyoming charges unless their numbers dramatically increased.<sup>76</sup>

An article appearing in the *Chicago Tribune* in April of the same year noted that Reel was inspecting penitentiaries there and getting ideas for how to run these institutions from Eastern cities since Wyoming was expecting to open a new prison shortly.<sup>77</sup> The *Cheyenne Daily Leader* wrote that the committee was making a two-week tour of penal, reformatory, and charitable institutions in Nebraska, Colorado, Indiana, Iowa, Illinois, and Michigan to research systems there, since the state was intending to build a new penitentiary at Rawlins to replace the cramped Territorial Prison at Laramie.<sup>78</sup>

Reel filed a report with the State Board of Charities and Reform after she attended the 1895 Congress of the National Prison Association in Denver. She made particular note of a paper presented by the warden of the Illinois state penitentiary that described convict labor as brutal and resented by the prisoners, and predicted is speedy abolition. Reel described what she had heard about prison conditions and administration in Pennsylvania, Minnesota, and Colorado. All seemed to focus on rehabilitation of prisoners--to make them entirely indistinguishable from other members of society upon their release.<sup>79</sup>

In one piece of correspondence from March 1895, Reel indicated that the state's Deaf, Dumb, and Blind Asylum had been converted into a "Soldier's Home."<sup>80</sup>

<sup>71</sup> Scrapbook, "Political," 75. For an account of the origins of the Carey-Warren feud, see T. A. Larson, *History of Wyoming* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, rev. ed., 1978), 291-293.

<sup>72</sup> Reel's later career is the subject of another part of the author's larger study from which this article is derived.

<sup>73</sup> Scrapbook, "Personal, Political, Misc., 1894-1896," 289.

<sup>74</sup> Scrapbook, "Misc. E. Reel," 319. No title.

<sup>75</sup> Scrapbook, "Misc. E. Reel," 41.

<sup>76</sup> Scrapbook, "Personal, Political, Misc., 1894-1896," 149.

<sup>77</sup> Scrapbook, "Personal, Political, Misc., 1894-1896," 29, 35.

<sup>78</sup> Scrapbook, "Misc.," 31; Scrapbook, "Personal, Political, Misc., 1894-1896," 35.

<sup>79</sup> Scrapbook "Personal, Political, Misc., 1894-1896," 44, 45.

<sup>80</sup> Letterpress Book, unnumbered, 260

## Depression

Throughout her term, Reel continued to complain of exhaustion and frustration with the demands of her job. In a letter to a friend in Sheridan, written almost immediately after she took office, Reel told her: "The work of the campaign, of the inauguration, and of a new position, have almost prostrated me and I am very anxiously looking forward to the time when I can take a vacation be it ever so brief."<sup>81</sup> Even into April 1895, Reel complained, "I have been working almost day and night ever since inauguration day."<sup>82</sup> She was to have little relief from these laments during her tenure as superintendent.

It does not seem unusual that Reel would suffer from depression, considering the strains put upon her by her office and her lack of association with women. In a letter to a friend named "Billy" written in the late spring of her first year in office, Reel complained that "Cheyenne is awfully dull, socially and in a business way. You can congratulate yourself that you are living in a place where there is at least life and excitement every day of the year." A letter to another friend written in June 1895 expressed similar feelings of boredom, especially since school was out for the term: "Cheyenne is very dull since all the teachers have gone away... There are no men to make it interesting. I look forward to a very dull summer, as I don't expect to get away for a vacation."<sup>83</sup>

In her letter to "Billy," Reel also complained about "endless meetings of Land boards, dreary sittings of the State Board of Charities and Reform, wearisome visits to the Insane Asylums, Hospitals, Penitentiaries, etc." These duties were time consuming enough, but they were not the end of her responsibilities, for as she says, "now to crown it all I am expected to travel through Colorado, Iowa, Nebraska, and Michigan to look at similar institutions in these states. And all the time, day after day there are letters by the dozen and by the score to answer."<sup>84</sup> Because she had just one secretary working with her in the office, the task of answering this correspondence fell to Reel herself.

Some of the few personal letters included in her correspondence records indicate that Reel was suffering from exhaustion for much of her term. She often complained of illness in her letters, ranging from continuing troubles with her eyesight to a severe attack of peritonitis early in her term. At one point she was even under doctor's orders to rest. Frequently she wrote of her desperate longing for a vacation. At one point, Reel was forced to abandon plans for an extended vacation

when the only secretary in her office became deathly ill. She sorrowfully wrote to a friend in Chicago, Hobart Martin, that her trunk had been packed for three weeks in anticipation of the trip, and she could not bear to unpack it. "Seriously, Hobart," Reel wrote, "I am very tired of the kind of life I lead, but it is my bread. I've not had much butter."<sup>85</sup>

Reel also expressed her frustration to her friend Gertrude Huntington, county superintendent in Saratoga. "I wish we could all go out and join your sister in California. The Legislature is upon us. Just think, 40 days of constant worry and annoyance..."<sup>86</sup> In a later letter to Huntington, Reel responded to her complaints over trouble in straightening out the district's finances by saying "I am very sorry that you are troubled so much but you know that I have 'gone gray' in this kind of business."<sup>87</sup>

Reel's public duties took precedence from her private life. It was the end of May before Reel found time to thank her friend Zoe Grigsby of Pittsfield, Illinois, (Reel's hometown) for a Christmas gift she had received. Reel apologized for not visiting even though she had been in Chicago the month before on business of the Board of Charities and Reform: "I am so busy all the time, that I never have a moment for private affairs."<sup>88</sup>

Much of her campaign support came from the fact that she was not married. Many voters believed that, with no family life, her public career would not be hindered and, apparently, she shared this view. This did not mean that Reel was content with this aspect of her life, however. Scattered among her scrapbooks are love poems, romantic stories, articles on skin care and beauty techniques, and many references to marriage. Some of her correspondence reveals that she was interested in marriage. In a revealing postscript to a letter to her former political opponent A. J. Matthews, Reel wrote: "If you know of any eligible bachelors, widowers, 'or most any old thing,' please keep us on your list, as we are a candidate for matrimony on the anxious seat." While this may have been a reference to the rumors circulating during her campaign that she planned on marrying Matthews depending on the election results, it nevertheless shows that the subject of marriage was on her

<sup>81</sup> Letterpress Book 4, p. 346.

<sup>82</sup> Letterpress Book, unnumbered, 323.

<sup>83</sup> Letterpress Book 4, p. 369.

<sup>84</sup> Letter to "My Dear Billy," Letterpress Book 3, pp. 381-382.

<sup>85</sup> Letterpress Book 5, p. 233.

<sup>86</sup> Letterpress Book 6, p. 264.

<sup>87</sup> Letterpress Book 6, p. 387.

<sup>88</sup> Letterpress Book, unnumbered, 455.

mind. A later letter to Matthews, which unfortunately is partly illegible, brings up the subject again, jokingly referring to the "matrimonial bureau" and noting that she believed she was "an impossible case."<sup>89</sup>

### *A Magnet for Suffragettes*

Throughout her term as Superintendent of Public Instruction, Reel was a focal point for the women's suffrage movement. Though it was an unavoidable position, it seems that Reel was reluctant in this role, and was even annoyed at the attention she received as the one of the most prominent women in public service. In a letter to a friend, she expressed her frustration: "Besides the ordinary business letters about which, of course, there can be no complaint, it seems to me that every crank in the country writes to get my opinion on Woman Suffrage, Life Insurance, Higher Education, or some like subject."<sup>90</sup> However, in her public correspondence she cordially answered all questions that arrived from around the country concerning the consequences and benefits of women's suffrage.

Her reluctance as a mouthpiece for the women's movement does not mean that Reel was uninterested in the topic of woman's equality. For instance, Reel wrote to Mrs. Thomas Orchard of Ogden, Utah, asking for her opinion of the practicality of woman's suffrage there: "Would it be an aid to the women of the state as it is to us in Wyoming? Would it have a tendency to elevate politics? Would it help Utah or retard its growth?"<sup>91</sup> These questions suggest that Reel was privately unsure of the benefits of universal suffrage, though all the newspaper articles and columns she wrote concerning this topic are emphatically supportive of it.

Many of the people who wrote to Reel were curious about the history of women's suffrage in the state. One such writer was Mrs. Eugenie Cleophas from Cleo, Wyoming.<sup>92</sup> Reel answered all of Cleophas' questions, saying that she believed women's suffrage made the parties more careful in choosing their candidates, while the presence of women at the polls "has tended to make the elections quiet and orderly," a question over which many people seemed concerned. Reel assured Cleophas that women did not vote with one mind but were divided into political parties just like men, and took great interest in campaign issues, "being, as a rule, more intelligent voters than the majority of the men." However, though there were many women employed as schoolteachers or domestic and clerical workers, Reel noted that women in the state were otherwise "not very prominent."<sup>93</sup>

Reel also received correspondence from medical doctors asking about work or certification in Wyoming. In one case, a female doctor from Chicago wrote to ask Reel's opinion on whether Wyoming's equal suffrage laws would give her an advantage in securing a position because of her sex. Reel responded in the negative. "I think, in the west, the disposition is to expect a woman to do a man's work, if she undertakes any occupation usually supposed to be a man's," though a woman could achieve the same degree of success as their male counterparts.<sup>94</sup>

Others who wrote to Reel were curious about women's roles in other political duties. Reel asserted that women's suffrage was an entire success in Wyoming. In a letter to Dora Sheldon of Iowa, Reel estimated that 95 percent of Wyoming women voted. She also noted that women were not forced to serve on juries, that women received equal payment with men, and that all classes of women voted.

Reel also addressed a big fear of anti-suffragists by admitting that sometimes a wife's vote would kill that of her husband, but emphasizing that it did not result in disaster.<sup>95</sup> In fact, Reel said that allowing women to vote was the impetus for reform. Women's influence had already led to having bad laws repealed. People observing the consequences of women's suffrage "fail to discover any injurious effects upon the women themselves, or their families. Political duties do not necessarily take up the time of any woman to such an extent that she need neglect any of her household duties..."<sup>96</sup>

Reel listed the benefits of suffrage: it frees women from dependency on males, it raises women from an inferior status, it improves the possibility of reform, it increases order during elections, and it ensures the selection of superior candidates. Reel wrote: "it will not be long before women, learning their strength, will unite together, and holding the balance of power, will be en-

<sup>89</sup> Letterpress Book 6, p. 218; Letterpress Book 6, p. 278.

<sup>90</sup> Letter to "My Dear Billy," Letterpress Book 3, pp. 381-382.

<sup>91</sup> Letterpress Book, unnumbered, 323. The question about elevating politics is apparently referring to the widespread reports that allowing women to vote in Wyoming had a great "civilizing" effect on the election process and led to less violence at the polls.

<sup>92</sup> The community name does not appear in Mae Urbanek, *Wyoming Place Names* (Boulder: Johnson Publishing, 1967). Quite likely, the name was given to the "post office" located at Mrs. Cleophas' ranch home.

<sup>93</sup> Letterpress Book 4, p. 461.

<sup>94</sup> Letterpress Book 7, p. 731.

<sup>95</sup> "A Charming Lady Office Holder," in Box 3, Scrapbook, "Personal, Political, Misc., 1894-1896."

<sup>96</sup> Letterpress Book 5, p. 31.

abled to exert a most potent influence in public affairs."<sup>97</sup>

Many people wrote to Reel for advice on how to advance the cause of equal suffrage. In a letter sent to famed suffragist Carrie Chapman Catt of New York City, Reel advised, "my public speaking during the recent campaign was confined to very brief talks... It may be that brief talks explaining what Suffrage has done for Wyoming may accomplish as much, or more, for the cause than more elaborate oratorical efforts."<sup>98</sup>

Reel also was asked to address issues dealing with women as educators. In one instance a man from Wisconsin asked Reel for statistics concerning the efficiency of women on school boards. Though Reel had no such figures, she still advised the man that, based on her experience, it was "wise" to have both men and women on the school board.<sup>99</sup> A letter sent from Philadelphia asked Reel whether any conflicts arose from the fact that male teachers were sometimes under the control of women superintendents. In response, Reel emphasized that instances of difficulties were rare, and that men were careful "not to assert any superiority over their women co-workers." Additionally, Reel felt that only the "fitness" of the person being considered, not the gender, should be the only determining factor in who was selected as administrators.<sup>100</sup>

Despite the answers, in her correspondence Reel revealed she grew tired of the tedious and sometimes ridiculous questions she was forced to address on the subject of women's fitness for political office. In the middle of her term as superintendent, Reel suddenly found herself dodging the rumor that she was planning a run for Governor of Wyoming. Apparently, the story started when Governor Richards mentioned once on a trip to St. Louis that his 19-year-old daughter was competent to handle the work involved. Newspapers reporting this remarked, "If a girl of 19 could run the gubernatorial office, why could not a woman of experience like Miss Reel be Governor?"<sup>101</sup> This idea began to buzz around town, and soon Reel was in the midst of a media frenzy as newspapers around the country falsely announced her candidacy and speculated on her chances of winning. Reel protested these stories, finally writing a letter to the editor of the *New York Sun* explaining the facts.

However, this simple letter itself provoked another controversy, especially among suffragists. In writing her reply to the *Sun*, Reel stated that "The idea of running a woman for Governor of the State of Wyoming is not worthy of serious consideration." As the *Sun* responded, and as many suffragists questioned, "Indeed, and why not?"<sup>102</sup> The answer, as found in her correspondence and other writings, is simple: Reel considered herself

not to be radical in her ideas of how women were to achieve suffrage or on the subject of women's equality. In her response, Reel wrote that just because half of the voters in Wyoming were women, they did not expect to hold half of the offices in the state, and that the only offices they should hold were strictly educational or clerical. As long as they were allowed these positions, and received equal pay for equal work, Reel said, "they will be well satisfied. They will not attempt to encroach upon offices which should always be filled by men, one of which is the Governorship."<sup>103</sup>

The editors, and probably many suffragettes, remained perplexed by these statements, though Reel had made her reasoning known in several previous interviews. For instance, Reel had written an article in which she questioned the right of women to seek a broader public mission than that which they already had. Reel stated that every woman, like every man, has a desire for influence, but this desire should not be expanded into new fields. Instead, Reel believed that the immediate fight for women's equality should focus on first gaining equal wages for the fields in which women were already established.<sup>104</sup>

A letter written in April 1896 to Ella Buie of St. Louis similarly addressed this conviction. "I believe the success of the Women's Suffrage idea in Wyoming has been due mainly to the fact that the women of the State have not asked too much at any time of the male voters... [women] were extremely modest in their requests for preferment and power. They essayed no radical reforms and did what good they could in politics and legislation in a quite unobtrusive manner..."

Reel then address Buie's request for advice on how to achieve equal suffrage in Missouri: "Do not attempt at first to secure universal suffrage. Get first the privilege of voting in school elections. This secured, work for a voice in municipal affairs. If you secure this, the

<sup>97</sup> Letterpress Book 5, p. 31

<sup>98</sup> Letterpress Book, unnumbered, 286. Reel often made disparaging remarks about her own speaking ability. For instance, she responded to a request to speak at the teacher's institute in Sheridan County: "As you know, I am not a fluent speaker and would not think of charging for the lecture." Letterpress Book 6, p. 231.

<sup>99</sup> Letterpress Book 4, p. 488

<sup>100</sup> Letterpress Book 4, p. 490.

<sup>101</sup> Scrapbook, "N.E.A. 1896-1897," 4

<sup>102</sup> "The Protest of Superintendent Reel," in Box 3, Scrapbook, "Political E. Reel," 98.

<sup>103</sup> "The Protest of Superintendent Reel," in Box 3, Scrapbook, "Political E. Reel," 98.

<sup>104</sup> "A Wider Mission," in Box 3, Scrapbook, "Personal, Political, Misc., 1890-1896," 47.

right of suffrage in County, State, and National affairs will follow in due time."<sup>105</sup> In other words, Reel advocated taking the movement slowly, allowing men to become acculturated to the advancements one step at a time. She feared that if too much was asked for all at once, the entire movement might be squashed in its infancy. She urged women to first pursue expansion within conventional women's spheres, such as caring for children (education) and home (community). They could use these gains to push for roles outside their traditional interests. In this context, Reel's response to the *Sun* seems to make perfect sense.

This fundamental disagreement with radical suffragists did not diminish Reel's position as one of the most visible female public figures in the nation. She continued to give interviews expounding upon the virtues of equal suffrage in Wyoming to newspapers wherever she traveled. In 1897 she represented the Woman's Club of Cheyenne at the national meeting of the Women's Republican League.<sup>106</sup>

### *On to Washington*

Though Reel faced both personal and political hardships during her time in office, she met these difficulties head-on and with integrity. Despite political divisions within her own party and criticism from Democrats, many of the public believed she rose above common politics. A newspaper article written in February 1897 note: "There is one state officer who appears to be doing her duty as she sees it and without reference to the wishes of the gang, and that is Miss Estelle Reel, superintendent of public instruction. She has made a good officer and is to be highly commended..."<sup>107</sup>

Reel was exhausted by the heavy burdens she had borne during her three years in office, yet her political career was about to take an important leap. After work-

ing for William McKinley's presidential campaign in 1898, Reel applied for the recently vacated position of Superintendent of Indian Education. Despite her connections with Warren who recommended her highly, she also received warm support for this application from Warren's opponent, Joseph Carey.<sup>108</sup>

Though no woman had ever held so high a position in the federal service, Reel's application received the unanimous approval of the Senate. Reel was soon packing her bags and moved to Washington, D.C., leaving the office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction, the first statewide office ever held by a woman, before the term ended.

<sup>105</sup> Letterpress Book 5, p. 325.

<sup>106</sup> Letterpress Book 7, p. 394.

<sup>107</sup> Scrapbook, "Campaign, 1896-97," 50, 175.

<sup>108</sup> "U. S. Department of the Interior, Office of Supt. of Indian Schools endorsements," folder in Box 1. Estelle Reel Meyer Collection.

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# Book Reviews

## Significant Recent Books on Western and Wyoming History

Edited by Carl Hallberg

### **Lynching in Colorado, 1858-1919.**

By Stephen J. Leonard. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2002. *Illus., tables, maps, notes, bib., index.* 232 pp. Cloth, \$24.95.

*Reviewed by Michael J. Pfeifer, The Evergreen State College, Olympia, Washington*

Unlike scholars of the South, historians of the West have devoted little serious attention to collective violence in the region's past. Stephen J. Leonard's study of lynching in Colorado advances our understanding about a crucial aspect of the legal and social relations of the nineteenth and early twentieth century West.

Employing a rigorous methodology, Leonard documents 175 lynchings in Colorado between 1858 and 1919. Leonard begins by analyzing the important precedent set by the extra-legal proceedings of the "People's Courts" which conducted informal trials and executions of accused criminals in Denver and other Rocky Mountain towns. These infant jurisdictions lacked legal institutions between 1850 and the formation of Colorado Territory in 1861 (Chapter 1). Yet the organization of legally-constituted courts hardly ended lynching in Colorado. As the railroad and discovery of pockets of gold and silver created towns throughout the state, lynching sprees often expressed the unstable social relations of novel places. Spates of lynching, sometimes preformed by well-organized vigilante committees and sometimes by spontaneously-assembled mobs, followed allegations of property crimes and murder in Denver, Pueblo, Leadville, and smaller hinterland towns, such as Ouray, in the 1860s, 1870s, and 1880s (Chapters 2 and 3).

However, by the 1880s, Coloradoans turned away from lynching persons accused of transgressions against property and began to reserve mob murder for those accused of murder and sexual offenses (pp. 54, 73). Homicides that were viewed as particularly heinous were the most likely to provoke mob violence. Leonard highlights this tendency with an in-depth analysis of the 1884 Ouray lynching of Michael and Margaret Cuddigan, a husband and pregnant wife who had allegedly murdered a ten-year-old child, Mary Rose Matthews (pp. 73-87). Leonard also charts the "tug-of-war" between lynching's proponents and its opponents. Advocates of lynching often cited the purportedly deterrent effect of rapid hanging on crime, and the expense that it spared county coffers from an unpredictably and potentially lengthy trial. However, beginning in the 1880s, critics of mob vio-

lence gained the upper hand and law enforcement became more aggressive about protecting prisoners from mobs. Opponents declared lynching inconsistent with "civilization" and cited the potentially negative effect of mob killings on investment and the attraction of new settlers (Chapter 5). Finally, between the 1880s and 1919, as lynching in Colorado waned, it also became highly racialized. Leonard describes how white Coloradoans drew upon racial and ethnic animosities to collectively murder at least nineteen Hispanics, nine African-Americans, five Italians, two Chinese and one Jew (Chapter 6).

Leonard has written a well-researched and highly readable history of a hitherto-neglected topic in Colorado's past. He skillfully traces general patterns in collective violence in the state, yet also understands that with lynching, specificity matters. Throughout the book, he adeptly weaves in the details of illustrative cases. Despite the necessity to impose coherence on a complex and disorderly topic, Leonard's narrative flows well. Moreover, his occasional use of wit leavens a morbid topic. Yet it would be helpful if Leonard would connect more of the dots and view events in Colorado as an aspect of a larger cultural transformation in the West and in the United States. Lynchers in the West and in other regions acted out a vision of punitive, localized criminal justice that rejected reforms that sought to centralize and regularize the legal system. By contrast, the growing number of "respectable" people in western towns who rejected lynching placed their faith in due process law as a regulator of social order and the flow of capital. Regardless, reading Leonard's book will amply repay those interested in lynching in the history of Colorado and of the American West.

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### **Into the West: The Story of Its People.**

By Walter Nugent. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999. *xvii + 493 pp.* *Illus., maps, notes, bib., index.* Cloth, \$35.

*Reviewed by Don Hodgson, Eastern Wyoming College*

Not only does Walter Nugent's *Into the West* add to a growing interest in the 20<sup>th</sup> century American West but comes at an opportune time on the eve of the 2000 census. Basing his research on a wealth of demographic data, Nugent undertakes the task of presenting the story of the West from the first Native American migrants to the more recent Vietnamese and Cambodians. His expansive and well-documented work chronicles the myriad of groups from within and outside the

nation that poured into the West to create a landscape of ethnic, racial and cultural diversity. From the earliest time, the West became a "melting pot" of sorts for peoples, who, according to Nugent, were motivated by the desire for land, its resources, a better quality of life, material gain and even nostalgia (Nugent applies nostalgia to the desire for adventure, individualism, freedom, romance, and secrecy).

With an obligatory reference to Turner's "frontier thesis," Nugent differentiates between the *frontier* and the *west*. Discounting the end of the frontier in 1890, the expected question is pressed, "Where is the West?" Relying on the U.S. Census Bureau's delineation of 13 states in the Mountain West and Pacific area that stretch from Montana to New Mexico and west to the Pacific, Nugent adds the Great Plains along with Alaska and 20<sup>th</sup> century Hawaii for his preference of a "Census West plus the Great Plains." Definition in hand, the first third of the book presents a sketchy but coherent overview of the West's history up to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Despite the familiar story of exploration and empire, the interpretative and thematic approach of immigration is emphasized; and the patterns of diversity, minorities and urbanization are established for more intensive consideration in the remainder of the book.

Demographics not only help to explain who came into the West but also permit a review of assumptions about its history. For instance, rather than casting blame on the Spanish and Mexican occupation, Nugent contends that the California gold rush resulted in the "great devastation" to Native Americans in that state. Between 1848 and 1860, California's Native population fell from an estimated 200-250,000 to a mere 20-25,000. In another revision, despite drought and depression that produced adverse effects on the West in the 1890s and the 1930s, economic gains were still made and people continued to migrate into the region. California was able to gain nearly 200,000 people during the 1890s; and in the Great Depression, Nugent relates, "Most states in the region, and southern California above all, continued to grow well beyond the national average of the 1930s." Regarding the baby boom, assumed to have begun at the conclusion of World War II, Nugent relies on demographics to argue that the baby boom began in 1941 and lasted until 1965. Coupled with the swelling migration of the post-war years and the growth of cities and industry, the West had become by 1960 the "leading edge of American culture, economy and society."

Nourished by railroads, mining, ranching, farming, and growing cities, the West was in the opening years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century being transformed by newcomers and prosperity. Simultaneously, rural and urban growth were occurring in the West. Homesteading reached a peak in 1913 in what Nugent describes as the "Golden Age of the Settlement Frontier." He writes, "In the first thirteen years of the century the Great Plains west of the 98<sup>th</sup> and 100<sup>th</sup> meridians truly opened up... The entire Plains became an enormous wheat field and cow pasture."

New Deal public works such as dams, irrigation systems and roads brought long-lasting consequences for the West. And the 1934 Taylor Grazing Act, passed in the interests of

conservation, served to stabilize ranching, but unlike the historic Homestead Act, did not draw large numbers of people into the West. Empowering ranching interests, "the rancher finally defeated the homesteader," but for the Great Plains, it would henceforth fail to keep pace with the rest of the West in population growth. Wyoming is an example of limited and anemic population increases.

World War II accelerated changes that Nugent asserts were bound to occur in the West. Cities in the West gained more people, more industry, more military bases, more Latinos and more black migrants. Los Angeles' horizontal expansion became a model for other cities, while Boeing and Seattle boomed as did the Northwest. Las Vegas lost innocent obscurity, Las Alamos mysteriously appeared, and small cities such as Wichita, Ogden, San Antonio and others across the West moved beyond adolescence.

The concluding two chapters focus on the bracero program, the 1965 Watts riot, the consequences of the 1965 and 1986 immigration reform acts, interstate highways, urban-metropolitan sprawl and the dramatic increase in Latin-American and Asian peoples.

Nugent's book invites readers and purveyors of Western history to incorporate population and demographics into their understanding of the West, past and present. Clearly, a deeper appreciation for diversity and minorities is gained from the reading, and there is a greater sense of continuity between the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in the West. Readers in Wyoming and surrounding states may be dismayed at the lack of attention given their own state's events as the author increasingly focuses on Los Angeles and California as the book progresses into the 1990s. It would have also been interesting to have included information about the missile defense system that sprouted missile silos like anthills across the Great Plains.

Nugent recognizes that the West was always fragmented and diverse, but was also a distinct region that became integrated into the nation during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and assumed national leadership. In his conclusion, Nugent calls for "A new national story, one that must include all the American people, whatever their ancestors' origins . . ." Few would argue with that plea. *Into the West* represents a solid and substantial beginning.

### **The Federal Landscape: An Economic History of the Twentieth Century West.**

By Gerald D. Nash. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1999. 224 pp. Maps, notes, bib. essay, index. Cloth, \$40; paper, \$17.95.

*Reviewed by Mike Muckey, Powell, Wyoming*

In his book, *The Federal Landscape*, the late Gerald Nash wrote an overview about the federal government's financial contributions and influence in the economic development of the 20<sup>th</sup> century American West. *The Federal Landscape* takes the reader from 1900, a time when the West was still, for the most part, a colony of the East and dependent on the capital of eastern investors, to the development of the com-



puter chip and the West's emergence as a region at the forefront of American economic and technological development at the dawn of a new century. However, Nash argues that this transition would not have come about had it not been for the federal government's massive infusion of cash into the region during the 20th century.

Nash suggests that during the first 30 years of the 20th century the West was still a colony of the East. Following the stock market crash of 1929 and the onset of the Great Depression, the role played by the federal government in the West changed. Under the New Deal the federal government began spending billions of dollars on massive dam building projects which continued into the 1960s and 1970s. Those projects provided flood control, water supplies for communities and agriculture, electricity, and jobs. The outbreak of World War II brought increasing federal infusions of cash. Between 1940 and 1945 the government spent \$60 billion in the West. Defense contracts led to the expansion and growth of companies like Boeing, and military bases that sprang up across the West employed hundreds of thousands of civilians.

Following World War II the cash coming into the West grew. A federal highway system was constructed, and defense spending increased as America fought a cold war with the Soviet Union and conventional wars in Korea and Viet-

nam. The federal highway system connected the far-flung cities of the region and brought tourists from other areas of the country. Defense contracts led to a growth in the aerospace industry and the development and growth of Silicon Valley.

During the last 30-35 years, the situation has changed. A number of groups want to slow or stop development as they seek to preserve the West. The cold war has ended, and some military bases have closed, resulting in a significant decrease in the number of defense contracts and civilian workers employed by the government. In spite of this, Nash argues that many companies once dependent on government contracts have adapted and continue to prosper, relying primarily on business dealings with the private sector. The author describes the past two decades as the beginning of a new economic growth cycle focusing on computers, transportation, and telecommunication, with less reliance on government funding. However, little of this development in the West would have come about without the massive infusion of federal funds throughout most of the century.

*The Federal Landscape* ranks high among Nash's many contributions to the study of the West. This concise, easy to read overview, will be useful to anyone interested in the history of the 20th century American West. Also, it will surely find its way into the classroom.

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# Wyoming Picture

From Photographic Collections  
in Wyoming

Newspaperman Tom F. Daggett edited three different newspapers in the Big Horn Basin in the early days. A talented writer and fearless editor, he worked for newspapers and wire services as a reporter around the country prior to coming to Wyoming. The story goes that while on assignment in El Paso, Texas, he quit as a national correspondent for a New York newspaper and moved to Wyoming.

He started a newspaper in the oil boomtown of Bonanza and called it the *Bonanza Rustler*. He wrote the news and editorials, but he also set the type.

When that town faded away, he moved the paper to Basin and renamed it the *Big Horn County Rustler*. (Later, it merged with the *Basin Republican* to become the *Basin Republican-Rustler*).

Soon after the first newspaper in Worland was founded in 1905, the *Worland Grit*, Daggett was hired as its editor by the owners, C. F. Robertson and A. G. Rupp. Daggett died in Worland in 1910. It is said that his body is buried in an unmarked grave in the Worland cemetery.

*Tom Daggett in the offices of his newspaper, the Big Horn County Rustler, Sept. 30, 1899*



State Parks and Cultural Resources Department

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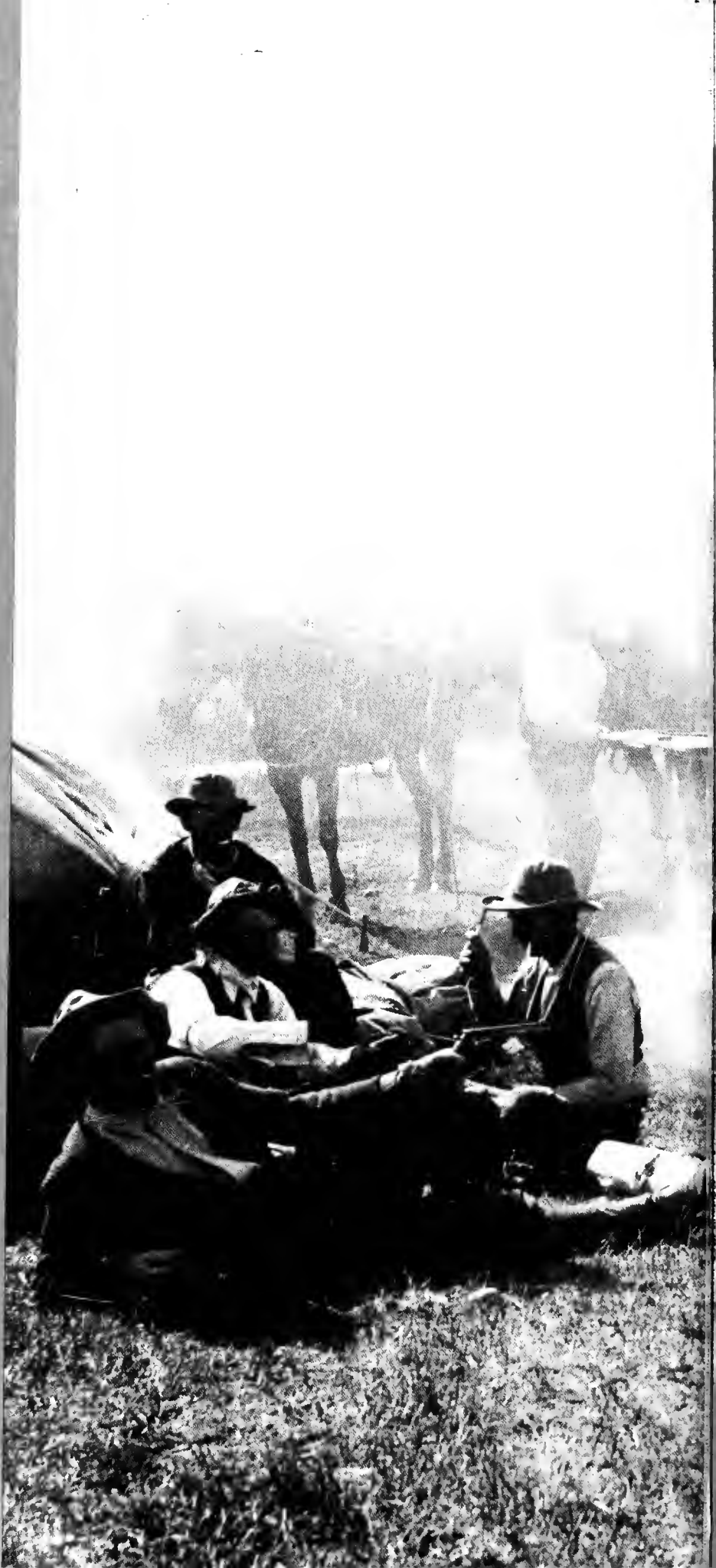
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*The Society also welcomes special gifts and memorials.*

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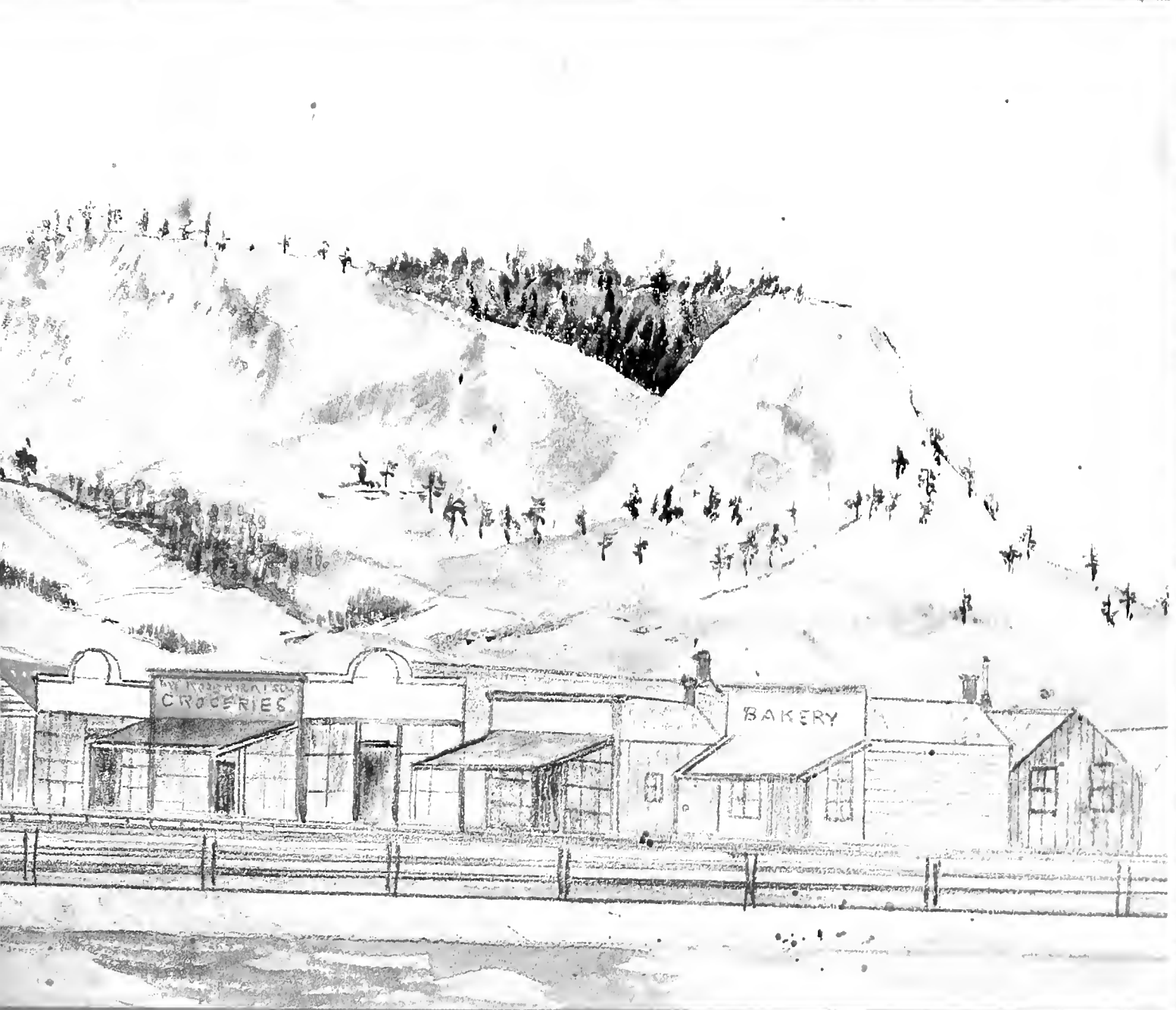
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*Annals of*  
**WYOMING**

The Wyoming History Journal

Spring 2003

Vol. 75, No. 2



## The Cover Art

### ***“Sheridan, 1903”***

*Anonymous artist*

*a watercolor painting in the Percy Metz collection, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming*

*This small watercolor depicts Sheridan as it appeared in 1903, according to this anonymous artist. The charming picture was donated to the American Heritage Center as part of the Percy Metz collection. Metz, a long-time Big Horn Basin resident, served for many years as a state district judge. Prior to that time, he was county attorney for Big Horn County when the county lines extended to include much of the Big Horn Basin.*

## **The Society, Annals Staff Thank Five Retiring Editorial Board Members**

**My special thanks to five exceptional friends of this journal. All five have served eight years on the Annals Board of Editors. Their two terms will expire with this issue. Thank you to Barbara Bogart, Evanston; Mabel Brown, Cheyenne; Thomas Stroock, Casper; Lawrence M. Woods, Worland; and Sherry Smith, Moose/Dallas.**

**Eight years ago, they graciously agreed to serve on the board for the newly established Society publication called Wyoming History Journal. The publication, edited by Rick Ewig and this writer, was created in response to the then State Department of Commerce**

**director’s eviction of the Society from her offices. Later, when our relationship returned to its traditional cordiality in 1997, the Journal became Annals of Wyoming, and the five continued to serve-- helping with advice, manuscript reviewing, and support. Throughout those years since their appointment to their first four-year terms and after their subsequent reappointment for four more years, they have been consistent friends of our journal. On behalf of the Society and the staff of Annals of Wyoming, “thank you, Barbara, Mabel, Sherry, Tom, and Larry!”**

**--Phil Roberts**

### **Information for Contributors:**

The editor of *Annals of Wyoming* welcomes manuscripts and photographs on every aspect of the history of Wyoming and the West. Appropriate for submission are unpublished, research-based articles which provide new information or which offer new interpretations of historical events. First-person accounts based on personal experience or recollections of events will be considered for use in the “Wyoming Memories” section. Historic photo essays for possible publication in “Wyoming Memories” also are welcome. Articles are reviewed and refereed by members of the journal’s Editorial Advisory Board and others. Decisions regarding publication are made by the editor. Manuscripts (along with suggestions for illustrations or photographs) should be submitted on computer diskettes in a format created by one of the widely-used word processing programs along with two printed copies. Submissions and queries should be addressed to Editor, *Annals of Wyoming*, P. O. Box 4256, University Station, Laramie WY 82071, or to the editor by e-mail at the following address: [rewig@uwyo.edu](mailto:rewig@uwyo.edu)

# Annals of WYOMING

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Inquiries about membership, mailing, distribution, reprints and back issues should be addressed to Judy West, Coordinator, Wyoming State Historical Society, PNB# 184, 174011 Dell Range Blvd., Cheyenne WY 82009-4945. Editorial correspondence should be addressed to the editorial office of *Annals of Wyoming*, American Heritage Center, P. O. Box 4256, University Station, Laramie WY 82071. Our e-mail address is [rewig@uwyo.edu](mailto:rewig@uwyo.edu). Printed by Pioneer Printing, Cheyenne.

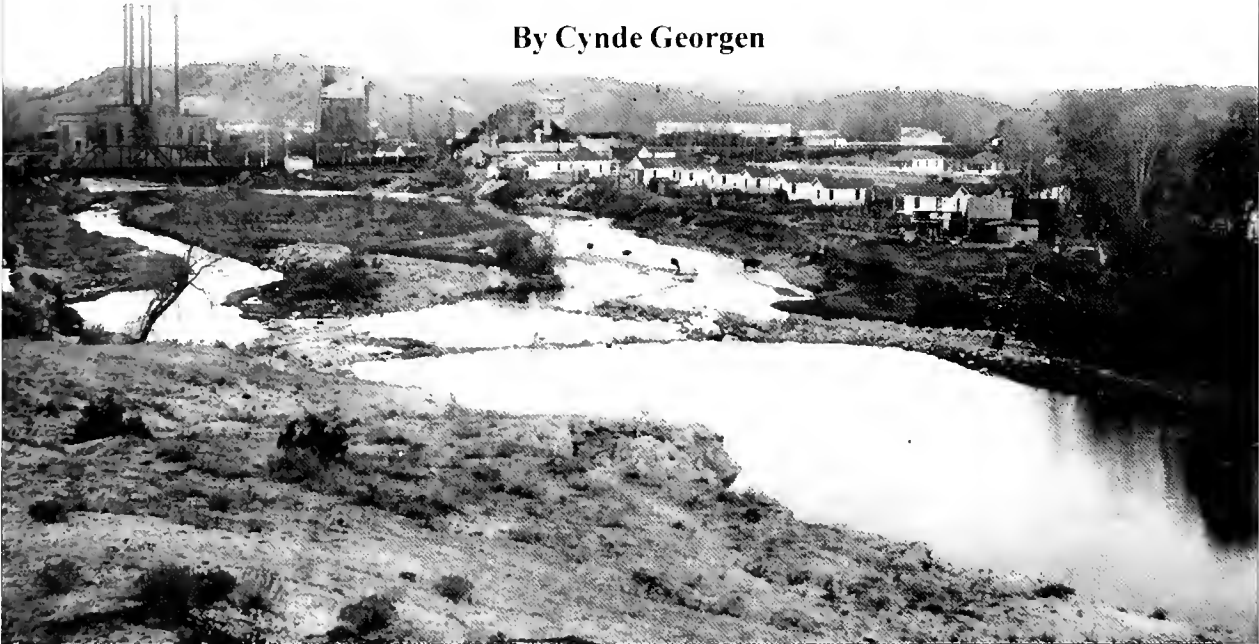
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# SUBJECTS OF THE MIKADO

## Sheridan County's Japanese Community, 1900-1930

By Cynde Georgen



Stanley Kuzara collection. Wyoming Room, Sheridan County Fulmer Public Library

"Japtown" (the white houses along the creek bank) near Acme Coal Camp, Sheridan County, c. 1912.

During the early years of the twentieth century, Sheridan County became home to immigrants from around the world. Hundreds of Czechs, Slovaks, Montenegrins, Poles, Austrians, Hungarians and Scots came to work in the underground coal mines north of Sheridan. A dozen or so Chinese entrepreneurs opened restaurants and laundries, while uncounted numbers of Mexican laborers came to work in the sugar beet and potato fields owned by German and Scandinavian farmers. Prior to 1908, however, the number of Japanese residents in the county could be counted on one hand.

According to the U. S. Census, no one of Japanese birth lived in Sheridan County in 1900. By 1910, 80 men, women and children claimed Japanese nativity. The Japanese population dropped to fewer than 60 in 1920. By 1930, census records and Sheridan City Directory listings showed only a few dozen Japanese families remaining in the area. Within a year or two, most of these families were gone as well, leaving only a handful of first and second generation Japanese residents in the county.

This gradual disappearance had to do in part with the economic hardships of the Great Depression as well as the declining fortunes of the coal mines and the resulting impact upon the railroads. One of the most impor-

tant factors, however, was the enactment of a series of federal and state laws severely restricting both the arrival of new Asian immigrants and the civil rights of unnaturalized resident aliens.<sup>1</sup>

Most of the Japanese men living in Sheridan County prior to 1920 worked as section hands for the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy railroad. Almost all had arrived in the United States prior to 1907, the year Japan and America signed the "Gentlemen's Agreement" which called for Japan to halt the emigration of Japanese labor to the United States.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A substantial body of work exists which focuses on Asian immigration issues. These include: Charles McClain, ed. *Japanese Immigrants and American Law: The Alien Land Laws and Other Issues*. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1994); Roger Daniels, *Not Like Us: Immigrants and Minorities in America, 1890-1924*. (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee Publishing, 1997); Bill Ong Hing, *Making and Remaking Asian America Through Immigration Policy, 1850-1990*. (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1994); Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Rights: On Asian American Cultural Politics*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996); Rosemary Wallner, *Japanese Immigrants, 1850-1950*. (Bloomington, Minn.: Capstone Press, 2001).

<sup>2</sup> Susan Lowes, A Timeline of U. S. Immigration Laws and Rulings. @ <<http://www.nycenet.edu/csd1/museums/timelines/timeline.html>> accessed June 2001.



The laborers were brought to Sheridan under the auspices of Shinzaburo Ban, a well-educated, highly respected and extremely successful merchant and labor contractor based in Portland, Oregon. Born in Tokyo in 1854, Ban was educated in both Japanese and English, in preparation for a career in diplomacy. He spent several years with the Japanese Foreign Service and was stationed at both Shanghai and Honolulu. In 1891, Ban moved to British Columbia and entered "the commercial life." He relocated to Portland in 1896 where he "attained unusual success...as a contractor, lumber dealer and shingle manufacturer."<sup>3</sup> By the early 1900s, he was the leading Japanese businessman in the state of Oregon.<sup>4</sup> One of his specialties was recruiting workers to fill jobs that white citizens didn't want, such as migrant farm work, mining and railroad construction.

Ban's contracting business, the S. Ban Company, had two offices in Japan -- in Osaka and Tokyo -- at which they recruited Japanese workers for the Union Pacific, Southern Pacific and other railroads. The company was so successful that branch offices were soon opened in Denver, Seattle, Ogden (Utah) and Sheridan.

Upon their arrival in northern Wyoming, sometime around 1908-1909, the contract workers were provided with housing, Japanese groceries and medical care by the Ban Company. The contractor also paid for funerals for any men (and their family members) killed by accident or illness while in its employ. Of the 36 registered burials of Japanese men, women and children in Sheridan County between 1903 and 1930, 26 of them were known to have been paid for by the Ban Company. In 1909, for example, when 25-year-old K. Honda of Denver was accidentally struck by a train and killed near Alger Station north of Sheridan, local Ban Company agent F. M. Suchiro and M. Terasaki, another Ban Company employee identified as "the leader of the Japanese colony," made arrangements for Honda's burial at Mount Hope Cemetery in Sheridan.<sup>5</sup> All fees were paid by Ban despite Honda's having only been in the Sheridan area for a week or two.

In order to maintain its contract with the CB&Q, the Ban Company kept its Sheridan office open through the mid-1920s. A changing political climate in both Oregon and the rest of the United States, however, soon led to the end of imported Japanese railroad workers. In 1911, the U. S. Immigration and Naturalization Service reaffirmed an 1870 Act of Congress which stated that only whites and blacks could become naturalized citizens of the United States. In 1917, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was expanded to cover all Asians, thus eliminating any lingering hope that Japanese might

be eligible for American citizenship.<sup>6</sup> In 1923, Oregon's Alien Land Law was passed, making it illegal for non-citizens of Japanese heritage to own or lease land, including the timber lands upon which much of Ban's income relied.<sup>7</sup> The next year, the federal government's National Origins Quota Act effectively halted all immigration of non-whites by stating that "no alien ineligible for citizenship shall be admitted to the United States."<sup>8</sup>

By the end of 1924, after being stripped of his lands and livelihood, Shinzaburo Ban was bankrupt. Two years later, he left Portland and returned to his ancestral home where he eventually died without issue, bringing an end to thirteen generations of Ban family history.<sup>9</sup> By the time the company closed its Sheridan office in 1926, it was no longer importing rail workers. Instead, it provided Japanese goods and groceries for the local Asian community. Without the influx of new workers, however, Sheridan's Japanese community quickly diminished in number and the store was no longer needed.

After the Ban Company lost the railroad contract, some of its former employees stayed in Sheridan County. A few continued to work with the railroad where, with their years of experience, they became section leaders and foremen of the repair crews. Because of both language and racial barriers, however, most of the workers had to take low-paying menial jobs. Some signed on as porters for local businesses while others hired out as domestic servants and gardeners for the wealthier residents of Sheridan and Big Horn. There were also several hotel keepers, a photographer, a cook or two, and several grocers. Only four Japanese were listed as landowners in the county: they were partners in a truck farm just north of Sheridan, between the city and the mines.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Joseph Gaston, *Portland Oregon: Its History and Builders*, (Portland: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1911), 3, 383-384.

<sup>4</sup> Oregon State Department of Public Instruction, "Asian Americans in Oregon," July 1990. <<http://naldiversity.extension.oregonstate.edu/download/asianamericans.pdf>> accessed November 2001.

<sup>5</sup> "A Japanese Found Dead," *Sheridan Enterprise*, 21 September 1909.

<sup>6</sup> The 1917 Immigration Act (39 Stat. 874) specified that those aliens who would be excluded from admission to the United States included "persons who are native of islands not possessed by the United States adjacent to the Continent of Asia...."

<sup>7</sup> Tricia Knoll, *Becoming Americans: Asian Sojourners, Immigrants and Refugees in the Western U. S.* (Portland, Oregon: Coast to Coast Books, 1982). Wyoming's first anti-Japanese alien land law was not passed until 1943. See Gabriel J. Chin, "Citizenship and Exclusion: Wyoming's Anti-Japanese Alien Land Law in Context," *Wyoming Law Review* 1 (2001), 497-521.

<sup>8</sup> 43 Stat. 153.

<sup>9</sup> Gaston, *Portland, Oregon*, 383.

<sup>10</sup> Sheridan County *Polk Directories*, 1907-1930.

Even before the Ban Company pulled out of Sheridan, some of the railroaders abandoned track work and hired on with the Sheridan-Wyoming Coal and Acme Coal companies. According to city directory listings, these men did not work in the underground mines; instead, they worked above ground as tippelmen and yardmen. A 1913 newspaper article reported that:

A number of Japanese are employed permanently at the [New Acme] mine as topmen and loaders. They have their own boarding house and keep pretty much to themselves. They have been found among the best and most efficient workmen obtainable.<sup>11</sup>

According to a 1912 article, "The Japanese laborers have a small settlement of their own and are more than content with their quarters."<sup>12</sup> This group of small, white houses along the banks of Tongue River--known as "Japtown"--was located just down the road from "Macaroni Flats," a community of Italian miners.<sup>13</sup>

If they did not live in one of the mining communities, most unmarried Japanese men roomed at one of the Japanese boarding houses located near the railroad tracks on the north end of Sheridan. The San Yo Hotel

(later Sumida House) and J. Hosaki's Japanese Hotel on North Broadway--along with the Ban Company's building on North Crook Street--were home to the bulk of the Japanese workers. Others lived in tarpaper shacks and converted railroad cars erected in the CB&Q's right-of-way between Fifth and Eighth streets.

Census records indicate that while many of Sheridan County's Japanese laborers were married, only a few had their wives with them; many of the women stayed in Japan where they lived on the wages sent back home by their husbands. Of the Japanese women who did come to Sheridan, most did not speak English and were fairly isolated from the rest of the mining and railroad communities. Very few, if any, worked outside the home and only a few of their children were enrolled in public school.<sup>14</sup>

Even if they were fluent in English, few Japanese integrated with the Anglo community; nor were they particularly encouraged to do so. Federal, state and local forces were against them: the Japanese were prohibited from becoming citizens, they could not own land, they could not even bring their wives and children over from Japan.<sup>15</sup> At the local level, on those rare occasions when they chose to acknowledge the city's Oriental population at all, Sheridan's newspapers referred to the Japanese as "Yellow Men," "Japs," "Sons of Nippon," and "Subjects of the Mikado."

Like their fellow immigrants from other countries, Sheridan County's Japanese residents had occasional brushes with the law. Most had to do with a combination of alcohol and billiards. In 1910, four "Sons of the Mikado" were arrested for gambling at Y. Koyama's Japanese Billiard Parlor on East First Street in Sheridan. The unnamed foursome posted bail but forfeited the bond when they declined to appear in court to enter a plea. A few years later, five unidentified Japanese men were arrested for gambling at a pool hall on North Broadway, adjacent to the railroad tracks. While they also chose to forfeit their bonds, the Japanese proprietor of the hall was convicted of "keeping his place of

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TOKIO, JAPAN                      OSAKA, JAPAN

*S. Ban Company Advertisement, City Directory, Portland, Oregon, 1924*

<sup>11</sup> "Post Representatives Visit the Sheridan County Mines." *Sheridan Post*. 11 November 1913.

<sup>12</sup> "New Acme Camp Newest Coal Mine." *Sheridan Enterprise*. 5 September 1912.

<sup>13</sup> Stanley Kuzara, *Black Diamonds of Sheridan* (Sheridan, Wyoming, 1977), 113.

<sup>14</sup> Federal Census Records, Sheridan County, Wyoming, 1910-1930.

<sup>15</sup> The same National Origins Quota Act (45 Stat. 153) that banned the importation of new foreign laborers also forbade the wives and children of previous immigrants from entering the country.

business open after midnight and permitting liquor to be drunk on the premises."<sup>16</sup>

Violent crime was apparently rare within the local Asian community, but there were exceptions. In May 1909, Herbert Yakamura died as a result of "being struck on the head by a billiard cue ... by a fellow countryman."<sup>17</sup> According to the *Sheridan Enterprise*, conflicting stories were told as to the reason for the altercation:

From the story told by the Japanese it seems that Yakamura and others were playing pool in the building used by the colony as headquarters in the northern part of the city, and that one of the number struck Yakamura over the head with the cue, not intending to hurt him. But the blow was harder than anticipated and Yakamura was taken to the hospital, where he died ... Another story is that the Japanese were incensed and had it in for Yakamura on account of his having taken out his first papers, intending to become an American citizen, and that he was hurt in a fight, but this story was not the one given out by the Japanese who were present at the time the deed was done ...<sup>18</sup>

The *Enterprise* went on to describe Yakamura as:

... a hard working Japanese, a market gardener, and had his headquarters on Big Goose creek where he raised vegetables and sold them in the city. He is said to have had considerable money, and is spoken of by those who knew him as a good, sober and industrious young fellow, being about twenty-five years old.<sup>19</sup>

The name of the assailant in Yakamura's death was not revealed in the papers or other official records. It was simply noted that he "left the country" and was not seen again. Funeral home records, incidentally, referred to Yakamura as "H. Kayama," and stated that his death was an accident.<sup>20</sup> This type of name change was not unusual; most Anglo-Americans made little effort to learn the correct spelling of any foreign-sounding names, be they Japanese, Chinese, Polish or Greek.

Accidents and disease were the leading causes of death among all immigrant laborers in Sheridan County. Accidents were common in the mines and along the railroad tracks; dozens of men and boys of all nationalities were killed during the mining boom of the 1910s and 1920s. At least four of the deceased were Japanese section hands who received fatal "crushing injuries" while working for the railroad and at the mines.<sup>21</sup>

Death from disease was also common. Typhoid, which occasionally swept through the mining camps and shanty towns that grew up along the railroad tracks, killed at

least four Japanese miners and railroaders between 1908 and 1911.<sup>22</sup> Particularly lethal to the immigrant community was the Spanish Influenza epidemic of 1918. In the last three months of that year, just in Sheridan County alone, several dozen men, women and children of every nationality died of the flu or its complications. Of the 18 men and women that died at Sheridan's Emergency Hospital -- established just to treat influenza victims -- four were known to be from the Japanese community:

*October 18, 1918* -- A young Japanese woman was another victim of influenza yesterday, her death having occurred at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. The young woman had been ill some days and was removed yesterday to the new emergency hospital where death occurred shortly after.

*October 22, 1918* -- A Japanese, whose name is at present unknown, died at the emergency hospital this afternoon at one o'clock. The man had been ill some time and for the past twenty-four hours his condition was such that it was known that death could not long be delayed.

*October 25, 1918* -- A woman whose name is at present unknown, but who is of Japanese nationality, died last night at the emergency hospital of pneumonia resulting from influenza.

*November 3, 1918* -- S. Akagaki died yesterday morning at 11:30 o'clock at the emergency hospital after a brief illness, his death due to influenza. Deceased was a Japanese who had been employed by the Burlington [Railroad]. At the present time his wife is also seriously ill.<sup>23</sup>

According to funeral home records, a total of nine Japanese were among those who died of influenza between October 1918 and March 1919. When they be-

<sup>16</sup> "Japanese Convicted," *Sheridan Post*, March 1, 1918.

<sup>17</sup> "Japanese Dies State Hospital," *Sheridan Enterprise*, May 9, 1909.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Smith Funeral Home, Funeral Record No. 537, May 8, 1909, Wyoming Room, Sheridan County Fulmer Public Library, Sheridan.

<sup>21</sup> Japanese-born victims of track-related accidents include 41-year-old M. Uchigama (April 10, 1911), 24-year-old R. Hiyayama (March 26, 1913), 33-year-old Teizo Takahashi (June 2, 1921) and 36-year-old Takenosuke Hasegawa (December 19, 1922). Reed and Champion funeral homes, Sheridan, burial records held in the Wyoming Room, Sheridan County Fulmer Public Library.

<sup>22</sup> Japanese typhoid victims included I. Masaki (January 1, 1908), K. Mikieda (March 16, 1910), S. Ohashi (August 13, 1910) and 20-year-old C. Sumimoto (August 11, 1911). Reed and Champion funeral homes, Sheridan, burial records.

<sup>23</sup> *Sheridan Post*, October 18, 22, 25, 1918, November 3, 1918.

came ill, most of the Japanese victims did not go to the emergency hospital, choosing instead to be cared for at home by family and friends. In these cases, very little was reported about their deaths. While obituaries for Anglo-European fatalities were extensive, those for Japanese sufferers were very short. Even so, they reveal how pervasive the disease was in the tightly-knit community:

*October 18, 1918* -- The bodies of U. Okazaki and his young wife are both at the Champion & Shannon mortuary where funeral services will probably be held Sunday. The husband died October 11 and on Wednesday morning at 8:30 the wife passed away. Both are Japanese and have made their home in Sheridan for some time.

*October 22, 1918* -- A quadruple funeral was held Sunday afternoon at the Champion & Shannon chapel, the services being for four Japanese, all victims of the prevalent malady. They were members of one family. U. Okazaki died on October 11, and his wife passed away on the 16th. While the bodies were being held at the undertakers awaiting interment the father of Mr. Okazaki passed away. On Thursday Mrs. Akimoto died at the emergency hospital and the funerals of all four were held at the same time.

*October 29, 1918* -- A double funeral was held at the Champion & Shannon chapel Sunday afternoon at 2 o'clock after which the bodies of Mrs. Equeki and S. Otoni, two Japanese who died a few days previous were laid to rest.<sup>24</sup>

Most of these men and women -- as well as others from the Japanese community who died in Sheridan County -- were buried in the Mount Hope (now Sheridan Municipal) Cemetery. Their resting places are indicated by tall stone markers etched with Japanese characters.<sup>25</sup>

Mount Hope Cemetery also contains the remains of at least one Japanese suicide victim. On July 15, 1914, 39-year-old Sam Munesato, reportedly depressed by a combination of accumulating debts and ill health, shot and killed himself in his small Sheridan home. He and his wife had arrived in Sheridan some seven months earlier from Montana. Munesato worked for a brief time for another Japanese immigrant named Tom Otani, but later purchased a small lunch cart (also called a "waffle cart") and went into business for himself. According to friends, Munesato got behind in his payments and became despondent, acting "rather strange for several days" prior to committing "the rash act."<sup>26</sup>

Munesato's suicide was front page news in both of Sheridan's newspapers. The following is excerpted from

a July 17 *Sheridan Post* article titled "A Subject of the Mikado Takes Life by Pistol Route:"

In a rusty, sheet iron shack, located in a lonely spot between the alley off Alger avenue west of Main Street and Big Goose creek, and about 200 feet north of the bridge at the city mission, some time after 11 o'clock Wednesday Sam Munesato, a Jap, placed the muzzle of a .45-caliber Colts' in his mouth, pulled the trigger and sent a bullet thru his brain, the ball not stopping until after it had pierced the board ceiling above his head. How much farther the missile went is not known for its further course was not traced.

Sam, whose wife is a white woman, was the proprietor of a lunch wagon located on Alger avenue a few doors east of Swan's grocery. At 11 o'clock Wednesday forenoon Sam left his place of business stating to his wife that he was going after some meat for the noonday meal. His wife states that he was in good humor, and said he would be back in just a few minutes. He did not return, however, when he had said he would. Neither did he show up at the lunch car during the afternoon.

At a few minutes prior to 6 o'clock in the evening, Mrs. Munesat went over to the hovel on Goose creek she and her husband called home. Upon entering the place she found in a small room at the northwest corner of the building the dead body of Sam lying across a bed, with the revolver clutched in his right hand lying upon his breast. She gave the alarm and in a short time two or three officers were on the scene, besides a large crowd of morbid spectators.

The situation of the body, and other indications in evidence, led to the conclusion that Sam had assumed a standing position close to and with his back to the bed. He evidently placed the gun against his breast with his right hand grasping the butt, inclined his head forward until the muzzle was in his mouth, then pulled the trigger.

On a small stand near the bed occupied by the corpse was found a piece of brown wrapping paper upon which was written in the Japanese language a note bearing the address of deceased's relatives in Japan, also the request that they should not be apprised of the fact that he had killed himself but that they should be told that he had sickened and died from natural causes.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> *Sheridan Post*, October 18, 22, 19, 1918.

<sup>25</sup> Several Japanese burial plots are concentrated in Lot 1-block 16, Lot 16-block 16, and Lot 5-block 3. Others are scattered throughout the cemetery.

<sup>26</sup> "Sends Bullet Through Head," *Sheridan Enterprise*, July 16, 1914.

<sup>27</sup> "A Subject of the Mikado Takes Life by Pistol Route," *Sheridan Post*, July 17, 1914.



*Anna and  
Tadaichi  
Kawamoto,  
Sheridan,  
Wyoming, 1913*

After her husband's death (and burial, paid for by the Ban Company), Munesato's widow left Sheridan. It was very hard in those days for any widow to make a living; for a woman who had married an Asian immigrant, it was even more difficult. Racial intermarriage was not appreciated by the local community, whether the couples involved were Asian and white, Indian and white, Hispanic and white or Black and white. In 1913 the Wyoming legislature passed a bill prohibiting white persons from marrying "Negroes, Mullatoes, Mongolians or Malays."<sup>28</sup> Even so, census records indicate a number of mixed marriages between Japanese men and Anglo women (there were none between Anglo men and Japanese women).<sup>29</sup>

One of these mixed marriages, between a Polish-American maid and a Japanese railroad worker, is fairly well documented. Tadaichi Kawamoto, known locally as "Tim," was born in Hiroshima, Japan, in 1882.<sup>30</sup> He came to the United States in 1896, at which point he can be connected with the Shinzaburo Ban Company in Portland. It is not known if he came to the U. S. on his own or was recruited by Ban.

Kawamoto worked on railroads in several locations before coming to Sheridan County in 1902. That same year he was promoted to the position of foreman of the section gang working at the Dietz Mine north of Sheridan. Sometime around 1912, he bought three lots of land in Sheridan, which he later lost when Wyoming's alien land laws took effect.

About this same time, Tim met and married Anna Bertha Clara Blansky, a 16-year-old Polish-American working as a pantry girl at the Dietz Hotel. Born in Illinois, Anna was the stepdaughter of Stanley Petros, a coal miner who worked in Kawamoto's section gang. Anna and Tim married in 1913 and moved into their

first home, a pair of boxcars placed together near the railroad depot. They later lived in Dietz and Monarch before moving again to Sheridan.

The Kawamotos had several children, all of whom attended local schools. In an ironic twist, daughter Grace Kawamoto received an award for "Best Girl Citizen" of Sheridan High School in 1932 -- a year during which her father was still excluded from applying for citizenship, despite having lived and worked in the United States for 36 years. It was not until 1952, just a few months after the McCarran-Walter Act removed race as a basis for exclusion, that Tim Kawamoto finally received his citizenship papers.

As a result of the failing mineral industry, changing foreign policies, and the Sheridan community's racial prejudice (usually covert but occasionally overt), less than two dozen Japanese men, women and children were still living in Sheridan County by the mid-1930s. That number continued to decline until only three or four families remained in the 1960s, and even fewer in the 80s and 90s.<sup>27</sup> While members of other ethnic groups thrived in northern Wyoming, the Japanese immigrants of the early twentieth century were unable to make Sheridan County their permanent home on the range.

<sup>28</sup> *Wyoming Session Laws* (1913), ch.7, sec. 1.

<sup>29</sup> The number of interracial marriages between Asian men and American women declined sharply after 1922, when Congress enacted the Cable Act (42 Stat. 1021), which decreed that any U.S.-born woman who married an alien who was ineligible for citizenship would automatically lose her citizenship. In a marriage terminated by divorce or death, a Caucasian woman could regain her citizenship. The Cable Act was repealed in 1936.

<sup>30</sup> The bulk of the information on the Kawamoto family was compiled by Edythe Kawamoto Vine and published in *Sheridan County Heritage Book*, Sheridan County Extension Homemakers Council, 1983. Other information comes from City Directory and Federal Census records.

<sup>27</sup> For more information on individual members of Sheridan's Japanese community, see "Alphabetical List of Japanese Residents of Sheridan County, 1903-1980," American Local History Network's Wyoming Homepage, [www.rootsweb.com/~wyoming/japindexintro.htm](http://www.rootsweb.com/~wyoming/japindexintro.htm).

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# THE WYOMING MUNICIPAL POWER AGENCY: THE EARLY YEARS

BY MICHAEL HOWE

The Wyoming Municipal Power Agency (WMPA) is a public power entity created to provide electricity to Wyoming municipalities owning their own electric distribution systems. Essentially, the WMPA is now (2003) the wholesale electricity provider for eight communities in Wyoming. This is the story of how the agency began and prospered in the four decades since the concept was first considered.<sup>1</sup>

In the 1960s, the United States Bureau of Reclamation was the primary supplier of electricity to a number of municipalities in Wyoming. During the decade, electric plant superintendents of the towns began to meet informally to discuss the issue of future power supply.<sup>2</sup> Among the issues the superintendents discussed was: What would happen if the Bureau no longer could furnish power to growing towns?

In 1973, just as the utility superintendents predicted some years earlier, the Colorado River Storage Project (CRSP), a Bureau of Reclamation project, could not meet the growing electricity needs of its consumers, including those in Wyoming. "The towns received word from the Bureau that said it would not be able to provide the electricity needed to keep up with growth, so the towns should start looking at other alternatives," said George Clarke, Lusk attorney who took an early role in the development of the WMPA.<sup>3</sup> CRSP sent a letter to its consumers on July 12, 1973, requesting that they curtail electric service and start generating their own electricity as soon as possible.<sup>4</sup>

Further, the government agency warned that current electricity wholesale rates would have to increase. At a 1973 meeting in Denver, Bureau officials proposed a rate increase of five percent. If users exceeded the allotted kilowatts, the Bureau planned to charge five times the normal rate for each additional kilowatt.<sup>5</sup>

The rate increase posed a significant problem for Wyoming towns, but potentially more significant was the "over-allotment charge." Most Wyoming towns expected continued growth and most officials believed that, if the new policies were implemented, their towns would suffer from restricted growth and the inability to provide sufficient electricity to existing residents.

The superintendents agreed that if towns were to cooperate in solving the power problem, they would require substantial legal assistance. After some discussion, the group decided that the role best could be filled by a local attorney, from one of the affected communities, and one with Wyoming municipal experience. Such a lawyer would be a better choice than an attorney from a large law firm practicing far away.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, Roy Shimek, the superintendent of Lusk, suggested involving George Clarke, an attorney from his community of Lusk. Clarke had substantial experience in city issues and accepted the offer to work with the group of utility superintendents. The group began meeting on a more regular, formal basis.

With pressure from the Bureau of Reclamation to curtail the use of power, and a potential opportunity with

<sup>1</sup> In 1973 the members of WMPA began to keep meeting minutes. For information about the organization's actions before that time, interviews of participants were the best available sources.

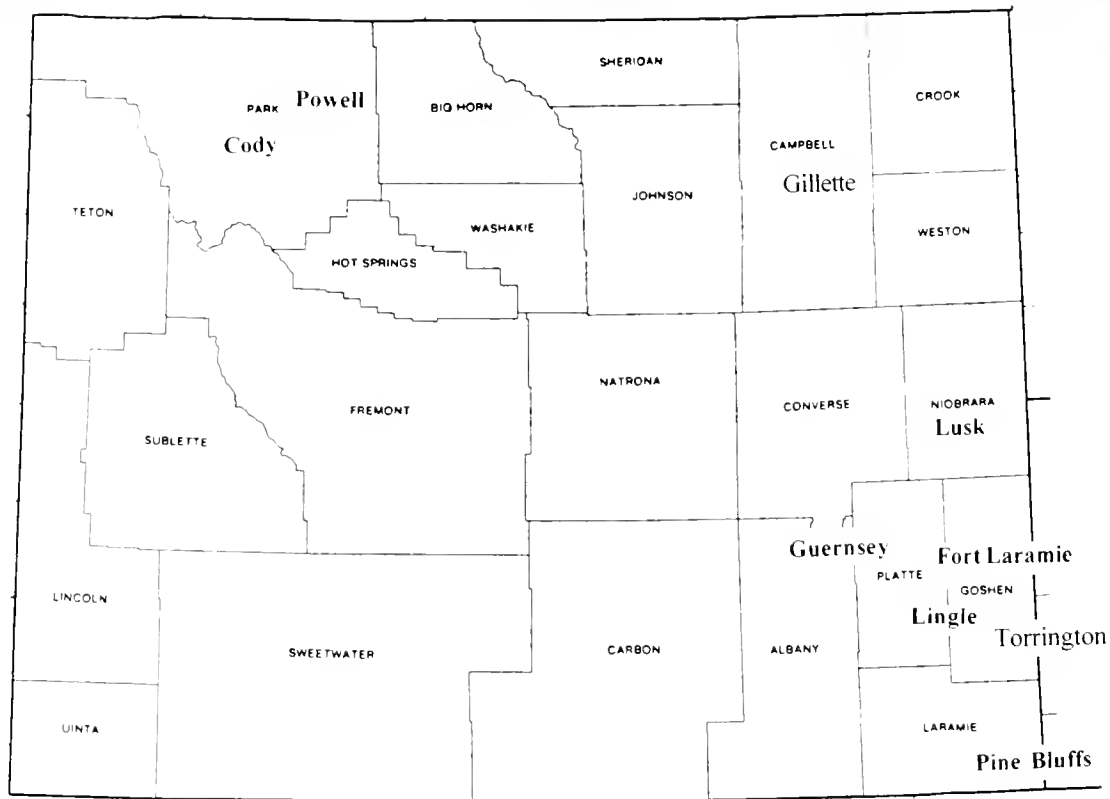
<sup>2</sup> George Clarke, interview by Michael Howe, Lusk, Wyo., 16 April 2003.

<sup>3</sup> George Clarke, interview by Michael Howe, tape recording, Lusk, Wyo., 16 April 2003.

<sup>4</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*. Lusk, Wyo., 16 August 1973.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*. Casper, Wyo., 19 July 1973.



*Member towns of the Wyoming Municipal Power Agency*

the MBPP, the members decided it would be best to incorporate and to combine all power contracts at the earliest possible date.<sup>7</sup> Clarke created a non-profit organization, formalizing the partnership of the communities that would later grow into the Wyoming Municipal Power Agency.<sup>8</sup> Representatives from nine Wyoming towns—Cody, Lusk, Lingle, Guernsey, Wheatland, Fort Laramie, Torrington, Pine Bluffs, and Gillette—established the Wyoming Municipal Power Agency.<sup>9</sup>

By the beginning of 1974, with the WMPA legally incorporated in Wyoming, the member towns developed an agreement to allow the WMPA to be the wholesale provider of electricity.<sup>10</sup> In doing so, the plan was to have all power supplied by the Bureau consolidated and, under a service agreement, distributed by the WMPA to the member communities. Combining power contracts would establish the WMPA as the wholesale electricity provider to its member communities. Doing this would also further unite the communities, and create a stronger voice in future negotiations with the Bureau.

At the same time that the Bureau was signaling major changes in rates and power availability, an alternative appeared. The Missouri Basin Power Project (MBPP) unveiled plans for the Laramie River Station (LRS) to be built near Wheatland. While preliminary feasibility studies were underway, attorney Clarke met

with managers from Tri-State Generation, one of the entities developing MBPP. After several meetings, Tri-State representatives offered the WMPA the opportunity to purchase up to 1.5% of the total output of the MBPP.<sup>11</sup> However, in order to do this, the WMPA would be required to purchase its percentage and become a project co-owner.

Why would Tri-State Generation agree to sell such a small share of the overall project to the WMPA? One reason was that it was politically expedient. Although the WMPA came in a little later than others, it was perceived that a wholly-owned Wyoming entity would be helpful in acquiring the necessary permits and in dealing with the State of Wyoming.<sup>12</sup> Basin Electric and Tri-State Generation essentially held open 1% of

<sup>7</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*, Casper, Wyo., 22 November 1974.

<sup>8</sup> George Clarke, interview by Michael Howe, Lusk, Wyo., 16 April 2003.

<sup>9</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*, Lusk, 16 August 1973.

<sup>10</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*, Casper, Wyo., 17 January 1974.

<sup>11</sup> Clarke interview.

<sup>12</sup> Larry LaMaack, Executive Director of the Wyoming Municipal Power Agency, interview by Michael Howe, Lusk, 16 April 2003.

the MBPP for the WMPA to purchase when it was ready.<sup>13</sup>

Throughout the discussions of how to provide electricity to member communities, it was apparent that the members of the WMPA were not entirely committed to the idea of purchasing a share of the MBPP. Other options were considered and presented. These included acquiring power contracts from Pacific Power and Light, the Nebraska Public Power District, or the local rural electric providers.<sup>14</sup>

Eventually, the decision came down to economics. After considering the options, the WMPA board concluded that regardless of the decision, the power costs would remain similar, but control and responsibilities would differ. The WMPA members decided to become a participant in the MBPP. The WMPA retained an engineering firm, financial consultants, bond counsel, and passed a resolution authorizing the WMPA for inclusion as an applicant before the Public Service Commission for Certificate of Convenience and Necessity as a joint owner of the Laramie River Station.<sup>15</sup> Formal authorization to become a participant in the MBPP was left to the individual towns for approval, however.

But even though the MBPP would become an integral aspect of the success of the Wyoming Municipal Power Agency, that project faced a number of hurdles. Meanwhile, the WMPA members had immediate problems.

As of February 21, 1974, only the town of Wheatland had signed the Integrated Service Contract, while others planned on signing it in the next couple of months. Torrington officials, however, began expressing concerns about the contract, especially as it related to the ability of a member town to withdraw from the WMPA.<sup>16</sup> The concerns were not that different than those of other members, however. Most WMPA members worried about the integrated contract which would have all federally-provided electricity supplied directly to the WMPA, who then would direct it back to the members. What happened if the WMPA failed to send electricity to a member, and what happened if the WMPA ceased to exist? The Bureau answered these questions, but only partially satisfied the members. According to the Bureau, if the federal power were not being provided by the WMPA to a member community it would do so and lower its obligation to the WMPA accordingly. If the WMPA ceased to exist, however, the Bureau would recapture the federal power and make a decision at that time as to the rights of the member community.<sup>17</sup>

By June 1974 the need to act on the MBPP opportunity came to the forefront. The MBPP's application to the Wyoming Public Service Commission included an

allocation of 50 megawatts (MW) of power to the Wyoming Municipal Power Agency.<sup>18</sup> There was pressure on the WMPA to move quickly, however, in order to secure this allocation. The challenge became financial.

Without the authority granted in a "Joint Powers Act," local governments were not allowed to cooperate on joint projects. But there was considerable opposition to passage of a Joint Powers Act by the Wyoming legislature. Pacific Power and Light, a commercial electric utility, opposed such a statute. The company was a formidable lobbying force in the legislature.<sup>19</sup> Further, some legislators opposed the action over concerns that local governments would gain too much authority. Despite the strong opposition, and with the help of State Representative Alan Simpson from the WMPA member community of Cody, the legislation eventually passed. Although Governor Ed Herschler did not sign the law, he allowed it to become law without his signature.<sup>20</sup>

By January 1975, the WMPA was very much involved in the Missouri Basin Power Project. In fact, as noted at the January 28, 1975, board meeting, the WMPA already owed \$67,000 for its share of project expenses.<sup>21</sup> To raise funds, the board members voted to assess a one-half mill levy on each kilowatt-hour for each town, based on the billing from the Bureau, through the month of May. Revenue bonds and even a loan from the State were being pursued as major sources of funding.

Attorney Clarke informed the members that if they joined together under the newly passed Joint Powers Act they could issue Revenue Bonds for the financing of the WMPA's share of the MBPP.<sup>22</sup> According to Clarke, "the only way to get this done would be to issue tax exempt bonds."<sup>23</sup>

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>14</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*. Casper, 22 November 1974.

<sup>15</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*. Casper, 22 November 1974.

<sup>16</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency, Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*. Lusk, 21 February 1974.

<sup>17</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*. Lingle, 25 April 1974.

<sup>18</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*. Lusk, 5 September 1974.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>20</sup> Larry LaMaack, Executive Director of the Wyoming Municipal Power Agency, interview by Michael Howe, Lusk, 16 April 2003.

<sup>21</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*. Cheyenne, 28 January 1975.

<sup>22</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*. Lusk, 20 June 1974.

<sup>23</sup> George Clarke, interview by Michael Howe, Lusk, 16 April 2003.



These were the reasons why, that legally, the WMPA is “a public body corporate and politic of the State of Wyoming created pursuant to the Wyoming Joint Powers Act by seven municipalities in Wyoming in order to provide for the financing, acquisition and operation of the power supply facilities and resources required to meet the electric power and energy requirements of the electric utility systems of such municipalities.”<sup>24</sup> The original members created the WMPA as a “Joint Powers Agency” as authorized under Wyoming law.<sup>25</sup> The Joint Powers Act authorized municipalities to enter into agreements with one another to create a separate agency in order to jointly supply the electricity needs of its members.<sup>26</sup>

With the construction of the MBPP still a few years down the road, the member communities still needed more electric power. The Bureau contracts had been signed and the WMPA was now acting as the wholesale provider of that electricity, but more was needed. In fact, there was a growing sense of urgency in acquiring supplemental power because of the impending Bureau’s “five times the normal rate” penalty for exceeding allotted power. Through the WMPA, member communities approached local rural electric cooperatives. As of March 21, 1975, several local rural electric cooperatives received contracts for review and indicated the intention of signing them. They would supply supplemental power to the WMPA.<sup>27</sup>

During 1975 and 1976, membership requirements in the WMPA became a heated topic. Gillette officials, who had been involved in the formation of WMPA from the beginning, opted out of full membership prior to the decision to participate in MBPP. Town officials believed the WMPA would have serious electrical transmission constraints. Besides, the town felt comfortable with its current power supply contracts from Black Hills Generation, an independently-owned private electric utility.<sup>28</sup> Nonetheless, local officials there remained interested in some involvement with the WMPA. They proposed an associate membership status at the rate of \$200 per year.<sup>29</sup>

Although most WMPA members believed the proposal was reasonable, there was a question of legality. The law creating the Joint Powers Board would not recognize having associate members, even though such membership was not a problem with an incorporated entity. Consequently, to keep Gillette involved in the organization, the members opted to remain incorporated, even after WMPA was controlled by a Joint Powers Board in order to take advantage of the financial benefits from such an organization.

These years, 1975 and 1976, were anxious times for the WMPA as it watched the MBPP slowly come to life—at least, on paper. The MBPP Management Committee, of which the WMPA had a vote, predicted that the project would be running its first unit by January 1, 1980.<sup>30</sup> Still, much needed to be done. The “Certificate of Convenience and Necessity” application was amended and needed approval, the siting permit needed to be filed and approved, pollution control bonds needed to be ratified, and ground for construction needed to be broken. The minutes of each of the WMPA meetings in 1975 and 1976 reveal discussions over the status of these permits and processes, but throughout, there was a tone of optimism.

Nonetheless, 1980, the projected date for first power generation from the project, was still four to five years away. The members still needed electric power—even with the supplemental contracts signed by the rural electric cooperatives. In an attempt to address these needs, the WMPA contacted officials of the Bureau of Reclamation about the possibility of increasing the electrical output of the Buffalo Bill Dam, on the Shoshone River near Cody, and Guernsey Dam, on the North Platte River.<sup>31</sup> The Bureau said the dams were at capacity. In April 1976 a firm promoting construction of a nuclear power plant asked the WMPA about interest in its project (although it is uncertain whether there was a proposal to purchase a portion of the plant or just to view the plant). The proposed plant would be located in Puerto Rico and would provide 600MW of electricity.<sup>32</sup> The WMPA board, however, turned down this opportunity to consider, or even view, the plant. Earlier that month, the Bonneville Power Administration contacted the WMPA and indicated that it would have surplus power available.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>25</sup> Wyoming, *Wyoming State Statutes* 16 1 101-109

<sup>26</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency, Board of Directors, *Preliminary Official Statement of the Power Supply System Revenue Bonds 1978 Series A*, Lusk, Wyo., 1 June 1978.

<sup>27</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*, Casper, Wyo., 20 March 1975.

<sup>28</sup> Larry LaMaack, Executive Director of the Wyoming Municipal Power Agency, interview by Michael Howe, Lusk, 16 April 2003.

<sup>29</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*, Lusk, 19 June 1975.

<sup>30</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*, Lingle, Wyo., 21 August 1975.

<sup>31</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*, Torrington, Wyo., 20 November 1975.

<sup>32</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*, Wheatland, Wyo., 15 February 1976.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*.

As the MBPP was being planned and developed, the WMPA found itself in an interesting position—it was the only owner of MBPP that had a member located in the construction zone—Wheatland. During the August 1975 WMPA Board meeting, the Wheatland director, Jim Dunham, reported on Wheatland residents' concerns over how the plant would impact the community. He asked how the MBPP would address those worries.<sup>34</sup>

The same question became an issue in the permitting process. The Wyoming Plant Siting Council granted a siting permit, with the stipulation that an "impact alleviation monitoring committee" be established.<sup>35</sup> Apparently this satisfied Dunham who later said that the MBPP was "bending over backwards to help the community."<sup>36</sup>

With groundbreaking ceremonies for the Laramie River Station scheduled for August 20, 1976, the WMPA needed to pursue its financing arrangements quickly. The bonds to be issued would be revenue bonds and because the WMPA would be a joint powers board, the WMPA alone would be liable for the bonds, not the individual communities.<sup>37</sup> To pay for the bonds, the agency would adjust upward the rates it charged member communities.

Clarke traveled to New York to meet with the bonding companies of The First Boston Corporation and Salomon Brothers.<sup>38</sup> He took along videos of the member communities in an attempt to portray the situation accurately.<sup>39</sup> The WMPA wanted to issue \$21.5 million in revenue bonds. On July 22, 1977, a bond resolution was presented to the members of the WMPA. The bonding instrument was intended to last 40 years.<sup>40</sup> As part of the presentation, the bonding company suggested that the WMPA establish a melded wholesale rate to its members of approximately 16 mills, and adopt a graduated rate increase over several years. The firm also pointed out that the bonds were more likely to attain a higher rating if appropriate and experienced staff were in place. Consequently, the board decided that the staff should include the executive director, an accounting manager, an electrical engineer, and a secretary.

As the bonding question was being worked out and the Wheatland issue resolved, a problem developed with another WMPA member—Torrington. The town had been a full participant in the WMPA from the beginning and throughout negotiations with MBPP, it showed every intention of remaining a full member. However, in 1976, Torrington's Town Council changed its mind.

On June 24, 1976, Al Hamilton, the mayor of Torrington, met with the WMPA Board of Directors.

Mayor Hamilton explained that he did not understand the action of his own Town Council—it was his opinion that the decision was "regrettable and not in the best interests of the citizens of Torrington."<sup>41</sup> Despite Torrington's decision to withdraw from the group, the Mayor urged the rest of the members to stay united. The town officials asked for associate member status and the WMPA agreed to allow it. The impact of Torrington's associate member status was minimal. The WMPA would accrue few benefits, other than the political strength of all public power entities being associated in one organization, from Torrington's new status.

While the board accepted Torrington's withdrawal as a full member, tensions arose over the money Torrington owed to the WMPA up to that point. After considerable discussion, the board informed Torrington officials that the town would be liable for obligations incurred "up to that date including dues on Bureau power, supplemental power and a proportionate share of the legal and engineering fees incurred to that date, including the legal fees for the bond attorneys and the test case involving the joint powers act."<sup>42</sup> The two parties reached an impasse. In April 1978, the WMPA board again considered Torrington's refusal to pay. Finally, the board concluded that, if the WMPA wanted to pursue the issue, the matter would likely have to go to court.<sup>43</sup>

After the associate membership problems with Gillette and Torrington were resolved, the WMPA had seven full, official members: Lusk, Lingle, Fort Laramie, Cody, Wheatland, Guernsey, and Pine Bluffs. This is the group that would pursue the interests of the WMPA in the MBPP, as well as other electric generation and transmission opportunities. They would share the costs and responsibilities of operating a generation and transmission organization.

<sup>34</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*, Lingle, 21 August 1975.

<sup>35</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*, Wheatland, 15 February 1976.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*, Wheatland, 24 June 1976.

<sup>38</sup> George Clarke, interview by Michael Howe, Lusk, 16 April 2003.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency, Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*, Wheatland, Wyo., 22 July 1977.

<sup>41</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*, Wheatland, 24 June 1976.

<sup>42</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*, Wheatland, 24 June 1976.

<sup>43</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*, Lusk, 13 April 1978.

While generation issues were important, the membership of the WMPA also realized it had to deal with electrical transmission problems. During the development of the MBPP, and in particular the Laramie River Station, the board decided that it would be best to build a 69-kilovolt transmission line directly from the LRS to the Town of Wheatland.<sup>44</sup> The Bureau of Reclamation required only an environmental assessment report before ultimately approving this project. The City of Cody also had a transmission problem that would require the construction of a substation near Cody. The WMPA voted to construct and fund the substation, naming it "Big George Number 1," after George Frank, then the WMPA Board chairman.<sup>45</sup>

In 1977, the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) was formed by the U.S. government to replace the Bureau of Reclamation as the entity to generate and transmit electricity in the West. The WMPA had to sign a new contract with the WAPA for transmission, and did so grudgingly because of rate design.<sup>46</sup>

**T**hroughout the years, the WMPA remained committed to the MBPP. In addition, the WMPA members looked at all options for the future growth of its member communities and potential growth of the WMPA itself. Any municipality that owned its electric distribution system prior to the adoption of the Joint Powers Act could join – this included the non-member towns of Powell, Forrington, Deaver, Basin, and Gillette. For municipalities interested in joining, they needed to express an interest in the WMPA's plans for future generation projects.

In 1976, the WMPA sent letters to Basin Electric Power Cooperative and Tri-State Generation requesting that, "if and when they determined to build additional generation in the state of Wyoming that we would be consulted."<sup>47</sup> A follow-up letter was sent in 1977 to Basin Electric, Tri-State Generation and Transmission, and Pacific Power and Light indicating that, "if any of them were to construct generation plants in Wyoming, we desired to be considered as a participant."<sup>48</sup>

In August 1977, the WMPA was asked to consider buying an interest in a nuclear power plant. The generating station was being planned near Fort St. Vrain, about 60 miles north of Denver.<sup>49</sup> At the same time, the Platte River Power Authority invited the WMPA to tour the area of a project it was designing.<sup>50</sup> Also, the WMPA was asked to consider involvement in the Rawhide power plant, in conjunction with the Platte River Power Authority. Tri-State Generation and Transmission contacted the WMPA regarding the design of yet another power

plant. Although the firm had not established the specifics of the project, it wanted a commitment from the WMPA by February 28, 1978.<sup>51</sup> In all of these cases, however, the WMPA either decided against participating or took no action.

In 1978 the utility supervisors of Fort Morgan, Colo., and Alliance, Neb., met with the WMPA with a view toward establishing a three-state municipal group to address generation and transmission.<sup>52</sup> Nothing came of the proposal, however.

The R.W. Beck consulting firm presented a hydro-power proposal to the WMPA on November 9, 1978.<sup>53</sup> The project identified the Bessemer Narrows as a potential source of hydropower. The WMPA took no action on this either.

As the Beck proposal points out, however, water played an interesting role in the WMPA's history, as well as the history of the MBPP. Much of the WMPA's power came from federal power contracts, such as the Colorado River Storage Project, which are primarily hydro-generated. The MBPP utilized the North Platte River for cooling water, and ultimately built the Grayrocks Dam and Reservoir. Because the North Platte River flows into Nebraska, that state became concerned that the North Platte River water used in these projects would jeopardize their rights. Litigation over the water was initiated. Ultimately, the parties reached a settlement, but each participant in the MBPP had to ratify and accept it. The WMPA board minutes of Nov. 9, 1978, day reflect the discussion:

After much discussion, motion by Pratt to accept the damn thing as written and to second the damn thing by Harrison.

<sup>44</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*, Cody, 13 May 1977.

<sup>45</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*, Lusk, 11 May 1978.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>47</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*, Casper, 17 August 1976.

<sup>48</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*, Cody, 13 May 1977. This second set of letters was different from the 1976 letters in that this set was copied to the Public Service Commission in order to show a record of interest.

<sup>49</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*, Lusk, 18 August 1977.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>51</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*, Lusk, 15 February 1978.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>53</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*, Lusk, 9 November 1978.

The WMPA's resolution (No. 78-10) ratified the settlement, but it did not end the Nebraska/Wyoming disputes over the waters of the North Platte River that continue to the present.

On April 13, 1978, the WMPA board met for the first time as a legally constituted Joint Powers Board.<sup>54</sup> The Attorney General for Wyoming officially signed the papers authorizing the new status on the previous day. The first order of business as a new entity was to elect officers. Elected were George Frank, Cody, chairman; Kester Akers, Lusk, vice chairman; Jim Dunham, Wheatland, secretary; and Jack Harrison, Pine Bluffs, treasurer. At the same meeting, the board designated June 1978 as a target date for selling the revenue bonds.

On June 8, 1978, the WMPA Board of Directors passed a resolution, Resolution Number 78-4, authorizing "\$21,540,000 in Power Supply System Bonds, 1978, Series A, for the purpose of paying WMPA's 1% share of the estimated cost of acquisition and construction of the MBPP, the cost of certain transmission facilities, and other related costs."<sup>55</sup> The underwriter of the bonds was Smith Barney, Harris Upham and Company. The action made the WMPA one of the official owners of the MBPP.

As an official Joint Powers Board, the WMPA also realized that it might need to do more than simply sell electricity. Transmission and distribution systems of member communities were important to the entire WMPA. R.W. Beck Associates recommended that the WMPA "assume the transmission facilities as they presently, or will in the near future, exist."<sup>56</sup> The reasoning behind this recommendation, and the ultimate decision of the WMPA, was that it would be less expensive to finance upgrades and new facilities through the WMPA's bonding capability.

Lobbying would have to be a priority as well. The board decreed that the Executive Director should "keep an eye on Agency matters" as well as be ready to help the Wyoming Association of Municipalities when needed.<sup>57</sup>

The WMPA also was interested in energy conservation programs. After all, the original reason the WMPA was formed was because the towns were using too much power. The WMPA board decided that the agency would become a clearinghouse of information for electricity conservation. Essentially, the WMPA could purchase materials for members at a better rate, and members would be billed for those materials.<sup>58</sup> The WMPA would become a clearinghouse for exchange items between members. These items might include transformers and other electrical equipment. Further, the WMPA

established a policy making its expert staff available to member communities, as the need for advice and consulting arose, at a low cost.<sup>59</sup> The agency would sponsor free educational seminars for member communities.

**T**he Wyoming Municipal Power Agency had become a viable electricity supplier in Wyoming for seven communities. In 1986, the WMPA added one more member, the City of Powell.

As its early history demonstrates, the agency members had to overcome political pressures and growth challenges, accept both financial opportunities and obligations, and work cooperatively. The agency retained its ownership in the MBPP and continued to pursue the most economic options for supplying electricity to its members and, ultimately, the consumers in those communities.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*, Lusk, 13 April 1978.

<sup>55</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*, Wheatland, 8 June 1978.

<sup>56</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*, Lusk, 16 August 1973.

<sup>57</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*, Lusk, 13 January 1977.

<sup>58</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*, Wheatland, 22 July 1977.

<sup>59</sup> Wyoming Municipal Power Agency Board of Directors Meeting, *Meeting Minutes*, Lusk, 9 November 1978.

<sup>60</sup> Larry LaMaack, Executive Director of the Wyoming Municipal Power Agency, interview by Michael Howe, Lusk, 16 April 2003.

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# The Landscape Architecture of Morell and Nichols, Sheridan, 1911-1914

By John F. Mahoney

*Definition: "Landscape architecture is both the art and science of arranging land, together with the spaces and objects upon it."<sup>1</sup>*

Very little research has been done on the history of landscape architecture in Wyoming. The first landscape architects to practice in Wyoming might be the firm of Morell and Nichols of Minneapolis, Minnesota. By examining the Natural Style in America and the World's Columbian Exposition, this article will show how some of these landscape concepts were used at Trail End State Historic Site in Sheridan. Many early landscape architectural drawings of the site are available and these will be linked to the early techniques.

The Natural Style was identified by "Landscape Gardener" A. J. Downing in 1841. This style from the English Landscape Gardening School was a combination of the grandeur of the English rectilinear, geometric style, with the beauty of the natural landscape arranged in informal groupings.

Downing's *Treatise* was "adapted to North America; with a view to the Improvement of Country Residences comprising directions for laying out grounds and arranging plantations, the description and cultivation of hardy trees, decorative accompaniments to the house and grounds, the formation of pieces of artificial water, flower gardens, etc."<sup>2</sup> He was the first American writer on landscape architecture. He went beyond botanical considerations which led him to an interest in visual quality, as well as operational efficiency.<sup>3</sup>

The *Treatise* described a style that "grew out of the love of country life and the desire to render our own property attractive, which naturally exists to a greater or less degree in the minds of all men."<sup>4</sup>



*The Main Court at Trail End today still has the block edging along the drive, the groupings of the plant material and the evergreen tree background/border.*

Downing said there were two distinct modes of landscape gardening that had the current admiration of the world. "One was the Ancient, Formal or Geometric Style, characterized by regular forms and right lines." The other style was the "Modern, Natural or Irregular Style, characterized by varied forms and flowing lines."<sup>5</sup>



*The Trail End Location and Grading Plan drawing from 1913, shows the formal, linear Mall area which is the linear walk leading to the Pool. The pool area consists of the geometric shapes which include the pool and adjacent shrub and flower planters. The straight lines of the pergola roof are shown at the top of the drawing. By contrast, the sidewalks with planting areas to the east (left) are designed in the natural style by the use of the irregular, free flowing lines which connect all of the site features before leading to the SW corner and off the property.*

A criticism of Downing is that he offered no particular system or method for the specific layout of the land.<sup>6</sup> However, along with the blending of the two styles he also described the design principles of Unity and Variety. Unity, which he described as the "production of the whole"<sup>7</sup> and necessary for the layout of the land "to assemble in a single composition forms which are discordant, and portions dissimilar in plan, can only afford pleasure for a short time".<sup>8</sup> Downing describes the principle of Variety as "belonging more to the details, than to the production of the whole. By producing certain contrasts, it creates in scenery a thousand points of interest, by different arrangements and combinations of forms, colors, light and shade."<sup>9</sup>

*The March 15, 1913, letter from Morell and Nichols to Mr. Kendrick states, "in order to have the flowering garden and the groups appear interesting throughout the season, it is well to plant a larger amount of varieties which would prolong the flowering season. Some of the plants will blossom in the early spring, others during the summer months and still others in the fall."<sup>10</sup>*



City beautification was an idea born in 1893 at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. "From the 1890s until as late as the end of the 1920s or even the early thirties the Exposition was usually held forth as making the pinnacle of achievement in the arts in America."<sup>11</sup>

Public interest in outdoor design was a significant outcome of the ideas developed from the Exposition in Chicago in 1893. The City Beautiful movement began as "civic aesthetics" or "modern civic art" that led to writings in 1903 describing the "City Made Beautiful." The degree of excitement about the Expo far exceeded anything its creators had hoped for. "The country had never seen anything like it before, including the use of outdoor electric lights, then still a novelty, that contributed to the general sense of enchantment. Thus began a vibrant new interest in what design could do for America's towns and cities."<sup>12</sup>

It has a unique reason for treatment here because "it was the unprecedented awakening of public interest in civic design."<sup>13</sup>

Daniel Burnham of the firm Burnham and Root, Architects from Chicago was chosen to take control of the architectural planning for the Exposition. Frederick Law Olmsted & Company, the firm that had designed Central Park in New York in 1857, was the first to use the title Landscape Architect in 1893 and was appointed by the governing board as consulting landscape architects.

Utilizing the natural landscape of Jackson Park, Olmsted created a system of lagoons and waterways to go along with the extensive sidewalk system. The bodies of water served as decorative reflecting pools, waterways for transportation and a cool place to rest for the visitors. Landscape historian Newton describes

Olmsted as "an artist, he paints with lakes and wooded slopes: with lawns and banks and forest covered hills."<sup>14</sup>

The immensity of the World's Columbian Exposition and the set of goals it wished to produce included spatial arrangement of architecture and the land. What Olmsted accomplished at the Expo was a lesson of exceptional value to the profession of landscape architecture. Indeed, by 1900 a young student of Olmsted's, Charles Eliot, established the first university courses of landscape architecture at Harvard University.

This was the environment on the East Coast and Midwest at the time John Kendrick hired the firm of Morell and Nichols.

John B. Kendrick was a cattleman with a ranching empire that grew to include over 210,000 acres in northern Wyoming and southern Montana. He had worked breaking horses and moving cattle as a cowhand since he was fifteen.<sup>15</sup> In 1910, Kendrick was elected to the Wyoming State Senate and in 1914, was able to win the Governorship of Wyoming. He served for two years before he became the first United States Senator from Wyoming to be elected by popular vote. He was then re-elected to the United State Senate in both 1922 and 1928.

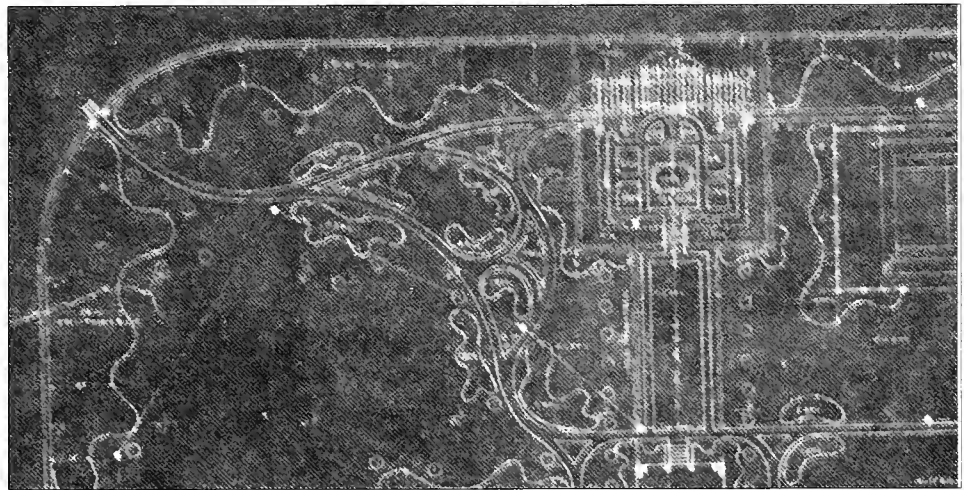
Noted Wyoming historian T.A. Larson applied the phrase "Grand Old Man" to three early Wyoming political leaders during the years 1920 to 1940. The first was Joseph M. Carey, the second Francis E. Warren and the third was John B. Kendrick.<sup>16</sup> Kendrick, with only seven years of formal schooling, had an exceptional drive to succeed. He left his native Texas in 1879 and rode with a trail herd to northern Wyoming. He put down roots and Sheridan became the end of the trail for Kendrick.



*A letter in the Sheridan Press, May 9, 1930, praises Senator Kendrick for donating land for city parks and declared, "The donation, in line with the Senator's avowed purpose to beautify the community and make that beauty available to all of the public will be only one of many that he has made to the city of Sheridan." 17*

Kendrick hired the firm of Morell and Nichols in 1911. Many letters and landscape architectural drawings between Kendrick and Morell and Nichols have been preserved at the Kendrick estate, Trail End State Historic Site, and are extremely valuable in understanding the design concepts employed at the site. One of the first of these letters was a letter dated May 29, 1911, from Morell and Nichols to Kendrick. It was a letter confirming their hiring, told what it was they were to accomplish and establishing their fee of "...approximately eighteen days...on the per diem basis at \$25.00 per day."<sup>18</sup>

*The location of the planting areas for trees, shrubs and flowers were all individually identified by dimensioning on the 1912 Trail End Location and Grading Plan drawing. The small perfect circles depict trees, shrubs and flowers were located in the irregular shaped natural style planting beds.*



Anthony Urbanski Morell was born in France in 1875, went to school there and immigrated to the United States around 1902. He spent some of his early career at the New York City office of landscape engineer Charles W. Leavitt. Morell would later be characterized by fellow co-worker Chandler Fairbank as "a highly artistic Italian who made a good impression socially, and gave the firm prestige."<sup>19</sup>

Arthur R. Nichols was born in West Springfield, Massachusetts, in 1880. In 1902 he was one of the first graduates of the short-lived (two years) landscape architecture program at Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he earned a B.S. degree. For a short time after college he worked in Schenectady, New York, before moving to New York City. There he also joined the landscape engineering firm of Charles W. Leavitt. One of Nichols' colleagues, Keith Wehrman, later char-

acterized him as "a good designer, mild mannered and a person that believed in large scale plans that met the needs of the present while providing flexibility for the future."<sup>20</sup>

Some early design projects that Nichols worked on included Monument Valley Park in Colorado Springs, Colorado, the private estates of John D. Rockefeller, Sr., in Pocantico Hills, New York, and George B. Post, Jr., in Bernardsville, New Jersey. It was while working on the Chester Congdon estate in Duluth, Minnesota, that he began to work with Anthony Morell.<sup>21</sup>

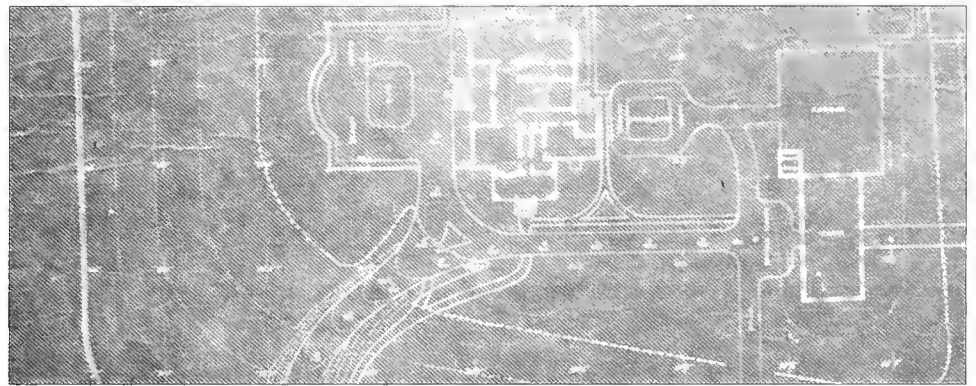
In 1909, Morell and Nichols decided to leave the Leavitt firm, establish a partnership and move to Minneapolis. The projects they worked on followed the wide spectrum of the growing landscape architecture profession. These projects included the design of the grounds for private estates, city and state park design, residen-



tial subdivision design, cemetery design, and hospital, schools and college design plans. They also worked on the landscape mall for the North Dakota state capitol grounds.

Many tools of the landscape architect are evident at the Trail End site including the use of dimensioning, centerline road surveying and the use of contour lines to depict gradual drainage away from the house.

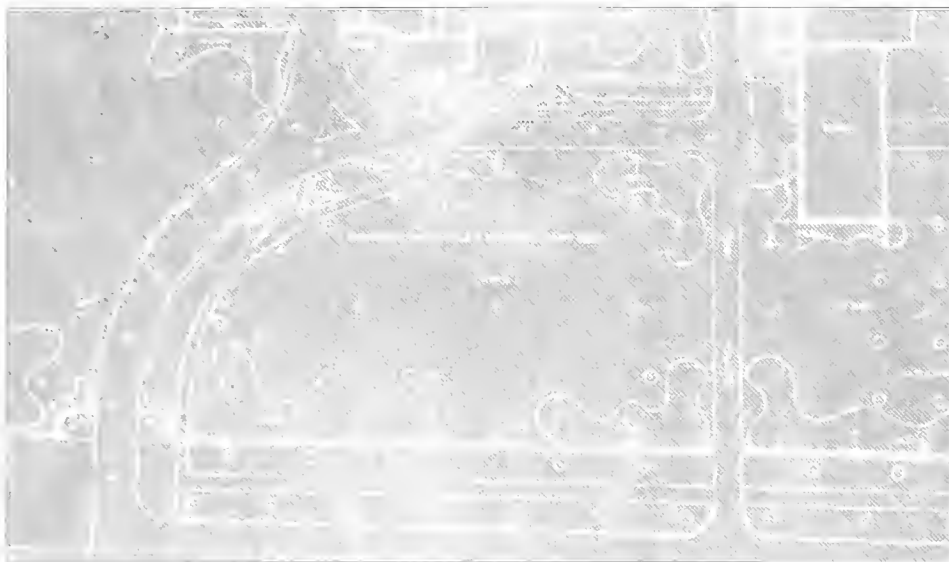
*Note the science of landscape architecture used on the 1913 Trail End Grading Plan. The fifty foot grid system on the drawing shows horizontal and vertical spot elevations. Dashed contour lines at one foot intervals depict a gradual, uniform, flat slope falling away from the house. Spot elevations along the centerline of the entrance road also show how the areas on the ground are to be manipulated.*



*Part of the art of landscape architecture associated with this design is the groupings of the plant material. "You will notice in the planting scheme that in the outlined groups there are located a number of evergreen and deciduous trees which in combination with the flowering shrubs and the herbaceous plants make the group strong, giving same a natural landscape effect." 22*

Many of the design techniques of A. J. Downing can clearly be seen at the Trail End site including the design concepts of Unity and Variety.

Unity in this design is achieved by the strategic location of the evergreen tress along the property line and the location of the apple trees. The smaller evergreen juniper shrubs are also strategically located around the grounds to tie the site together "as a single composition, the production of the whole."<sup>23</sup> Variety is shown through the use of the green, pink and white flower color of the apple trees, the upright form of the Siberian peashrub and junipers in contrast with the flowing, single trunk apple trees and the use of light and dark shades.



*The lower left portion of the 1912 Trail End Location and Grading Plan shows the centerline layout of the entrance road, the main brick entrance gate and wall plus the evergreen tree planting locations along the north property line. The location of the irregularly shaped planting areas are shown by dimension lines from the known location of the proposed brick wall.*

*This is the view today of the southeast corner of the property. The joggers on the upper bank are jogging along the south property line. The joggers in the foreground are just off the property to the south, up the hill from Kendrick Park.*



The site today still contains many of the original tree and shrub grouping areas. The July 1, 1911 letter from Morell and Nichols informed Kendrick that they had completed preliminary site plans. This included "locating the property boundary lines, the main driveway, stables driveway, service drive, clothes yard, service court, greenhouses, gardens, tennis court and walks connecting them."<sup>24</sup>



*The sidewalk intersection treatment shown center bottom in the 1912 drawing where the sidewalks intersect at ninety degrees, is also visible on the grounds today.*

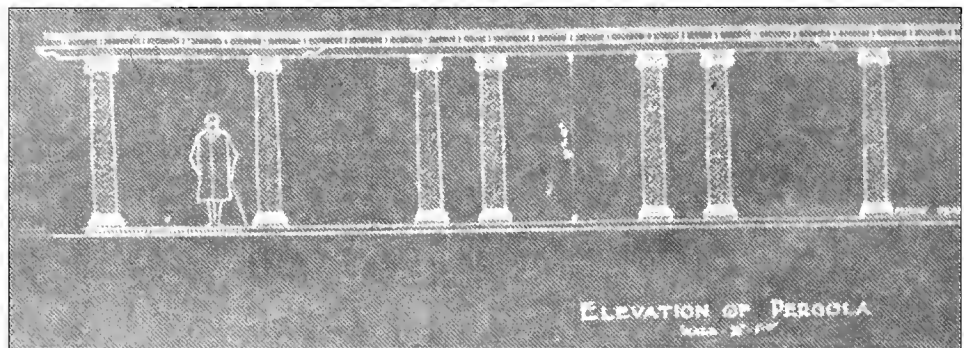
*This sidewalk intersection treatment is still used in landscape architectural drawings today. The person in the photo is walking at the approximate location of the proposed Pool and Pergola area. Groupings of old shrubs provide the focal point along the sidewalk.*



Kendrick was not only interested in employing landscape architects to design the landscape on his property, he was also interested in beautifying the town of Sheridan.

In a July 29, 1919 letter to H.A. Loucks in Sheridan, Kendrick makes reference to a piece of land to be used for a park in Sheridan. "It is an opportunity that must not be overlooked and is only another step in the plan for ornamenting and beautifying our beloved town of Sheridan."<sup>25</sup> The land became Kendrick Park.

*Elevation View of Pergola*  
The scaled Elevation View from the Trail End drawings of the proposed Pergola, a patio-like structure, in the Elevation view with gentleman figure above. Note the dimensioning technique used to show the height of the Pergola, the wood roof members over a brick floor, with columns to match the house; cap and base on the columns to be the same as Cap and base of the south porch on the house. This outdoor landscape feature was not constructed.



*Plan View of the Pergola*  
The scaled Plan View (overhead) from the Trail End drawings of the pergola that show the column locations, with the wooden girders on top of the columns to wood rafters and a finish layer of wood lath. The proposed brick floor was to be composed of a layer of gravel, then a layer of concrete, then the finish brick.

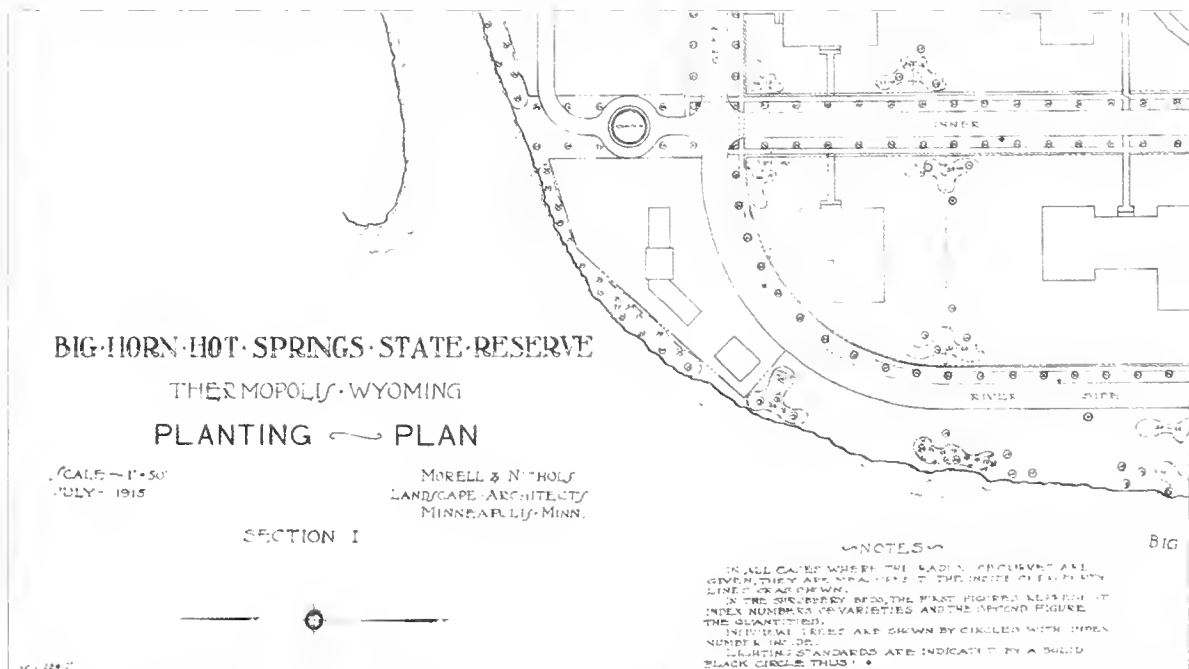
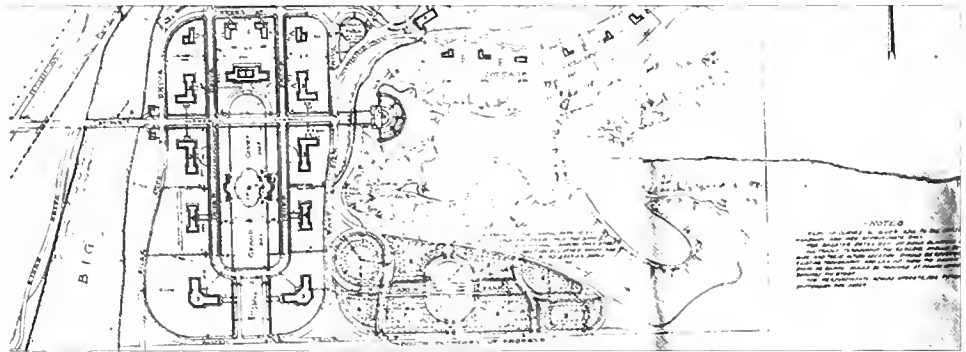
The Morell and Nichols work in Sheridan contains all of the components that are still used in landscape architecture practice today throughout Wyoming. The early drawings from the firm would still be considered state of the art.

It is unknown what brought Kendrick to hire the firm of Morell and Nichols. Perhaps he saw some of their work in the region or other works of landscape architecture in the United States while representing Wyoming as its Governor and State Senator. The citizens of

Wyoming are still benefiting from his foresight which can still be enjoyed today by visiting Trail End in Sheridan.

Morell and Nichols also developed at least two other sets of landscape architectural drawings in Wyoming. Pioneer Park in Sheridan is located just down the hill from Trail End and includes a circular drive, variety of plant material and hillside grottos. The drawings for Hot Springs at Thermopolis (*below*) in 1913 (Hot Springs State Park) depict a larger scale or master plan type drawing.

*The 1915 Planting Plan shows individual tree locations using circles with index numbers inside. The designed shrubbery beds are shown by the use of two symbols with index numbers; one to describe the plant variety the second number to call out the quantity of plants.*



*Large scale Master Plan-type Drawing of Hot Springs, Thermopolis, Wyoming, 1913, Morell and Nichols.*

<sup>1</sup> Norman T. Newton. *Design on the Land* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1976), xxi

<sup>2</sup> A.J. Downing. *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening, Adapted to North America* (New York and London, 1841), i.

<sup>3</sup> Newton, 261

<sup>4</sup> Downing, 10

<sup>5</sup> Downing, 11

<sup>6</sup> Newton, 64.

<sup>7</sup> Downing, 39.

<sup>8</sup> Downing, 41.

<sup>9</sup> Downing, 42.

<sup>10</sup> Morell and Nichols, letter to John Kendrick, 1913, 1. Trail End State Historic Site collections, Sheridan.

<sup>11</sup> Newton, 353.

<sup>12</sup> Newton, 367.

<sup>13</sup> Newton, 353.

<sup>14</sup> Newton, 368.

<sup>15</sup> Trail End Guilds, Inc., Trail End State Historic Site website, 3.

<sup>16</sup> T.A. Larson. *History of Wyoming*, 2nd ed., rev., (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), 447.

<sup>17</sup> *Sheridan Press*, May 9, 1930.

<sup>18</sup> Morell and Nichols, letter to John Kendrick, 1911

<sup>19</sup> Chandler D. Fairbank, letter to Greg Kopischke, 1975. Trail End State Historic Site collections.

<sup>20</sup> Gregory Kopischke, "Pioneers of American Landscape Design II", article for the National Park Service, *Historic Landscape Initiative*, 1.

<sup>21</sup> Kopischke, 1.

<sup>22</sup> Morell and Nichols, letter to John Kendrick, 1913.

<sup>23</sup> Morell and Nichols, 1913.

<sup>24</sup> Morell and Nichols, letter to John Kendrick, 1911.

<sup>25</sup> Morell and Nichols, letter to John Kendrick, 1919.

*John F. Mahoney, Wyoming licensed Landscape Architect #0001A, has been practicing landscape architecture in Wyoming since 1978. After stumbling across the early letters between John Kendrick and the landscape architects Morell and Nichols, Mahoney was led to the actual construction drawings of the estate by the Site Superintendent at Trail End. "The first time I stepped on the site I realized this was a designed landscape. After a look at the construction drawings, I saw they were so detailed and of such high quality they could have been developed yesterday instead of ninety years ago." A current project Mahoney is fond of is the proposed Vore Buffalo Jump Site in northeast Wyoming near Sundance. A second project was the collaboration with an Environmental Artist to develop wildlife habitat and hidden human viewing areas along the Wildlife Trail at the Rest Area in Pine Bluffs, Wyoming. Mahoney currently works for the State of Wyoming and is the Manager of the Planning and Construction Section.*

# The History of Electricity in Rural Goshen County

## The Wyrulec Company

By Jack R. Preston

Electricity came late to rural Goshen County, Wyoming. It was not available to all the rural consumers until the late 1940s, nearly 80 years after the first commercial power system went on line in Wyoming. The rural areas of Goshen County were in a technology lag from the rest of the country, because of the increased incremental cost of building electrical distribution lines to the rural areas.<sup>1</sup> While a few Wyoming towns had electricity as early as the 1880s, it was 1914 before the first central station power plant produced electricity for any town in Goshen County.

A few rural customers in the county did have electricity from central station power plant lines—the same ones used to supply the county's towns and villages. For those not in the proximity, their recourse was to generate power with their own internal combustion engine-powered generators and wind chargers.

Within 20 years of Congressional passage of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936, creating the Rural Electrification Administration (REA), electricity was brought to rural areas throughout Goshen County. The agency, created to bring power to farms and ranches, had an enormous impact on rural life and the rural areas of Goshen County. Wyrulec Company, Wyoming's first electrical cooperative, was founded under this REA Act. Electricity that Wyrulec brought rural Goshen County residents was more important than any other development of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Nationally, the first public use of electricity came in 1882 when Thomas Edison built the "first central station electric system in lower Manhattan."<sup>2</sup> Edison proved that central station power could serve many customers over a large area from one large generator. Over the next few years electricity generation plants were developed in many cities across the United States. The first central station electric power in Wyoming was supplied to Cheyenne in 1882, the same year Edison's station started up in New York. The electricity supplier,

known as the Brush-Swan Electric Light Company, used the alternating current (AC) system, as distinguished from the direct current (DC) method that Edison's firm was perfecting at the time.<sup>3</sup> By 1883, the Brush-Swan Company had installed 1,000 incandescent lights in Cheyenne. Most were streetlights, but in 1884, the firm put in the first interior lights in a building when it wired the Cheyenne Club for electricity. The Inter Ocean Hotel in Cheyenne was purportedly the first hotel in the world with a light in each room.<sup>4</sup>

Cheyenne was not the only city in Wyoming to have electricity in the 1880s. Laramie had a light plant by 1885,<sup>5</sup> however it was an Edison system operating on direct current (DC). On January 27, 1887, R. M. Jones, operator of the plant, wrote to J. H. Vail, an Edison official, about power outages at the Laramie plant: "This system operated 3,800 lamps by December 31, 1888."<sup>6</sup>

Whenever a new invention of wide importance comes about, there is much posturing and shifting as to what the standards will be. Sometimes the less desirable standard wins out because of the political and social power of the inventor or it may be just timing or luck. While Edison was developing DC electricity that worked well with streetcar lines, one of the first major uses of elec-

<sup>1</sup> The number of electrical service customers connected per mile of line greatly affects the cost of line per consumer.

<sup>2</sup> Irma Angevine, ed. *People-Their Power* (Washington, D.C.: National Rural Electric Association, 1980) 4.

<sup>3</sup> Alternating current (AC) changes directions as it flows through the wire. Direct current (DC) flows in one direction.

<sup>4</sup> I. A. Larson, *History of Wyoming* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), 199; Phil Roberts, David L. Roberts, and Steven L. Roberts, *Wyoming Almanac* (Laramie, WY: Skyline West Press/Wyoming Almanac, 2001), 168.

<sup>5</sup> David F. Nye, *Electrifying America* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 3.

<sup>6</sup> <http://edison.rutgers.edu/NamesSearch/DocPicture.php3>

<sup>7</sup> <http://edison.rutgers.edu/citylist.htm>

tricity, George Westinghouse and Brush-Swan were developing AC electricity. One of the major advantages of AC power was that the voltages could be transformed to higher levels for moving large amounts of power great distances.<sup>8</sup> Edison felt that AC power was more dangerous and called it "the killer current."<sup>9</sup> One of the problems in developing electricity was that something had to be done with it other than power electric lights. Electric motors and appliances were the most prolific items being developed by industry with General Electric and Westinghouse being the dominant companies supplying both products that use electricity and products that distribute and generate electricity. Direct current had disadvantages and before too long, Edison converted to alternating current. Brush-Swan and Edison eventually merged into the General Electric Company.

As central station power was being developed across the United States, there were inventors who were developing alternatives to provide electricity for the rural areas. The two most promising and practical choices were small gasoline engine generators and wind-powered generators. The combination of these two methods provided electricity for farms and ranches until the REA cooperatives were developed.

Many rural Goshen County residents used the gasoline-powered Delco generator, the first widely used power source. In the first decade of the 20th century, C. F. Kettering and Edward Beeds, employees of the National Cash Register Company (NCR), were doing independent research while employed by NCR in Dayton, Ohio. Together, they developed electronic starters and ignitions used in automobiles. They founded the Dayton Engineering Laboratories Company (Delco) in 1909 to build the starters and ignitions for Cadillacs. Their company, Delco, was acquired by United Motors in 1916, which was acquired in 1918 by General Motors. Kettering subsequently became General Motors president.

In the course of perfecting the Cadillac starter and ignition, Delco developed 32-volt DC and 110-volt AC generators. Beginning in 1916, Delco began manufacturing the Delco Farm Lighting System, a line of internal combustion-powered generators for farm use. These generators were designed to power farm electric motors and household appliances. Delco ingeniously developed a portable electric motor mounted on a stand that could be moved around the farm. With this portable device, various types of farm machinery could be powered with one electric motor. The 32-volt generator was capable of charging batteries for use by the farmer and housewife when the generator was not running.<sup>10</sup>

World War I veterans, who had become acquainted with electric power in the military service, returned to the farms after the war. Many began using generators from Ford Model T cars to provide DC electricity for their farm radios and other appliances.

Wind generators also provided electricity to Goshen County farms. Jacobs and Wincharger were the two major companies that developed during this era. Marcellus Jacobs developed his first wind-power generator on his father's Montana ranch. By 1927, he was using a variable pitch airplane propeller controlled with a flyball governor.<sup>11</sup> "Between 1931 and 1957 thousands of Jacobs plants were sold and installed in all parts of the world, including weather stations within the Arctic Circle and at Little America in Antarctica."<sup>12</sup> It is estimated that the Jacobs Wind Electric Company produced about 30,000 of their 2500-watt wind chargers.

The Wincharger Corporation produced nearly as many wind-powered generators as the Jacobs Wind Electric Company. However, they were not as reliable because the governing system was not as effective. Consequently, high winds caused significant mechanical failure. Most of these systems operated at 32 volts DC rather than 110 volts AC. The advantage of DC for this type of power was that unused power was stored in glass-cell lead-acid batteries for use when the wind wasn't blowing. Along with the farmstead size generators, Wincharger produced more than 300,000 generators producing 200 watts—specifically to power radios. These were often sold under the names of other companies.<sup>13</sup>

In December 1914 Torrington received the first central station power in Goshen County. The plant, costing \$5,000, consisted of two 39 KVA generators, one for street lights and one for the town's residences.<sup>14</sup> According to the *Torrington Telegram*: Lewis Austin, the operator, "will start the plant whenever...[he] thinks it is dark enough to require the lights, and he will run until

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.codecheck.com/pp\\_elect.html](http://www.codecheck.com/pp_elect.html).

<sup>9</sup> David Morris, *Be Your Own Power Company* (Emmaus, PA: Rodale, 1983), 3-8.

<sup>10</sup> Lisa Mirabile, ed., *International Directory of Company Histories Vol. II*. (New York: St. James Press, 1990), 34.; General Motors, *Delco Products*. (Detroit: General Motors, 1983), 2-14.

<sup>11</sup> A flyball governor controls the speed of the wind generator by mechanically changing the propeller's pitch. As the speed increases the balls fly out and activate mechanical arms controlling the pitch.

<sup>12</sup> Tom Kivarik, Charles Pipher, and John Hurst. *Wind Energy*. (Chicago: Domus Books, 1979), 12.

<sup>13</sup> Robert W. Righter. *Wind Energy in America* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1996), 90-104.

<sup>14</sup> *Torrington Telegram*. May 7, 1914; Sept. 17, 1914.



midnight. He will start the Machinery at five o'clock in the morning and run until the sun lights the stores and residences."<sup>15</sup>

The next power development was the Lingle Power Plant, a low-head hydro facility constructed in 1918, operated on water supplied through penstocks from the Gering-Fort Laramie Canal just southwest of Lingle. The plant was initially built to supply power to the electric dragline being used to construct the canal.<sup>16</sup> As the dragline moved along, power lines were extended along the canal and a very large extension cord connected the power line to the dragline. The excess power was marketed to the area towns while the canal was being built. After the canal was finished, the total output of the plant was sold to the local towns. The plant remained in operation until the early 1950s when there was sufficient and more efficient power supplied by the dams on the North Platte River.

In the late 1920s, two private power companies built lines and supplied power to Goshen County residents. Mountain States Power Company served customers in Yoder, Veteran, and the farms and ranches along the transmission lines between the two towns. Wyrulec bought Mountain States' Goshen County lines on Jan. 11, 1943, paying \$18,000 for them. Some of the remaining lines of Mountain States were later sold to Pacific Power and Light.<sup>17</sup>

A second company, Western Public Service Company, provided power to a considerable territory in Nebraska, but it also had lines in Wyoming, Colorado, Kansas and Missouri. Western Public Service was a subsidiary of Engineers Public Service Company, a Delaware-based utility. That firm was controlled by Stone and Webster, an engineering company. (These types of holding companies were made illegal by the Public Utilities Holding Companies Act passed in the middle 1930s). Western Public Service Company had an internal combustion generator in LaGrange that served the towns of Huntley, LaGrange and Hawk Springs, Wyoming. Wyrulec purchased Western's lines on Feb. 26, 1942.<sup>18</sup>

Throughout the early 20th century, the federal government, private power companies, land grant universities, equipment manufacturers and the American Farm Bureau Federation were all studying ways to make power more cost effective for the rural farms and communities.<sup>19</sup> The problem was economics. The high price of electricity could not be brought down without greater power use; usage could not be increased without lower prices. In the Northeast, in the middle 1920s, Gov. Gifford Pinchot of Pennsylvania helped form success-

ful local cooperatives. Few states were able to follow Pennsylvania's lead. At this time, a handful of cooperatives and public power companies were being established in the northwestern United States.

The federal government directly entered the power business when on May 18, 1933, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) act was passed. The TVA demonstrated that with federal government assistance, cooperatives could bring down the costs of power to rural areas. This positive experience with the TVA on the Tennessee River set the pattern for further development of cooperatives in the rest of the country.

Congressional supporters for bringing more electricity to rural areas, many representing Midwest and Western states, at first believed that power had to be sold to private electrical companies, not to consumer-owned cooperatives. However, grassroots groups in rural areas lobbied hard and, finally, cooperatives were formed to utilize the power, selling it to rural areas.

With momentum from establishment of the TVA, Congress passed a cooperative power act. The Rural Electrification Administration was established after President Franklin Roosevelt signed the enabling act on May 11, 1935.

The measure had been supported by many Western and Midwestern congressmen, including Senator George Norris of Nebraska and Representative Sam Rayburn of Texas. A year later, through the efforts of Norris and Rayburn, the Rural Electrification Administration became a funded agency on May 20, 1936. The Norris-Rayburn REA bill provided for loans "...for building electric power lines and for generating and transmitting electricity." Another type of loan was to enable the farmer to buy electrical equipment.<sup>20</sup> To meet the rural needs, the program grew rapidly. In 1935, 527 Wyoming ranches/farms had electricity. By 1939 the number had risen to 3,300 ranches/farms.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>15</sup> *Torrington Telegram*, Dec. 17, 1914.

<sup>16</sup> A dragline is an earth-moving machine that drags a bucket on the ground with a cable pulling it until it fills up with dirt. Then the bucket is lifted by the machine's boom and dumped on the edge of the canal and the process is repeated.

<sup>17</sup> Wyrulec contract with Western Public Service Company, Jan. 11, 1943.

<sup>18</sup> Wyrulec contract with Western Public Service Company, Feb. 16, 1942.

<sup>19</sup> The Farm Bureau was the predecessor to the Cooperative Extension Service founded in 1914. By 1919 the Cooperative Extension Service had drifted away from the Farm Bureau which became a private political entity.

<sup>20</sup> Marquis Childs, *The Farmer Takes A Hand*. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1952), 69.

<sup>21</sup> T. A. Larson, *History of Wyoming* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), 445.

Wyoming's first electrical cooperative was Wyrulec Company founded in Lingle on Oct. 9, 1936, less than five months after the passage of the Norris-Rayburn bill. The five incorporators, F. R. Pearson, L. R. Brewer, R. V. Allen, Emery Bright, and T. J. Lisle, met in the Bump Building law offices of Reid and More in Torrington.<sup>22</sup> They elected themselves the first directors of the company to serve for one year or until their successors were elected. They voted to insert a copy of the articles of incorporation in the minute book, passed the proposed bylaws, and placed a copy of the bylaws in the minute book. The incorporators agreed to apply for a Rural Electrification Administration loan. They also hired engineers and attorneys for the cooperative.

A half-hour later, meeting as the newly created board of directors, they elected officers. Pearson was named president; Allen, vice president; Brewer, secretary/treasurer. The board agreed to sell memberships to individuals who chose to receive electricity from the company, provided that the prospective customer could be served by the company economically.

After a sample membership certificate was presented, approved and inserted in the minute book, L. R. Brewer was appointed the company's agent. Wyrulec's principal office would be in Brewer's office in Lingle. The board designated Citizens National Bank of Torrington as the company's depository, stipulating that all checks be signed by either the president or vice-president and countersigned by the secretary-treasurer. After the actions of the incorporators were ratified and the incorporation expenses were approved, President Pearson was authorized to adopt REA plans for construction of the distributing system. Further, he was given responsibility to complete negotiations for a loan to cover expenses and employ the necessary people, subject to REA approval, to complete the projects.<sup>23</sup> Pursuant to Wyoming incorporation laws, they convened a third time that evening, as a general membership meeting to endorse earlier actions.<sup>24</sup>

Less than a month after the by-laws were passed, the board amended them. Cash flow was a problem for the company. It was not reimbursing memberships until a new one has paid in.<sup>25</sup> In a meeting at the Lingle office on November 14 the board agreed that the company would hold membership certificates in escrow for each of the members. If the member ceased to take service from the company, he would be required to surrender the certificate. Wyrulec could then sell it to the next qualified applicant for membership. A \$5 fee would be collected from the new member and given to the departing member. The board also agreed that the by-

laws of the company could only be amended by a super majority—four of the five directors had to agree on such a change.

Construction plans for transmission and distribution lines were ready for member approval at a special meeting held at Lingle High School in mid-December. The first meeting failed to gain a quorum, but later in the month, more than two dozen members were present or represented by proxy. Along with the plans, they approved a construction loan contract from the REA (in an amount not to exceed \$29,000). To secure the loan, the company members voted to execute a mortgage note, not to exceed \$29,000, at 2.77% interest for 20 years. The members also signed the construction loan contract with REA, and agreed to contract for power from U. S. Reclamation Service in conjunction with the town of Lingle.<sup>26</sup>

After the meeting, Wyrulec prepared to construct 25 miles of line. The project could begin as soon as the contracts had been signed for construction of line as well as a mortgage secured from the REA for the \$29,000. The note was to be paid off at a rate of 2.77% per year with monthly payments for 20 years.<sup>27</sup>

In March, the directors modified the power contract and terms of the construction loan. The permitted borrowing amount was increased by \$71,000, but not to exceed \$100,000.<sup>28</sup> Membership was growing rapidly.

<sup>22</sup> Minutes of the first Board Meeting of Wyrulec Company, October 9, 1936, 7:30 p.m.

<sup>23</sup> At 8:30 p.m., at the third meeting, the board adopted the recommended bylaws that were approved at the organization meeting. A unanimous vote was taken to approve the bylaws after they were read section by section. Minutes, October 9, 1936, 8 p.m.

<sup>24</sup> Minutes, October 9, 1936, 8:30 p.m. Attorneys Reid & More were designated at the October 27 board meeting to act as attorneys for the company with the President authorized to contract with the attorneys subject to REA approval. Minutes, October 27, 1936, 10 a.m.

<sup>25</sup> Minutes, November 14, 1936, 3 p.m.

<sup>26</sup> Minutes, November 30, 1936, 8 p.m. After the board meeting, the December 14 membership meeting was called to order by President Pearson. In attendance were F. R. Pearson, L. R. Brewer, J. H. Hergert, R. V. Allen, David Greenwalt, Emery Bright, and Hiram D. Lingle. The president announced that no quorum was present so the meeting was adjourned until December 22, 1936. Minutes, December 14, 1936, 8 p.m.

<sup>27</sup> Minutes, December 22, 1936, 8 p.m. Members present were: Fred Ashenhurst; Richard Remo; J. S. Montez; M. Lopez; B. T. Moorehead; Steve Whitmer (J. V. Dana, proxy); Fred Sieck; L. R. Brewer; G. C. Long; F. R. Pearson; W. H. Wagner; Dr. G. O. Hanna; David Greenwald; Norma L. Dupertius; Charles Morris; C. W. Kiser; Milton Anderson; Emery Bright; Carl J. Burns; Carl Arndt; W. B. Knott; Donald Knott; John McCormick; W. H. Nida; Hiram D. Lingle; Aileen Hildreth (Ward Hildreth, proxy); Phillip M. Wellman (Ward Hildreth, proxy).

It was very impressive for an electrical cooperative to grow 300 percent in just five months.

At the second membership meeting, attended by 35 members,<sup>29</sup> the group ratified the board's decision to increase the amount that could be borrowed from \$29,000 to \$100,000. Among those attending was Hiram D. Lingle, the founder of Wyrulec.<sup>30</sup> While membership continued to grow, Wyrulec was having trouble dealing with the changing requirements of the REA, an agency less than a year old.

Now that Wyrulec could begin construction of electrical lines, the next step was to acquire right-of-way for the lines from the landowners where the poles were to be placed. These included the State of Wyoming, Goshen County, the Burlington Railroad, and a number of private landowners. The board also increased the authorized line to 53.5 miles; it would serve 165 members. With these additional members, an increase in the power contracted from the Bureau was necessary.<sup>31</sup>

During May 1937, Wyrulec paid bills for the first time. Most were for director's fees and publishing costs. With summer approaching, the first construction contract was awarded with the low bid of \$55,030.10 to Donovan Construction Company of St. Paul, Minnesota. At last construction was about to begin.<sup>32</sup>

The pace at Wyrulec was beginning to pick up in June and the board began holding weekly meetings. The board modified line extension policy, awarded a pole inspection contract, authorized an additional loan for \$33,000, designated an engineer, and appointed board member L. R. Brewer as project superintendent.<sup>33</sup> This latter action posed a problem, however. Brewer could not serve as both director and project superintendent. Consequently, he resigned as director and the board appointed A. J. Haeffelin as his replacement. Newly elected officers were R. V. Allen as president and T. J. Lisle as vice-president.

Construction seemed to be moving along, but the REA rejected the pole inspection bid, asserting that it was too high. The agency instructed the company engineer (paid at 4% of the construction contract) to inspect materials to be used by the contractor. Wyrulec took its first recorded loan advances—\$440.23 for organization expenses, \$550.35 for engineering services and \$1021.12 for legal services.<sup>34</sup>

The board adopted wiring and plumbing codes of the REA, hired Miss Elizabeth Rider as the bookkeeper and stenographer, approved Phil Rouse as engineer for the next line extension project and decided to put up signs during construction as required by the REA.

At one meeting, the board was told that the REA insisted that the company obtain insurance.<sup>35</sup> The REA

also required Wyrulec to pay for the bonding for the officers. Many members thought the REA's involvement in Wyrulec's business was becoming onerous, but as others saw it, to loan these large amounts of money to unsupervised cooperatives without financial histories could have been disastrous for the new federal agency.<sup>36</sup>

The number of Goshen farmers interested in "hooking up" continued to increase. In September, the board authorized taking out a new loan, this one for \$156,000 at 2.88% for 20 years, for the construction of an additional 150 miles of line. The addition would bring the total system line length to 204 miles. All three loans now totaled \$218,000 so the board raised the maximum mortgage amount to \$1,000,000.<sup>37</sup> The engineer requested approval for line extensions of more than 1,000 feet for A. Gobble, L. E. Harriman, H. Eisenbarth, U. Kubo, E. Bright and Mark Carson.

Wyrulec took on the role of electrical inspector, and the board recommended that Oliver Wendell Holmes of Yoder be engaged for the duty.<sup>38</sup> The company

<sup>28</sup> Minutes, March 16, 1937, 10 a.m.

<sup>29</sup> Emery Bright, George Wunder, Jacob Kreig, E. J. Tonkin, I. J. Lisle, John Walters, J. V. Dana, Irvin, Hoitsma, R. V. Allen, L. R. Brewer, F. R. Pearson, R. N. Paules, J. I. Marley, H. H. Wagoner, Carl J. Burns, Donald Knott, W. B. Knott, Maurice J. Oxley, Carl Arndt, Lottie M. Craig, C. C. Shepard, Fred Sieck, Herman Hamel (Adm. Est. A. J. Phillips), A. C. Long, H. S. Kirk, Clark H. Smith, Hiram D. Lingle, David Greenwald, Norma L. Dupertius, C. H. Oxley, O. A. Curry, Homer Oxley, Br. G. O. Hanna, John McCormick

<sup>30</sup> Minutes, March 31, 1937, 8 p.m.

<sup>31</sup> Minutes, April 13, 1937, 10 a.m. The Bureau of Reclamation was the power supplier to Wyrulec. The power source was hydro power from dams located in Wyoming.

<sup>32</sup> Minutes, May 4, 14, 1937.

<sup>33</sup> Minutes, June 7, 11, 22, 30, 1937.

<sup>34</sup> Minutes, July 27, 1937.

<sup>35</sup> Minutes, September 25, 1937.

<sup>36</sup> Minutes, September 1, 1937. At this meeting, the board adopted a resolution paying the directors \$3 per meeting and 5 cents per mile to and from the meetings, beginning June 1, 1937. The total amount paid to directors was not to exceed \$35 per month and payment was to end with conclusion of the construction loan contract.

<sup>37</sup> On the same day at 4 p.m., the board had another meeting. The salary for Wyrulec's office secretary, Elizabeth Rider, was set at \$60 per month. To perform her duties, she needed considerable office equipment, including a card filing cabinet, steel legal-sized filing cabinet, a typewriter, two boxes of carbon paper, four sets of steel tab indices, four packages of miscellaneous folders, alphabetical indexes, 100 legal-sized folders and gummed labels. Talbert Typewriter Exchange offered to furnish the entire package for \$229.90.

<sup>38</sup> Minutes, September 25, 1937. He was to be paid \$1.50 per inspection containing six openings or less and ten cents for each additional drop or opening with the maximum price to be charged of \$2.50, and \$1 additional for each reinspection. If the contractor was on the premises, then he was to pay the charges. Otherwise, the homeowner would be responsible for the bill.

needed a means to record member usage for billing purposes. Consequently, Wyrulec purchased 159 of the REA-approved watt-hour meters.<sup>39</sup>

Wyrulec had been managed to that point by the officers and board. It was time to hire a manager, who would be particularly important for taking over when the system was energized. After reviewing seven applications, the board hired Grover Hartman at a salary of \$125 per month.<sup>40</sup>

Line construction had reached close to 150 miles by October and the board met to set electrical rates. After some discussion the following rates were authorized:

1 <sup>st</sup> 40 KWH	7 1/2 cents per KWH
Next 60 KWH	4 cents per KWH
Next 100 KWH	2 1/2 cents per KWH
Over 200 KWH	2 cents per KWH

Wyrulec had to charge a minimum of \$3 per month, the board concluded. It also modified the bylaws to reduce the meter deposit from \$10 to \$6.<sup>41</sup>

At the November 1 board meeting, the president and manager were given the responsibility of estimating the average monthly income and expenses for the REA, taking into account construction contracts.<sup>42</sup>

The REA officials told the board that the rates set at

<sup>39</sup> Five bids were received. The Westinghouse and General Electric meters were bid at \$1673.18 while the one bid for Sangamore meters was for \$1751.74. Considering the delivery time, the bid was awarded to Mine & Smelter Supply Company of Denver for the Westinghouse meters. The board considered the fact that Westinghouse equipment was used on the construction project.

<sup>40</sup> The seven applicants were Grover C. Hartman, J. J. Eddington, Clyde Matlock, Charles Simmons, J. B. Spurgeon, Martin Wilburn, and Walter Roshong. Hartman, Eddington, Matlock and Simmons were present at the meeting to be interviewed. The board went into their first executive session and chose the top three candidates. The first choice was Grover C. Hartman; second was J. J. Eddington; third was Clyde Matlock. Minutes, September 29, 1937.

<sup>41</sup> Minutes, October 11, 1937. At the October 11 board meeting the stenographer was instructed to write letters to all workers about requesting their receipt books be forwarded to the Wyrulec office so the solicitation of members can be brought up to date. Membership forms were being developed by the president and superintendent. J. M. Roushar was hired as the attorney on the 150 mile line project.

<sup>42</sup> Minutes, Nov. 1, 1937. Superintendent Brewer was authorized to direct Reid & More to turn over all easements, minutes, seal and other records to their successor J. M. Roushar. Brewer was instructed to pay Roushar \$381.72 and to negotiate the legal rates for other matters with him.

<sup>43</sup> Minutes, November 11, 1937.

<sup>44</sup> Wyoming 6 Goshen, Examining Division Project Control Record, REA.

<sup>45</sup> REA form F1-2R (10/21/37), Wyrulec Company Monthly Operation Report, December, 1937.

<sup>46</sup> Minutes, May 8, 1941.



Wyrulec collection

Wyrulec's display of electrical appliances, c. 1939

the October 11 meeting were too low to cover expenses. Consequently, the next month, the board approved higher rates:

First	40 KWH per month	\$3.75 per month
Next	40 KWH per month	5 cents per KWH
Next	120 KWH per month	3 cents per KWH
Over	200 KWH per month	2 cents per KWH <sup>43</sup>

Wyrulec energized its lines and began to serve its members/owners on December 4, 1937, one year and two months after the formation of the cooperative. It had experienced tremendous growth. It had gone from no debt to \$218,000; from no lines to 204 miles of line; and from no members to 555 members.<sup>44</sup>

But when the power was first sent into the lines, the entire membership was not completely connected to electricity. At the end of December 1937, Wyrulec had 101 connected consumers. The gross income was \$604.00, the total operating expenses were \$353.59 and the interest paid to the REA was \$111.24 with a net income of \$159.17.<sup>45</sup>

Over the next few years, Wyrulec board meetings were highlighted by the attendance of rural residents wanting electrical power from the cooperative. A long list of individuals appeared in the minutes as being approved as members of the coop. "A delegation of thirty men and women from LaGrange and the surrounding country met with the Board, requesting that lines be built and electric service furnished them. Mr. Chamberlain, representing the delegation, explained their mission. Mr. Morgan [Wyrulec's manager] explained the cost of building the lines."<sup>46</sup> (Chamberlain had been one of the petitioners to Western Public Service Company to bring power to LaGrange in 1928). As a result of the meeting with the LaGrange individuals, the board began negotiating with Western Public Service for the purchase of the LaGrange electrical system and its attached lines.

The REA gave cooperatives the responsibility to educate its owners about the possible uses of electricity. In 1941 Wyrulec's board postponed the annual meeting from February 10, 1942, until May 5, 1942, because the "...REA offer[s] a traveling demonstration which will have electro-economy, food for defense demonstrations, moving picture[s] and other desirable features [sic]..."<sup>47</sup> At a previous Wyrulec meeting, the board had "RESOLVED, that the Wyrulec Company apply to the Administration for a loan in the amount of \$22,500.00[sic] under Section 5 of the Rural Electrification Act to be used for the following purposes: (a) \$15,000.00 to finance the wiring of the premises of ap-

### System Statistics<sup>48</sup>

Year	Consumers	KWH Sold	Miles of Line
1938	272	80,082	52
1948	1,414	2,676,512	550
1958	2,120	30,735,748	1,169
1968	2,436	96,743,016	1,408
1978	3,314	98,633,118	1,727
1988	3,574	71,918,454	1,849
1998	4,103	85,605,202	1,881

proximately 150 consumers of the Cooperative, (b) \$17,500.00 to finance that [sic] purchases and installation of plumbing appliance and equipment by approximately 400 of such consumers."<sup>49</sup> Not only was Wyrulec involved in selling and demonstrating appliances, it was helping the rural residents modernize and it was financing these improvements with aid from the REA.

At the 1945 annual meeting, "Mr. Dick Isaac, a representative from the Westinghouse Co. gave a very interesting discourse for about an hour on maintenance, use and care of electrical appliance[s]. He further states that since 1942 all of the Westinghouse plants had been in the service of the United States for making various war materials and that they were unable to furnish any of the appliances that he so earnestly advocated and recommended. His address was very interesting and instructive."<sup>50</sup> Westinghouse and Wyrulec were doing their part for the war effort.

After World War II ended, Wyrulec had growth similar to the rest of the United States. The REA was balky at lending funds to the coops whose boundaries were not defined. This pushed Wyrulec and neighboring coops and public power districts to work together to define their boundaries. Roosevelt Public Power District<sup>51</sup> and Wyrulec had minor scrapes over who should serve adjacent territory at the Nebraska-Wyoming state line. There were other boundary issues: "Superintendent Lorenzen stated that he was trying to get approval upon the ultimate boundary map, and read a letter from R.E.A. concerning the reason for delay in approval; they want agreement with the Pine Bluffs Project on the Banner County boundaries."<sup>52</sup> The result was that the service territories were defined in both Wyoming and Nebraska.

<sup>47</sup> Minutes, December 4, 1941, 1:30 p.m.

<sup>48</sup> Wyrulec System Statistics.

<sup>49</sup> Minutes, November 6, 1941.

<sup>50</sup> Minutes, April 13, 1945, 11:00 a.m.

<sup>51</sup> Public Power Districts are quasi-governmental entities that are formed under Nebraska Law. They borrowed from the REA just like cooperatives, but they had the advantage of tax free financing.

<sup>52</sup> Minutes, August 11, 1948, 1:30 p.m.

As the coop matured, it began operating as a utility. In 1950 Wyrulec began safety training for its employees in conjunction with other Wyoming rural electricians and continued to meet the REA's construction standards for its borrowers. The same year a capital credit plan was approved by the membership that allowed the cooperatives' net earnings to be credited to each member in proportion to usage. These plans typically rotated capital on a 20-year basis with the early years' earnings being refunded first. This allowed the coop to use the 20 years of earnings as equity for borrowing and operating purposes.

By this time Wyrulec decided to build its own office and shop. Approval was obtained and the REA's plan #K-11647 was selected with the "service area be increased in width and in length to a minimum length of 65 feet."<sup>53</sup> The building was finished in the summer of 1952 with air-conditioning installed. An open house featuring the all-electric demonstration kitchen was held from 2-9 p.m. on July 30, 1952.

In January 1955 Wyrulec purchased the Bureau of Reclamation transmission line from Guernsey to Lingle for \$1840. This line was needed for growth in the system. Their loan limit from the REA was increased to \$5,000,000 in December, 1956. Because of this growth, in June 1957 Wyrulec assigned their Bureau contract to

## WYRULEC COMPANY MANAGERS

1937 - 2003

Manager	Years of Service
L. R. Brewer	June 6, 1937-September 29, 1937
Grover C. Hartman	September 29, 1937-June 20, 1939
Hayden Morgan	June 20, 1939-May 17, 1942
Fred Neubaumer	May 17, 1942-July 23, 1946
Lawrence Lorenzen	July 23, 1946-July 9, 1952
Ivan M. Whipple	July 9, 1952-May 30, 1976
James A. Hudelson	May 30, 1976-Present

From: Wyrulec Company Statistics.

Tri-State Generation & Transmission Company and became an "all requirements" member of Tri-State.<sup>54</sup>

With the increased tensions worldwide and the advent of the cold war, missile sites were being constructed around Cheyenne's Warren AFB. This directly affected Wyrulec's service area and increased the electric load. An Atlas missile site was constructed near Meridan, Wyoming, in 1960 and many Minuteman missile sites were built within Wyrulec's territory in the ensuing years. These sites demanded heavier lines and these lines helped Wyrulec deliver power to other new loads on the system.

<sup>53</sup> Minutes September 11, 1950.

<sup>54</sup> Minutes. December, 8, 1954; December 13, 1956; June 13, 1957; January 14, 1960.



Wyrulec photograph

*Wyrulec's office and shops were constructed in 1952*

In its first 40 years Wyrulec gained many new consumers, sold substantially more kilowatt-hours of electricity, and strung many more miles of line, including a portion of Scotts Bluff and Banner counties in Nebraska, an area which was not being served by the Nebraska rural electric companies.

To protect the interests of Wyrulec's consumers, the cooperative joined with other electrical cooperatives to form organizations to represent themselves in the state-wide, regional and national arena. At the state level, the Wyoming Rural Electric Association was formed by cooperatives in 1941 to aid the parent organizations in lobbying before the state legislature and to cooperatively join to furnish such services as the *Wyoming Rural Electric News* and statewide safety training. Wyrulec, having lines in Nebraska, also joined a similar organization known as the Nebraska Rural Electric Association founded in 1935 by the rural public power districts. On a regional basis, the Midwest Electric Consumers Association was formed in 1958 to represent the preference power<sup>55</sup> users of a nine-state region. Nationally the National Rural Electric Association was formed in 1942 to represent nearly 1,000 cooperatives and rural public power districts at the federal government level. The association not only lobbied the U. S. Congress on rural electrical matters, it was also involved in training and management consulting for its members.<sup>56</sup>

On December 17, 1951, a group of cooperatives and public power districts met to found Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association. The Bureau of Reclamation told those gathered that the power supply situation was not good for the region. Rural electric representatives, gathered at this and subsequent meetings, decided to jointly commission a study on power needs. After several more meetings, proposed articles of incorporation were approved for an umbrella organization founded to supply power. The Bureau felt that it would run out of power by 1955 and they wanted preference customers to guarantee their power purchases. The REA wanted a regional incorporated entity to lend money for the development of power supply. On May 19, 1952, Tri-State became an official corporation organized under the laws of the state of Colorado. The board consisted of three directors from each of the states of Colorado, Wyoming and Nebraska, with provisional directors becoming permanent directors. On February 13, 1953, at the first annual meeting, Oscar Yoder from Wyrulec was elected to Tri-State's board of directors as one of the three directors from Wyoming.<sup>57</sup> Yoder served on the board from 1953-1971, holding the position of board secretary from 1954-1962, and board treasurer from 1954-1958.

At the same time the private power industry was trying to obtain preference power from the Bureau of Reclamation so there were hearings and many battles between the public and private sectors of the power industry. During 1953, Tri-State decided to proceed with a loan application from the REA to build a 40-megawatt (MW) power plant in Pine Bluffs, Wyoming, and to contract with the Bureau of Reclamation for 93 MW of firm power and 38 MW of seasonal power.<sup>58</sup> Eventually, Tri-State signed a master contract with the Bureau of Reclamation enabling it to take power for all its members. This allowed for diversity of loads within Tri-State and allowed the cooperatives to contract for Bureau power through Tri-State without as much risk.<sup>59</sup>

The power shortage the bureau projected did not materialize until the early 1970s. Instead of building its own power plant, Tri-State contracted to purchase 200 MW of power from Basin Electric, a "super G&T." (A super G&T is a generation and transmission company that supplies power only to other generation and transmission companies). Tri-State built its own facility, the AC-DC tie<sup>60</sup> at Stegall, Nebraska, which became operational on Dec. 7, 1976.

With projected growth in irrigation load, Tri-State and three other regional suppliers contracted in August 1973 to build the Yampa Project in Craig, Colo., with Colorado-Ute G&T as the operator. Tri-State's share was 24 percent of units one and two. Both units went on line in 1980 with Tri-State taking 203 MW of the power.

In September 1975 six utilities formed the Missouri Basin Power Project with Basin Electric as the operator. Tri-State's share was 24 percent. The project, near Wheatland, Wyo., was completed in 1982 with Tri-State receiving 398 MW of power.

<sup>55</sup> Municipals and REA cooperatives have preference in buying power from the Bureau of Reclamation, thus the term "preference power."

<sup>56</sup> National Rural Electric Cooperative Association *People-Their Power* (Washington, D. C.: National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, 1980), 106-109.

<sup>57</sup> Mark Dowling, *Transforming the past...into the future*. (Denver: Tri-State Generation and Transmission Assoc., Inc., 1993), 1-4.

<sup>58</sup> A megawatt of power will furnish electricity for approximately 1,000 homes.

<sup>59</sup> Dowling, 4-15.

<sup>60</sup> The eastern and western electrical grids were constructed and tied together separately. They cannot be connected directly because the electricity is not in phase. To match the phases, the power on one side of the grid is converted to DC power and then the phases matched and the power reconverted to AC power on the other grid. Tri-States' AC-DC tie allows 100 MW of power to flow either way across the grid allowing the transfer of power from either grid, thus helping to save the building of a plant or the purchase of power on the spot market.

Many problems plagued Tri-State in the ensuing years. Tri-State based its load growth on the members' data which was too optimistic, and at the same time, the agricultural economy fell into a slump and the projected irrigation growth never materialized.

Surpluses caused rate increases in the 20 percent range for all of Tri-State's territory. There were hard times for both the distribution and the G & T cooperatives. The pattern of year-to-year kilowatt-hour sales growth that had held for Wyrulec's first 40 years changed after 1978. Since then, Wyrulec has experienced no growth in kilowatt-hour sales. In fact, there has been a significant decline. Goshen County has an agricultural-based economy with little income from other sources. As the county goes, so goes Wyrulec, and its electrical load pattern. Other factors such as energy conservation, pipeline pumping and irrigation have also had an effect over the years.

But there were positive aspects, because the cooperatives own the plants that now produce the cleanest and cheapest coal power in the United States. Throughout the years of growth and into the decline of electric usage, these plants have helped the cooperatives meet their load requirements.

Since its inception, the production of electricity has helped fuel the growth in the rural areas. The changes taking place today in the country do not have nearly the impact that the REA had in the 1930s. Nonetheless, the millions of tons of coal being hauled daily through Goshen County, to fuel power plants throughout the United States, provide a source of jobs for local residents. The monetary effect of the Union Pacific Railroad and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe on the local economy is very great, and indirectly electricity is again having an impact on Goshen County.

Electricity might have moved into the rural areas without the REA, but it would have been at a far slower pace, and it would have been more expensive. The cooperatives nationwide have done an immeasurable service for the rural areas. With its cost-based rates and its capital credits that it pays to its members, Wyrulec fulfills the REA's original purpose of providing reliable electrical power to its owners at the lowest price consistent with good business practices. In the days of national scandal in the private power community, the ethics of public power producers stand alone at the top of the utility industry poised to meet the electricity demands of the 21st century.

#### WYRULEC COMPANY DIRECTORS

Director	Years of Service	District
F.R. Pearson	1936 - 1937	Incorporator
R.V. Allen	1936 - 1938	Incorporator
L.R. Brewer	1936 - 1937	Incorporator
Emery Bright	1936 - 1938	Incorporator
T.J. Lisle	1936 - 1939	Incorporator
R.J. Haeffelin	1937 - 1946	
J.F. Zimmerer	1938 - 1973	5
George F. Haas	1938 - 1948	
Clyde Yeik	1939 - 1945	
	1948 - 1972	3
Paul Dupertis	1939 - 1951	1
Hugh Stemler	1945 - 1948	3
E. G. Phelps	1946 - 1950	2
Glenn Hertzler	1948 - 1951	4
George D. Duncan	1950 - 1976	2
Grover Cameron	1951 - 1967	1
Oscar Yoder	1951 - 1978	4
Edward J. Baldwin	1967 - 1983	1
Carl Otto	1972 - 1973	3
Wayne A. Riggs	1973 - 1994	5
Howard A. Haas	1973 - 1987	3
Kenneth Pursley	1976 - 1981	2
Jack R. Preston	1978 - Present	4
William J. Motsick	1981 - Present	2
Calvin E. Hoy	1983 - 1989	
	1991 - Present	1
F. E. Wolski	1987 - Present	3
Larry N. Lamb	1989 - 1991	1
Robert Yiek	1994 - 2003	5
Kerry Kilty	2003 - Present	5

From: Wyrulec Company Statistics.

*The author graduated from the University of Denver and he is a M. A. candidate in history at the University of Wyoming. Wyrulec Company provided electricity to the family farm when the author was seven years old. In 1978 he was elected to Wyrulec's board of directors and continues to serve as the Nebraska director. He is past president of the Nebraska Rural Electric Association, and past director of Tri-State G & T. He is serving as President of the Nebraska State Historical Society. He was one of the founders of the Farm and Ranch Museum (FARM) in Gering, Nebraska. Agricultural history is his specialty.*



## Letter to the Editor

I grew up in Gillette and have poked around in Gillette's history, so may I invite you to join me in "reading" the photograph of the east side of Gillette's Main Street published in the Autumn 2002 issue?

The shadows show the sun is getting low in the sky, either late in the afternoon or even into the early evening in those pre-daylight savings time days. The leaves on the trees establish that it is mid- to late summer. Two conclusions could be hazarded from that little information: the absence of people on the street might suggest that they are home for the evening meal, and that it is a weekday. Whether simply summer or weekday, either way those engaged in ranching activities would not likely be in town.

The photo shows clues toward a time period when the photo may have been made. One is the building on the right, the first shown on the east side of the street. It appears to be made of brick, and, if so, that puts the photo after 1900, even possibly as late as 1910. That particular building appears to be the one I knew in my childhood as Cates Men's Wear, later my father's Stag Shoppe; it is the building now across the street on the northeast corner opposite the old post office.

The hitching rail outside that building suggests that autos were not in prevalent usage yet--but in Gillette, that can be as late as the 1920s, at least the early part of the 1920s.....I know from my research that when the railroad arrived, there was not a single tree anywhere around. On the left side of the photo, a tree tops the building it is beside--and that building is uncommonly tall, more than a single story, putting that particular tree somewhere between 10-15 feet tall. Pretty much in the center of the photo is a tree located outside a business--its size in relation to the trees in the background suggest it is relatively newly planted, but it is already as high or higher than the false store front, again 10-15 feet high. The other trees at the northern end of the street are clustered in the vicinity of the railroad depot.....if we surmise that a tree might grow a foot per year, that would place this photo about 20 years after the founding of Gillette--roughly 1913 or so. It would be incredibly unlikely that this is a photo of Gillette in the period of the 1890s. As the railroad moved on, businesses closed--and their buildings dismantled to be reassembled at the next anticipated end of the railroad. There could not have been so many standing buildings in Gillette after the railroad moved on! That alone dates the picture after 1900. The extent of the development more points to a period after 1910. A tighter frame for the photo would be 1915-1920....

If I am correct about that brick building's location, what is extremely frustrating is the absence of a photo of the facility due east of it (due east of the old Cates Men's Wear). It was the stable and office of the stagline, originally from Moorcroft to Buffalo, hence to Sheridan, with its eastern point dictated by where the railroad ended construction for the season. That facility enters into the lynching of Tom Waggoner and also into the Johnson County War.

Days before the stagline was to begin its operations from



Moorcroft, its entire herd of horses was stolen--and not one word was ever reported of those horses being returned. Yet, when the stagline went into bankruptcy, a driver who had been with the line since its beginning testified the stage horses then were identical to the horses the stage line began with--on time. But, meanwhile, Joe Eliot had arrested one of the horse thieves up on the Crow reservation. Two nights before Waggoner was killed, Eliot and his prisoner were in Buffalo en route to Newcastle where the prisoner was deposited in jail the day Waggoner was killed. It was reported at the time that men were seen rounding up horses on Waggoner's ranch--and the next day, as memory serves, the stage line began operations with the horses it had owned all along, the horses which had been stolen--and which, somehow, rematerialized just in time for operations to begin.

But this gets more fascinating because of the excuses given for the Johnson County War was that homesteaders ("thieves") were stealing the cattlemen blind, selling beef to the railroad construction crews. The man who had the contract to supply beef to the railroad construction crews was the owner of that stage line. After he committed suicide in Clearmont and the line was in bankruptcy, cattle hides from that operation were recovered from a facility he had near Rozet--more than enough hides to have fed every railroad construction worker quite well during the entire construction season. And during the Johnson County War, the stage line's co-owner and manager rode as a deputy sheriff--at the back of the Johnson County sheriff, a wondrous position remembering the stage line's affinity for Joe Eliot and Eliot's employers, the Wyoming Stockgrowers Association. Every ounce of beef that made it into railroad construction workers' bellies passed through the hands of the stage coach line's owners, both of whom had a curious relationship with the a known agent of the WSGA. And if those cattle had been stolen, the stage line had every one of the hides on hand.

And a major component of all that is just off the photo behind that brick building on the east side of Gillette's main street. Or was. The stable and office were likely long gone before the photo was taken.

Roger Hawthorne  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

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# Wyoming Picture

From Photographic Collections  
in Wyoming



Agnes Wright Spring collection. American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming

*The building pictured is the Fillmore, Wyoming, post office and "depot" in Albany County. Said to be the smallest post office/depot in the world, the structure was built by George Wright as a place to store mailbags. Some years later, the freight box (right) was placed next to it for freight arriving on the Laramie, Hahn's Peak and Pacific Railroad. Wright was the father of noted historian Agnes Wright Spring and Rachel Ann Wright Fish.*

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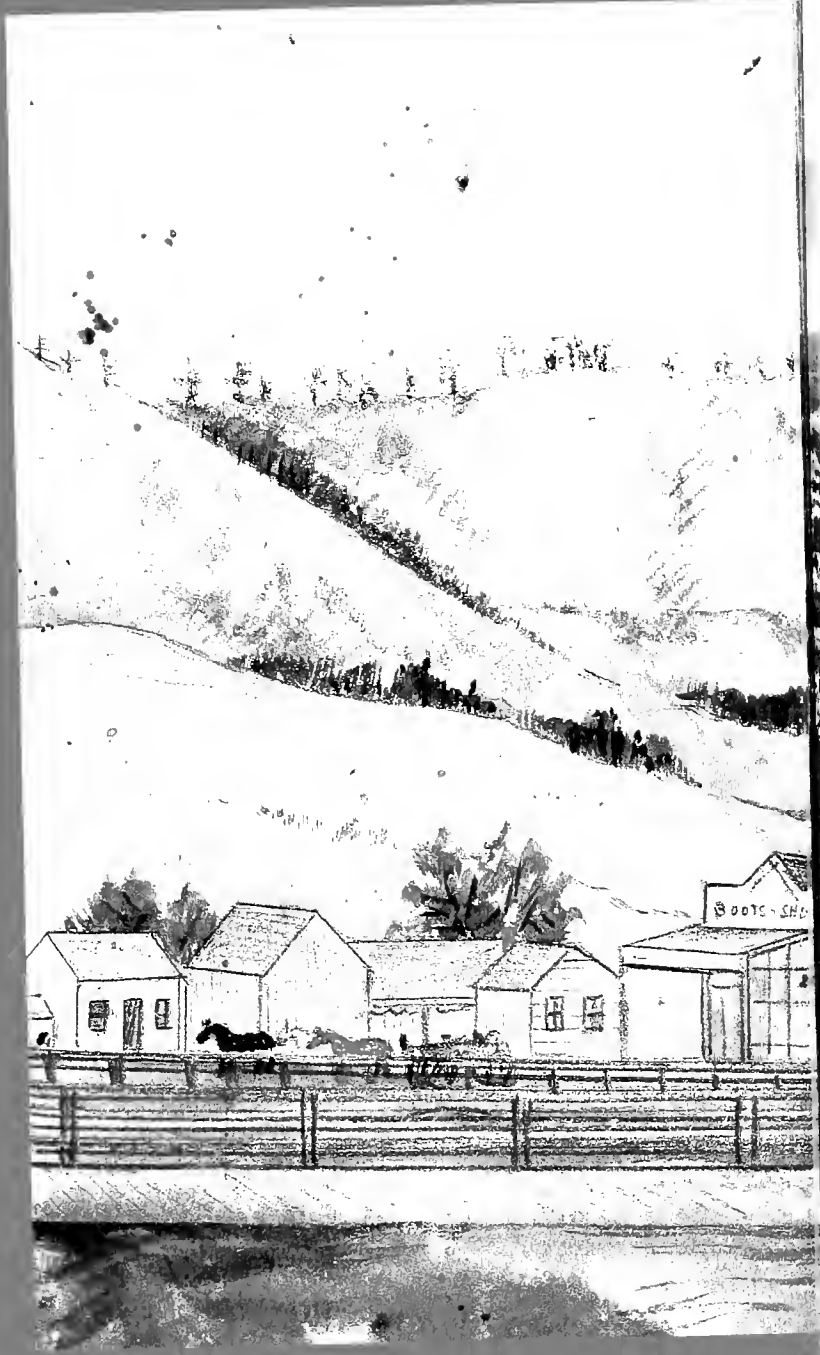
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# *Annals of* **WYOMING**

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**The Wyoming History Journal**

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**Summer 2003**

**Vol. 75, No. 3**



# The Cover Art

## *“Devils Tower”*

*By Dave Paulley*

*An oil painting in the collection of paintings commissioned to commemorate the Wyoming Centennial of Statehood, it is owned by the Wyoming State Historical Society and held in the collections of the Wyoming State Museum, Cheyenne.*

*The painting of Devils Tower shows a parachute drifting down onto the rock formation in northeastern Wyoming. On Oct. 7, 1941, George Hopkins intentionally parachuted to the top of Devils Tower in order to win a bet. The stunt turned serious, however, when he found he could not get down. For six days, he remained stranded until eight rescuers reached him, despite the heavy rain and icy cold.*

### **Note from the Editor**

Thank you for reading *Annals* over the past eight years. I have had the opportunity to edit this journal during much of that time. With this issue, I take what may be a temporary leave once again. (I first served as editor for several issues in the early 1980s). This time, I turn over the editor's chair to my old friend and colleague, Rick Ewig. Rick has extensive experience editing this journal, beginning when he, too, was historian in the Wyoming State Archives, Museums and Historical Department. He returned as my co-editor back in 1995 when, as associate director of the American Heritage Center, he and I helped the WSHS “rescue” the *Annals* from possible demise. At that time Celeste Colgan, then-director of the State Department of Commerce, removed state sponsorship from the Society and sought to either eliminate the *Annals* or re-make it into a non-historical magazine. Rick and I brought the journal to Laramie, with support from the WSHS, the University of Wyoming, and many friends of the Society.

That first issue of what we called “Wyoming History Journal” was partially financed with funds I had received that year from a teaching award that I applied to the printing of that first issue. The name “Wyoming History Journal” was used after the State Department of Commerce argued that the name “*Annals*” belonged to the State. On Ms. Colgan's departure from Wyoming, the name became *Annals of Wyoming* again, and Rick continued to serve as co-editor. Since that time, the relations between the State and the Wyoming State Historical Society have returned to cooperation.

My thanks again to the talented contributor historians, the small dedicated staff and Board of Editors, helpful Society boards, and interested readers. I'm proud of our work over the past eight years. My best wishes to Rick as he returns to take the editor's chair. Of course, I'll continue to read and enjoy my favorite history journal as I know each of you will do as well.

--Phil Roberts

### Information for Contributors:

The editor of *Annals of Wyoming* welcomes manuscripts and photographs on every aspect of the history of Wyoming and the West. Appropriate for submission are unpublished, research-based articles which provide new information or which offer new interpretations of historical events. First-person accounts based on personal experience or recollections of events will be considered for use in the “Wyoming Memories” section. Historic photo essays for possible publication in “Wyoming Memories” also are welcome. Articles are reviewed and refereed by members of the journal's Editorial Advisory Board and others. Decisions regarding publication are made by the editor. Manuscripts (along with suggestions for illustrations or photographs) should be submitted on computer diskettes in a format created by one of the widely-used word processing programs along with two printed copies. Submissions and queries should be addressed to Editor, *Annals of Wyoming*, University of Wyoming, Laramie WY 82071, or to the editor by e-mail at the following address: [rewig@uwyo.edu](mailto:rewig@uwyo.edu)

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# Annals of WYOMING

The Wyoming History Journal  
Summer 2003 Vol. 75, No. 3

## Devils Tower, Wyoming: An Examination of a Clash in Cultures

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When the National Park Service issued a ban on climbing during a month of Native American ceremonies at the site, climbers objected. This is the story of the culture clash that culminated in court decisions in the matter.

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*Annals of Wyoming* The Wyoming History Journal is published quarterly by the Wyoming State Historical Society in association with the Wyoming Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources, the American Heritage Center, and the Department of History, University of Wyoming. The journal was previously published as the *Quarterly Bulletin* (1923-1925), *Annals of Wyoming* (1925-1993), *Wyoming Annals* (1993-1995) and *Wyoming History Journal* (1995-1996). The *Annals* has been the official publication of the Wyoming State Historical Society since 1953 and is distributed as a benefit of membership to all society members. Membership dues are: single, \$20; joint, \$30; student (under 21), \$15; institutional, \$40; contributing, \$100-249; sustaining, \$250-499; patron, \$500-999; donor, \$1,000+. To join, contact your local chapter or write to the address below. Articles in *Annals of Wyoming* are abstracted in *Historical Abstracts* and *America: History and Life*.

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# Devils Tower, Wyoming A Clash of a Class

By Brenda L. Haes

J. E. Stimson collection. Wyoming State Parks and Cultural Resources Dept.

In 1991, the Washington Office of the National Park Service (NPS) mandated that national parks with significant climbing activities develop management plans to accommodate the expanding number of participants. Devils Tower, Wyoming, one of 30 such sites; however, had a unique situation. It was the only location that was considered sacred as well as recreational. After the passage of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA) in 1978 and the subsequent influx of people celebrating ceremonial practices at the Tower, and the simultaneous popularity in mountain climbing, friction became evident between the two cultural segments as they competed for the same natural resource.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Main Street Wyoming*, produced by Deborah Hammons in association with KCWC-TV Wyoming Public Television. 30 minutes. 1996. videocassette.



**D**evils Tower and the nearby Missouri Buttes are believed to be volcanic necks that emerged over millions of years as sedimentary rocks eroded and revealed the spectacular structures. Scientists believe that molten magma forced its way underground some 60 million years ago, and as igneous rocks cooled they contracted and fractured forming the famous columns noted on Devils Tower. Over the years, sedimentary exteriors eroded revealing the surfaces that now rise nearly 1,300 feet above the winding Belle Fourche River.<sup>2</sup>

At least 24 indigenous cultures of the Plains consider the monolith sacred to their people. Many stories have been related as to the structure's creation.

The Kiowa tale centers on seven girls who were playing near their village when some bears happened upon them. The girls ran toward the village but the bears almost caught them, so they jumped on a rock that was nearly three feet high. The youngsters prayed that the rock would save them and it began to grow. As the rock increased out of the reach of the bears, they gouged at its sides. The girls are now in the sky and are known as the Pleiades or the "Seven Sisters" and the furrows can still be seen on the sides of the Tower, or Rock Tree, as it is known to the Kiowa. The story not only reflects how Tso-i was created, but how the People must have faith in the Creator.<sup>3</sup>

The Cheyenne version of the story is somewhat different. There were seven brothers. The wife of the eldest was kidnapped by a big bear and taken to his cave. Her husband mourned her loss deeply. The youngest was a very powerful medicine man and resolved to help his brother. He made special medicine arrows and instructed the others to fill their quivers. They all went after the big bear. At the cave's entrance, the youngest brother changed into a burrowing animal and dug into the bear's den. He found the bear with his head in the woman's lap. The medicine man put the bear to sleep and changed back to human form. He and the woman went to the entrance where the brothers were waiting. The Indians fled, but the bear soon woke, brought other bears, and gave chase. The brothers and wife came to the place where the Tower or Bear's Tipi now stands. The young man held a rock in his hand and had his brothers and the woman close their eyes while he sang a medicine song four times. When he had finished the rock was as it is presently. When the bears reached the Tower, the brothers killed all of them except the leader who jumped repeatedly against the structure's sides. His claws left the furrows that are visible today. The youngest brother shot his special medicine arrows, and

it wasn't until the final arrow pierced the bear's flesh that the animal died. Then the medicine man called bald eagles and four magnificent birds flew to their assistance. The brothers and woman took hold of their legs and were carried safely to the ground.<sup>4</sup>

Each of the Indian cultures that considered the site sacred has a name for the location other than the one by which it is known today, Devils Tower. The names and the origin myths generally lend themselves to involvement with bears as evidenced by the furrows or gouges on the sides of the structure. The Arapaho called Devils Tower, Bear's Tipi, the Crows dubbed it Bear's House; the Sioux named it Mato Tipila or Bear's Lodge as did the Cheyenne.<sup>5</sup>

Col. Richard I. Dodge, who traveled through the Black Hills in 1875 on reconnaissance for the U.S. Geological Survey, noted the uniqueness of the formation. It is Dodge who is credited (or blamed) with the name "Devil's Tower," due to a quote in his 1876 book on the Black Hills: "The Indians call this shaft 'The Bad God's Tower,' a name adopted with proper modification, by our surveyors." This was obviously not the case as indigenous societies did not associate evil with the sacred site. A Mr. Newton published one of the earliest maps of the region in 1880. It included the name Bear Lodge (Mateo Teepee)--Newton's incorrect translation.<sup>6</sup> Somewhere along the way, the location's name lost its possessive apostrophe; in modern times to "chang(e) the name of the monument require(s) an act of Congress."<sup>7</sup>

President Theodore Roosevelt proclaimed Devils Tower to be the first national monument on September 24, 1906. The Commissioner of the General Land Office recommended that 1,152.91 acres be set aside as sufficient land to manage the site. Missouri Buttes, part of the same volcanic system, were not included in the original plan.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Monument, Wyoming, *Devils Tower* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1985), 1-2.

<sup>3</sup>Devils Tower, "Devils Tower First Stories," 2001, electronic document, <http://www.nps.gov/deto/stories.html>, 3-4. Dewey Tsometokoy, Sr., Oklahoma, to author, 31 August 2002, transcript held by author, 1.

<sup>4</sup>Devils Tower, "Devils Tower History - Our First Fifty Years," 2001, electronic document, <http://www.nps.gov/deto/first50.html>, 2.

<sup>5</sup>Mary Alice Gunderson, *Devils Tower - Stories In Stone* (Glendo, Wyoming: High Plains Press, 1988), 31-55.

<sup>6</sup>"First Fifty," electronic document, 3.

<sup>7</sup>Christopher Smith, "Tribes Say Devils Tower Is No Name For A Pious Peak," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 4 September 1996, A-2.

<sup>8</sup>Proclamation 658, Sept. 24, 1906, 34 *Stat.* 3236.

Devils Tower's climbing history began some ten years prior to its becoming the first national monument. In 1893, William Rogers and Willard Ripley, both local ranchers, constructed a 350-foot wooden ladder "by driving pegs into a continuous vertical crack running between two columns on the southeast side of the Tower. The pegs were braced and secured to each other by a continuous wooden strip." Rogers was scheduled to climb the monolith on July 4, 1893, as a throng of onlookers witnessed the event; however, the two gentlemen needed to place a flagpole at the pinnacle, so the event actually took place sometime beforehand.

Linnie Rogers, William's wife, was the first woman to climb the ladder on July 4, 1895. She wore dark blue bloomers and knee-high leather boots.<sup>9</sup> The lower portion of the ladder was last used in 1927, and was removed for visitors' safety. The upper portion still remains as a piece of Devils Tower history; the NPS nominated the apparatus to the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>10</sup>

German-born Fritz Weissner and Americans Bill House and Lawrence Coveney were the first individuals to employ European techniques of rock-climbing at the Tower in 1937. They drove in two pitons, or steel wedges. Pitons vary in size from two to six inches in length with an open eye. As a precautionary measure, a piton can "be driven into the rock and the rope clipped into the eye of the piton with a carabiner, an oval-shaped clip. This would anchor the rope closer to an ascending climber, thus shortening a possible fall."<sup>11</sup> The ascent took four hours and 46 minutes.<sup>12</sup>

In 1990 an article addressed concerns about climbing in national park settings. Issues, such as permanent bolting and portable electric drills, creating new climbing routes which devastated wildlife and plants as well as contributed to erosion and caused birds to abandon their nests, numbered among the timely topics. The most telling statement in the story was that the NPS had no system-wide policy concerning climbing but allowed each park to set its own standard depending upon the pressure it was receiving.<sup>13</sup>

The following year, the NPS indicated that a climbing management plan was necessary due to the increased popularity of the sport, as well as the need to protect the nation's park resources. Some of the overall areas of concern in the system pertained to heavy use areas and vegetation loss on hiking and climbing trails, discoloration of rock faces because of chalk usage, and damage due to permanent bolting and pitons drilled into rocks.<sup>14</sup>

Between 1985 and 1995, rock climbing increased dramatically at Devils Tower and resulted in accelerated

route development and bolt placement. The result was nearly 220 named routes. Currently, there are approximately 600 metal bolts embedded in the monolith's surface along with several hundred metal pitons. Devils Tower is one of the premier crack-climbing locations in the world.<sup>15</sup>

In late 1992, Devils Tower had formally begun the management process, and by 1993 was holding consultations with environmentalists, rock climbers, and indigenous people. Personnel developed a work group to write the Devils Tower climbing management plan. The following were the organizations that contributed to the work group: two American Indian organizations, Medicine Wheel Coalition, Grey Eagle Society; two climbing groups, Access Fund and Gillette Climbing Club and Black Hills Climbing Coalition; an environmental group, Sierra Club; a local elected official, Crook County Commissioner; and a NPS representative, Devils Tower Chief Ranger; as well as other individual contributors and subject matter experts.<sup>16</sup> More than 23 indigenous groups were considered culturally significant to the Devils Tower vicinity and were identified as follows: Assiniboine and Lakota of Montana, Blackfeet, Blood (Canada), Crow, Cheyenne River Sioux, Crow Creek Lakota, Devil's Lake Lakota, Eastern Shoshone, Flandreau Santee Lakota, Kootnai and Salish, Lower Brule Lakota, Northern Arapaho, Northern Cheyenne, Oglala Lakota, Pigeon (Canada), Rosebud Lakota, Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux, Southern Arapaho, Southern Cheyenne, Standing Rock Sioux, Three Affiliated Tribes, Turtle Mountain Chippewa, and Yankton Lakota. Although not included on the NPS's official Agencies and Organizations List, the Kiowa Nation of Oklahoma was also included in the proceedings.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>9</sup>Devils Tower. "Devils Tower Study: How Do They Get Up There?," 2001, electronic document. <http://www.nps.gov/deto/upthere.html>. 1-2.

<sup>10</sup>Devils Tower. "Devils Tower General Management Plan," 2001, electronic document. [http://www.nps.gov/deto/gmp/03\\_affected.html](http://www.nps.gov/deto/gmp/03_affected.html). 5.

<sup>11</sup>Gunderson, 88, 91.

<sup>12</sup>"Up There?," electronic document, 2.

<sup>13</sup>Claire Martin. "Set in Stone." *National Parks*. November/December 1990, 37.

<sup>14</sup>Laura P. McCarty. "National Parks Grapple With Rock Climbing." *National Parks*. September/October 1993, 22.

<sup>15</sup>Devils Tower Superintendent Deborah Liggett. *Main Street Wyoming*. videocassette.

<sup>16</sup>Jim Schlinkmann, compiler. "An Interpreter's Guide to the Most Asked Questions on the Devils Tower Climbing Management Plan," 1994, 1.

<sup>17</sup>Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Crook County, Wyoming, Devils Tower National Monument, *Draft General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement*. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2001), 172.

Indians, as well as climbers, constituted about one-percent each of the visitors at Devils Tower annually.<sup>18</sup> The primary goal of the work group was to balance recreational use with the spiritual needs of the tribes which held sun dances, sweat lodge rites, vision quests, and left prayer offerings at Devils Tower. The plan highlighted the significance of the site to Native Americans as well as requested that visitors not climb during June, the month of the summer solstice, the most important time for Indian worship.<sup>19</sup> Since 1978 and the passage of the AIRFA, Indian usage has increased. In 1981, the first major group of Indians registered at Devils Tower. The sun dance has been held annually at the site since 1984. Although the NPS keeps statistical information related to indigenous usage of the site, that data is not available to the public.<sup>20</sup>

Christopher McLeod, producer and director of the documentary, "In the Light of Reverence," summarized the Supreme Court rulings in the 1980s pertaining to First Amendment religious freedom protections by stating that they didn't apply to Native American spiritual practices because Indians needed large areas to pray or to conduct vision quests. Based on his research, what was missing was an understanding by the dominant culture of what a sacred place was.<sup>21</sup>

Lawyer, Indian rights activist, and author Vine Deloria, Jr., tried to clarify the philosophy behind sacred places. He explained that there are places on Earth that seem to have power, although one does not know why or what kind of power. He continued that the place leaves one with an energized feeling that is why a lot of people go to that site under the direction of a medicine man and open themselves up to the supernatural forces. Deloria said, "It is not like we designate a place and [say] it is sacred; it came out of a lot of experience. The idea is not to pretend to own it, not to exploit it but to respect it. Trying to get people to see that that is a dimension of religion is really difficult."<sup>22</sup>

Charles Wilkinson, University of Colorado law professor, told McLeod: "In the corner of the mind of many judges, is the idea that these just can't be real religions. Religion is something that you do in a church. Real religion isn't something that you do in Nature." If something is conducted outside, it must be recreational. Furthermore, the idea that a religion is in direct relation to a specific place is not generally part of these judges' experiences.<sup>23</sup>

Charles Levendosky, a reporter and a member of the NPS's work group, wanted to compose an article that reflected how an indigenous person might feel at the violation of Devils Tower in June. He wrote, "Think of someone hammering climbing bolts into one of the tow-

ers of St. Patrick's Cathedral on Easter Sunday, and yelling to another climber while you try to pray down in the pews. That's the clash—in real Christian terms."<sup>24</sup>

Out of protest for the disrespectful treatment that Devils Tower received from visitors' hands, the Dakota, Nakota, and Lakota Nations submitted a resolution to the NPS in 1993. The proclamation was included in the NPS' 1995 Final Climbing Management Plan and reads as follows:

WHEREAS, the DEVILS TOWER has been subjected to similar damage from an onslaught of rock climbers and now has hundreds of steel pins pounded into the face of this Sacred Site, and...

WHEREAS, these sites and many others are vital to the continuation of our traditional beliefs and values, and

WHEREAS, it is our legacy to protect these sites for the future generations, so they too, may be able to enjoy these holy places for prayer and revitalization of Mother Earth, now...

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this assembly does not support efforts by Federal Land Managers to allow further destruction to these Sacred Sites by tourists, hikers or rock climbers.<sup>25</sup>

Later, President Clinton would arrive at the same conclusion as the Sioux Nations, and signed an Executive Order instructing federal land managers to: "1) accommodate access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites by Indian religion practitioners and, 2) avoid adversely affecting the physical integrity of such sacred sites."<sup>26</sup>

The 1995 Final Climbing Management Plan was a means of conflict negotiation.<sup>27</sup> It included six options that varied from a complete and total ban on climbing throughout the year to an unlimited, minimally regulated plan. The preferred plan offered a voluntary climbing

<sup>18</sup>Liggett, *Main Street Wyoming*.

<sup>19</sup>"Native Rites and Wrongs," *The Natton*, (July 1997), 4.

<sup>20</sup>Liggett, *Main Street Wyoming*.

<sup>21</sup>PBS's "Point of View (POV)" Series copresentation with Native American Public Telecommunications, *In the Light of Reverence*, produced by Christopher McLeod and Earth Island Institute, 75 min., 2001, videocassette

<sup>22</sup>Vine Deloria, Jr., *In the Light of Reverence*.

<sup>23</sup>Charles Wilkinson, *In the Light of Reverence*.

<sup>24</sup>Charles Levendosky, "Face Off At Devils Tower: Climbers v. Religion," *Casper Star-Tribune*, 24 March 1996

<sup>25</sup>Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Rocky Mountain Region, Crook County, Wyoming, *Final Climbing Management Plan Finding of No Significant Impact* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1995), 9.

<sup>26</sup>*Main Street Wyoming*.

<sup>27</sup>Liggett.

closure during the month of June, out of respect for the indigenous cultures' observance of Summer solstice ceremonies. Commercial guides' licenses were not sold during the month of June, cross-cultural educational programming was offered, and climbing closures would continue as deemed necessary for raptor nest protection—which translated as within view of the nest site or 50 meters on either side of the nest. To insure that there were no new physical impacts to Devils Tower, there were no new bolting or fixed pitons and permits for replacement of existing bolts and fixed pitons only were allowed. Only camouflaged climbing equipment was left on the tower.<sup>28</sup>

The first year, the site had an 85% compliance rate with the June voluntary climbing closure. Superintendent Deborah Liggett reported that very few requests were made for replacement bolting, and the Native American culture made positive comments about fewer climbers as well as notations about fewer bolts being pounded into the sacred altar.<sup>29</sup>

By March, 1996; however, Andy Petefish, owner of Tower Guides, and the Bear Lodge Multiple Use Association sued the NPS for violating the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. Petefish argued that the voluntary closure wasn't really voluntary because if the NPS didn't have enough percentage of people participate in the closure, they could enact a mandatory closure as stated in the plan. The plan also included a ban on issuing commercial guides licenses, which became a focus in the legal battle. He said, "If anybody wanted to hire a commercial guide, like myself, to climb the tower during the month of June they couldn't, so that part of it also wasn't voluntary for any aspect for anybody that might want to have a safe, enjoyable climb also I couldn't work."<sup>30</sup>

Ironically, seven of the eight guide companies in the area honored the NPS's request not to climb, while Petefish's did not. The lawsuit filed by Mountain States Legal Foundation stated that the park's policy "established" religion in violation of the First Amendment.<sup>31</sup> Petefish further stated that he was Euro-American and that he didn't want to understand Indian religion, and he didn't have to.<sup>32</sup> Superintendent Liggett said, "We were sued in part for violating [Petefish's] opportunities to make a profit, and in the preliminary injunction stage the federal judge upheld his claim and forced me to issue a commercial use license."<sup>33</sup> The license issue continued until the case was decided.<sup>34</sup>

Liggett said that one of the factors in the conflict centered around the fact that there were "two different world views" involved. In the indigenous walks of life, land and religion are inseparable, while in government

practices there is a definite division between church and state. "That's one of the very, very difficult things about this issue." On the other hand, Petefish said that such arguments were "a bunch of baloney." He stated that nature and religion played a role in his own life: "Rock climbing is my spiritual activity." Other climbers were embarrassed, especially when Indian prayer bundles and signage at the Tower requesting respect for such items were vandalized. Bob Archbold of the Access Fund (a climbing group based in Rapid City, S.D.), said, "You have five percent of the people making 95 percent of the impression. Most climbers, in fact, are voluntarily rescheduling their ascents." Al Read of Exum Mountain Guides (located in Grand Teton National Park) did not use his commercial license at the tower in June. He said, "Some climbers just want access no matter what the consequences of that access might mean to the general public. We don't share that philosophy."<sup>35</sup>

In June 1997, 185 people climbed the Tower compared with 193 in 1996 and 1,294 in 1994. No actual figures were available for 1995, other than the NPS statement that there was an 85% compliance rate due to the voluntary climbing closure. Proponents of the June closure added their support to the NPS's educational efforts through talks, demonstrations, exhibits and other such activities given by both climbers and Native Americans. According to NPS statistics, the cooperative ventures appeared to be highly effective.<sup>36</sup>

Judge William F. Downes, the United States District Court for the District of Wyoming, ruled on the NPS Final Climbing Management Plan on April 3, 1998.<sup>37</sup> "[T]he voluntary climbing ban is a policy that has been carefully crafted to balance the competing needs of individuals using Devil's [sic] Tower National Monument while, at the same time, obeying the edicts of the Constitution."<sup>38</sup> Judge Downes upheld all aspects of the NPS's program. "While the purposes behind the voluntary climbing ban are directly related to Native American religious practices...the purposes underlying the ban

<sup>28</sup>Department of the Interior. *Final Climbing Management Plan*. iv-v.

<sup>29</sup>Liggett. *Main Street Wyoming*.

<sup>30</sup>Andy Petefish. *Main Street Wyoming*.

<sup>31</sup>"Native Rites and Wrongs," 4-5.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup>Liggett. *Main Street Wyoming*.

<sup>34</sup>Karen J. Coates, "Stairway to Heaven: When A Climbing Mecca Is Also A Sacred Site," *Sierra*, (November/December 1996), 28.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup>*Bear Lodge Multiple Use Association v. Babbitt*, 2 F.Supp.2d. 1448 (D. Wyo., 1998).

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, 1455.

are really to remove barriers to religious worship occasioned by public ownership of the Tower." He continued, "This is in the nature of accommodation, not promotion, and consequently is a legitimate secular purpose..."<sup>39</sup> Further, "The government is merely enabling Native Americans to worship in a more peaceful setting."<sup>40</sup> The Mountain States Legal Foundation petitioned the District Court's decision to the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals.<sup>41</sup>

On April 26, 1999, the Court of Appeals affirmed the previous judgment, and addressed the three injuries cited in the complaint by Petefish and the Bear Lodge Multiple Use Association.<sup>42</sup> First, the court stated that the petitioners were not constrained by the NPS's Final Climbing Management Plan and were free to climb Devils Tower throughout the year, including the month of June, and that they had done so according to NPS records.<sup>43</sup> Second, the "[c]limbers' fear of an outright climbing ban in June does not satisfy the constitutional requirement for an injury in fact, which must be 'actual or imminent not conjectural or hypothetical.'" Finally, the Court of Appeals did not find that petitioner Petefish had demonstrated economic injury.<sup>44</sup>

Bear Lodge Multiple Use Association requested that the United States Supreme Court hear their legal dispute against Devils Tower National Monument Climbing Management Plan. On March 27, 2000, that motion was denied thereby ending the long-standing court battle that began in 1996.<sup>45</sup>

What was the outcome of the legal disputes? The NPS's Final Climbing Management Plan of 1995 was strengthened and even revitalized with the suggested court revisions and through the test of time. The original goal, a three-to-five year plan, outlived that projected period and entered its eighth year of use in 2003. The 1998 District Court decision lifted the NPS ban on the sale of commercial tour guide licenses during the month of June. Some climbing routes are closed from mid-March to mid-summer to protect nesting Prairie falcons on Devils Tower to lessen climbers' impacts on their environments. The NPS's bolt policy continues with no new introduction of bolts or fixed pitons on the Tower, except for those deemed necessary as replacements. Power drills are prohibited and permits are required for manual drills.<sup>46</sup> Additionally, the NPS considered nominating the adjacent sun dance grounds to the National Register of Historic Places, as it would help ensure continued protection of this area for the sacred Lakota ceremony.<sup>47</sup>

Not only is there a stronger climbing management plan in place, but there is also a stronger presence of the indigenous community at Devils Tower. Romanus

Bear Stops, a leader of the Cheyenne River Sioux in South Dakota, said that the AIRFA was a step in the right direction. "Now that we can go to Devils Tower [without interference from climbers], we can breathe new life into our culture."<sup>48</sup>

Ultimately, it is not a matter of taking sides, the sacred usage of the American Indian v. the recreational use of the climber, but rather an issue of putting differences aside and learning mutual respect, tolerance, acceptance, and compromise. Elaine Quiver, a Lakota from the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota and a member of the NPS consultation work group, said, "As long as we have a misunderstanding that my culture is better than yours, we'll never succeed. We'll always be fighting at the base of the Tower and the Tower will be standing forever."<sup>49</sup> It is a matter of embracing the fact that Devils Tower is owned by the United States and is managed as NPS property, destined for usage by both cultures, as well as others.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 1455.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 1456.

<sup>41</sup> Arlene Hirschfelder and Paulette Molin. *Encyclopedia of Native American Religions: An Introduction* (New York: Facts on File, Inc. 2000), 174.

<sup>42</sup> *Bear Lodge Multiple Use Association v. Babbitt*, 175 F3d 814 (10th Circ., 1999).

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 820-821

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 821

<sup>45</sup> *Bear Lodge Multiple Use Association v. Babbitt*, 529 US 1037 (2000), cert. denied

<sup>46</sup> Department of the Interior. *Draft General Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement*, 173; Department of the Interior. *Final Climbing Management Plan*, 2-3.

<sup>47</sup> "General Management Plan," electronic document, 4-5.

<sup>48</sup> "Native Rites and Wrongs," 5.

<sup>49</sup> Levendosky, n.p.

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# Rocky Mountain Entrepreneur:



Robert Campbell. Denver Public Library Western Collection

## Robert Campbell As a Fur Trade Capitalist

By Jay H. Buckley

Between 1825 and 1835 Robert Campbell emerged as a fur trade entrepreneur. Campbell served as clerk for Ashley-Smith, as brigade leader for Smith, Jackson, and Sublette, and as supplier and financier for the Rocky Mountain Fur Company. Campbell quickly became a dominant figure in the American fur trade. In addition to leading fur brigades, Campbell and his partner William Sublette built several trading posts (most notably Fort Laramie), supplied the annual rendezvous, and challenged John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company on the Missouri River. Through it all, Campbell's business acumen helped him pursue economic opportunities that paved the way for future financial success as a Missouri businessman.

Campbell's tenure in the fur trade provides an example of frontier capitalism. As a central figure in the complicated history of the rivalries, politics, struggles, and strategies of the upper Missouri fur trade, he greatly influenced the fur trade, including the men and companies involved, established friendly relations with numerous Indian tribes, resurrected fort-building and the demise of the rendezvous system, and helped to link St. Louis to its most important commercial enterprise—the fur trade. During the Rocky Mountain fur trade era (1825-1840), few individuals fit the role of a successful businessman as well as Campbell. Fur trade historian Dale Morgan remarked that a good, balanced history of the trans-Mississippi West fur trade in the 1830s would have to be centered, at least in part, around the life and career of Robert Campbell.<sup>1</sup>

Campbell experienced many of the same things common to mountain men, but his profitable career was the exception rather than the rule. Better educated and more articulate than the average mountain man, Campbell left numerous letters, documents, and papers. Fewer than a dozen mountain men left the mountains with any significant amount of wealth. Campbell's personality, honesty, education, and business acumen helped him become one of these successful entrepreneurs. Campbell seized the leadership and partnership opportunities offered by Ashley, Smith, and Sublette. Although he probably never really enjoyed nor cared for the solitude and romance of the mountains, Campbell saw the wisdom of making money while the good times lasted and then managed to leave while it was still profitable. To Campbell, the prospects of success outweighed the risks involved.

Like other mountain men, Robert Campbell hoped his ambition and hard work would lead to economic success and rapid upward mobility, eventually culminating in wealth and prestige.<sup>2</sup> Yet relatively few of the hundreds of mountain men ever achieved financial success. What were the key elements that mountain men needed to make the fur trade a viable means of acquiring wealth and how did Robert Campbell become a successful Rocky Mountain entrepreneur? Some of the

factors that spurred Campbell's successes include developing relationships and making important connections, dealing diplomatically with Indian friends and foes, and dealing with competitors while implementing innovative changes in the fur trade.

Born February 12, 1804, to Scotch-Irish parents Hugh Campbell and Elizabeth Buchanan in Aughalane, Tyrone County, Ireland, Robert was the youngest of six children. His family owned several farms and served as landlords to tenants who worked the land. Unfortunately, Hugh Campbell, Sr., died in 1810, leaving his wife Elizabeth, and his children Ann, Hugh, Andrew, Elizabeth, James Alexander, and Robert in a precarious financial situation.<sup>3</sup> As economic conditions in Ireland worsened, many Scotch-Irish immigrated to Pennsylvania and the other middle colonies seeking better economic opportunities.<sup>4</sup> Because of their landholdings, Hugh Campbell's



Map by author

<sup>1</sup> Dale Morgan, ed., *The West of William H. Ashley: The International Struggle for the Fur Trade of the Missouri, the Rocky Mountains, and the Columbia, with Explorations Beyond the Continental Divide, Recorded in the Diaries and Letters of William H. Ashley and His Contemporaries, 1822-1835* (Denver: Rosenstock-Old West Publishing Company, 1964) xiii, 302, 318, 322. For book-length treatments see: Jay H. Buckley, "Rocky Mountain Entrepreneur: Robert Campbell's Significance in the Fur Trade, 1825-1835," (MA thesis, Brigham Young

University, 1996); Marlene I. Hawver, "Robert Campbell: Independent Capitalist," (MA thesis, University of Missouri-Kansas City, 1983); Drew A. Holloway, "Robert Campbell and the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade: The Myth and the Reality," (MA thesis, Vermont College of Norwich Univ., 1989); Stephen F. Huss, "Take No Advantage: The Biography of Robert Campbell," (Ph.D. diss., St. Louis University, 1989); William R. Nester, *From Mountain Man to Millionaire: The "Bold and Dashing Life" of Robert Campbell* (Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1999). The author thanks Lyndon S. Clayton and Julie A. Harris for reading drafts of this paper.

<sup>2</sup> William H. Goetzmann, "The Mountain Man as Jacksonian Man," *American Quarterly* 15 (Fall, 1963): 402-15.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Campbell Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Missouri. Aughalane is a rural area just east of Newtownstewart near present-day Plumbridge.

<sup>4</sup> Liam Kennedy and Philip Ollerenshaw, *An Economic History of Ulster* (Manchester, England, Manchester University Press, 1985); William F. Adams, *Ireland and Irish Emigration to the New World* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1967); Kirby Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

family fared better and the children could afford to attend school. Robert's oldest brother Hugh, who had recently studied medicine at Scotland's prestigious Edinburgh University, decided to leave Ireland in 1818 with hopes of achieving success in America. Hugh entered commercial pursuits in Milton, North Carolina, before settling in Richmond, Virginia, where he began building a reputation as a man of integrity with a keen business sense. His letters home told of his success and when he invited his younger brother Robert to join him, Robert readily agreed.<sup>5</sup>

In 1822 Robert boarded the *Climax* and began his trans-Atlantic voyage from Londonderry to Philadelphia. After arriving in America, he traveled to Hugh's home and began working as a clerk at his store. Hugh offered Robert what he needed most: encouragement, friendship, occasional censure, and numerous business contacts. Hugh served as Campbell's most significant acquaintance, as well as a father figure, advisor, and financier. He instilled in Robert the need to cultivate friendships and form business relationships. Hugh's most important advice to Robert came in a letter in the fall of 1825. He wrote "You doubtless are aware that when fortune smiles friends remember us...Take Care my dear Robert of making cronies—I do believe that no occurrence of a trifling nature that has ever given me more cause to regret."<sup>6</sup>

When Robert contracted a lung infection, Hugh advised him to go West in hopes of regaining his health. Campbell rode a river boat down the Ohio River and arrived in St. Louis in 1824 where he was hired as a clerk by his next important contact, John O'Fallon, for whom he worked from the fall of 1824 to the summer of 1825. As a founding member of the Erin Benevolent Society, O'Fallon helped Scots-Irish immigrants find opportunities in America.<sup>7</sup> Campbell's brief education, his internship with Hugh, and being literate prepared him for this new clerical position. O'Fallon, the nephew of Superintendent of Indian Affairs William Clark, had just received an appointment as the sutler at Council Bluffs in 1821 and was friends with the important men of Missouri, including the Chouteau family and Senator Thomas Hart Benton. Campbell assisted O'Fallon with procuring and delivering supplies to points along the Missouri from St. Louis to the Platte River. Campbell's health continued to decline and he still suffered from congestion and occasional bleeding in his lungs. He sought professional advice about his respiratory ailments from St. Louis physician Dr. Bernard G. Farrar, who suggested a rugged outdoor lifestyle as the best cure.<sup>8</sup> Campbell obtained a reference letter from his employer and sought his fortune in the fur trade.

The St. Louis-based fur trade had begun during Spanish and French occupation, played a key role in the settlement and development of upper Louisiana, and provided the impetus for westward expansion.<sup>9</sup> The Louisiana Purchase, the Lewis and Clark expedition, the Treaty of Ghent, the Transcontinental Treaty with Spain, Mexican Independence, and Missouri statehood had opened up commercial interests in the Rocky Mountain fur trade and on the Santa Fe Trail. Men such as Manuel Lisa, the Chouteaus, Andrew Henry and William H. Ashley were all trying their hand at harvesting beaver pelts that brought between \$3 and \$10 in St. Louis, a fabulous sum for the day.<sup>10</sup> When Ashley and Henry realized that trapping parties could yield higher returns and profits than trading with the Indians, they obtained licenses to trap the upper Missouri. Newspaper advertisements seeking hundreds of "Enterprising Young Men" to ascend the Missouri and work for one to three years brought prompt responses from men like Jedediah Smith, David Jackson, William Sublette, and Jim Bridger.<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately, Henry and Ashley's firm faced repeated failures with capsizing keelboats, raiding Assiniboines and Atsinas, and an Arikara attack in 1823.

<sup>5</sup>J. Thomas Scharf, *History of Saint Louis City and County, from the Earliest Periods to the Present Day: Including Biographical Sketches of Representative Men* vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts & Co., 1883), 372n.

<sup>6</sup>Hugh Campbell to Robert Campbell, September 18, 1825; Dale L. Morgan and Eleanor T. Harris, eds., *The Rocky Mountain Journals of William Marshall Anderson: The West in 1834* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1967), 271-72.

<sup>7</sup>John O'Fallon also financed the mercantile firm of O'Fallon and Keyte with his partner James Keyte. John O'Fallon Papers, Missouri Historical Society; Mary Ellen Rowe, "'A Respectable Independence': The Early Career of John O'Fallon," *Missouri Historical Review* 90 (July 1996): 393-409; James N. Primm, *Lion of the Valley* (Boulder: Pruett Publishing Co., 1981): 171.

<sup>8</sup>Robert Campbell, "A Narrative of Colonel Robert Campbell's Experiences in the Rocky Mountains Fur Trade From 1825-1835 (St. Louis: Campbell Papers, Missouri Historical Society, n.d.).

<sup>9</sup>Howard L. Conard, "Fur Trade," *Encyclopedia of the History of Missouri* (St. Louis: The Southern History Co., 1901), 536-543.

<sup>10</sup>Fred R. Gowans and Linda H. White, "Traders to Trappers Andrew Henry and the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade: The Life and Times of a Prominent Fur Trade Figure," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 43 no. 1, 3 (Winter, Summer, 1993): 59-65, 55-63. For details of the Ashley-Henry partnership, see Richard M. Clokey, *William H. Ashley: Enterprise and Politics in the Trans-Mississippi West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 62-77; For their trading license from John C. Calhoun and the War Department, see Morgan, ed., *The West of William H. Ashley*, 1-2.

<sup>11</sup>Advertisements appeared on February 13, 1822 in the St. Louis *Missouri Gazette & Public Advisor*, on March 16 in the *Missouri Intelligencer*, and on March 20 in the *Missouri Republican*. Other notices ran periodically in various Missouri newspapers that spring and over the next few years like the one on January 18, 1823, that appeared in the *Missouri Gazette & Public Advisor*.



Nearly \$100,000 in debt, Ashley and Henry faced financial ruin and ended their partnership. Meanwhile, Jedediah Smith crossed South Pass, located the beaver-rich Green River basin, and established contact with the Crows, Utes and Shoshones.<sup>12</sup>

While Campbell was clerking for O'Fallon, Ashley received the exciting news about the beaver bonanza along the Green River and about the need to supply the men remaining in the mountains. Holding a rendezvous would help Ashley avoid the loss of men and pelts to the Blackfoot Confederacy and the Arikaras on the upper Missouri, the expense of building and using costly trading posts on the river to collect and transport furs, and relying on Indians to do the trapping. Great overland caravans replaced river transportation for bringing needed supplies into the Rockies during the summer and exchanging them with mountain men and friendly Indians for fur at the summer rendezvous, which

the returning men sold in St. Louis in the fall.<sup>13</sup> Ashley's innovation of trapping rather than trading enabled him and his successors (including Campbell) to dominate the northern and central Rockies fur trade for almost a decade. Moreover, the switch from trading to trapping represented an important economic change and anticipated a broader shift to corporations and markets in America by the latter part of the nineteenth century.

Campbell's next important contacts included Ashley and Smith, who had formed a partnership in 1825. In early October, Ashley sent Smith to gather men and supplies for the following year and due to Campbell's connections with O'Fallon, Smith hired Campbell to clerk for the Ashley-Smith firm.<sup>14</sup> Smith, Campbell and their 68 men, with pack horses and mules, left St. Louis on November 1, traveling along the south side of the Missouri River before reaching Fort Riley on January 1, 1826. Due to the lateness of their start, Smith decided to winter with the Pawnee along the Republican River. Campbell and Smith impressed the Pawnee chief

Ishkatupa, who insisted they stay in his lodge, and also formed a lasting friendship.<sup>15</sup>

Ashley received word that the expedition had halted so he brought additional men and supplies and reunited with Smith and Campbell. Not having sufficient numbers of horses, the men took turns walking to Cache Valley in present-day Utah where they arrived in June for the 1826 rendezvous. In less than three years Ashley's men had trapped 500 packs of beaver (50,000 pelts) worth more than \$250,000 on the east coast.<sup>16</sup> Ashley now had the money necessary to launch his political career so he dissolved the Ashley-Smith firm, selling his share to David E. Jackson, and William L. Sublette who formed the partnership of Smith, Jackson, & Sublette (SJ&S) on July 18, 1826. Campbell acted as witness and recorder for the transaction and agreed to continue providing his clerical services to the new company and

Smith's two new partners, Bill Sublette in particular, were the next important contacts Campbell made.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Clokey, *Ashley*, 78-100; William R. Nester, *The Arikara War: The First Plains Indian War, 1823* (Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 2001); White and Gowans, "Traders to Trappers," *Montana* 43: 62; "More Reports on the Fur Trade and Inland Trade to Mexico, 1831," *Glances of the Past* 9 (3) (Reprint, 1942): 80; Dale F. Morgan, *Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1953), 86-95.

<sup>13</sup> Fred R. Gowans, *Rocky Mountain Rendezvous: 1825-1840* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1976).

<sup>14</sup> Campbell, "Narrative," 4; Richard M. Clokey, *William H. Ashley: Enterprise and Politics in the Trans-Mississippi West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 161-69.

<sup>15</sup> Campbell, "Narrative," 4-6. Smith's confidence in Campbell enabled Robert to attain leadership positions very quickly in the Ashley-Smith and later the Smith, Jackson, & Sublette partnerships. Morgan, *Jedediah Smith*, 172-4.

<sup>16</sup> Cited in William E. Parrish, et al, *Missouri: The Heart of the Nation* (St. Louis: Forum Press, 1980), 69.

<sup>17</sup> Campbell provides one of the few records of this important transaction. Campbell, "Narrative," 8-9. An addendum to his narrative states that in the summer of 1826 "We remained in Cache



Map by author

Campbell's success in building a friendship with influential men such as Hugh Campbell, John O'Fallon, William Ashley, Jedediah Smith, and William Sublette created a network of influential contacts with connections to high-ranking military officers, government officials, financiers, and merchants. His reliable character made him a valued associate and presented him with a string of employment opportunities that helped him to become a major player in the fur trade and to earn a substantial amount of money at the same time.

**R** knowing the right people was not enough to succeed in the fur trade. One also had to become proficient in the diplomatic negotiations with Indians. The same integrity, honesty, and character that earned Campbell lifelong friends also won him the trust and confidence of many Indians. Campbell was adept in his relationship with Indian tribes because of his open and honest nature, and his genuine friendships with Indian leaders. Campbell's first Indian contact was with the Pawnees during the winter of 1825-1826. Ashley had unwisely sent Smith and Campbell to the Rocky Mountains from St. Louis in the late fall. Winter quickly set in on the Plains, forcing their party to take refuge at a Pawnee village on the south side of the Republican Fork of the Platte River. One third of the mules died and their 70-man party suffered greatly for want of provisions. In their situation, they consumed the Pawnee corn caches for sustenance. When the Pawnees returned from their buffalo hunt, Smith and Campbell paid them for the corn they had consumed, which impressed Chief Ishkatupa so much that he insisted the two stay in his lodge until they left a few months later to join Ashley. Ishkatupa would be the first of many Indian leaders from the Missouri to the Columbia—men like Cut Face (Shoshone), Insillah (Red Feather or Little Chief; Flathead), Bracelette de Fer (Iron Wristbands; Shoshone), Friday (Warshinum; Arapaho), Eshehunsk (Long Hair, Old Burns; Crow), and Arapooish (Rotten Belly; Crow)—who would regard Campbell as a friend.<sup>18</sup>

While Campbell was expanding U.S. fur interests, the British fur companies were actively working to hinder American competition and settlement to the Pacific Northwest. In 1821, the Hudson's Bay Company sent trapping brigades to the Snake River country to trap all of the beaver and create a "fur desert" as a political move aimed at keeping Americans from venturing into the Oregon Country, an area that had been under British/American joint-occupation since 1818. Hudson's Bay Company leader John McLoughlin sent out Peter Skene Ogden and a large number of proficient Iroquois trappers formerly of the NWC to once

again cover the region. On May 23, 1825, one of the most notorious confrontations between British and American trappers occurred at Mountain Green, later known as Deserter's Point, near present-day Ogden, Utah. As a result, 29 men—most of them John Grey's Iroquois trappers—joined the Americans with the promise of higher wages and status as free-trappers.<sup>19</sup>

After Campbell had spent a year learning the ropes from David E. Jackson, Smith, Jackson & Sublette assigned Campbell as the leader of the northern brigade, which included the Iroquois trappers who had left the HBC. Smith, Jackson & Sublette relied solely upon Campbell to uphold their interests against the HBC.<sup>20</sup> Campbell readily adapted to his new role and his brigade set out to trap the Flathead country along the headwaters of the Missouri, Columbia, Deer Lodge and Bitter Root rivers. Campbell made a good impression, not only among his band of Iroquois but also among the

Valley only a couple of weeks, long enough to complete the traffic with the trappers. After we left Cache Valley, Jackson and Sublette met us on Bear River. Ashley then sold out his interest in the fur trade to Smith, his partner, and to Jackson and Sublette, the new firm being known as Smith, Jackson, & Sublette." Dale L. Morgan Papers, MS 560, Microfilm reel 77, frame 1074. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Marriott Library-Manuscripts Division, in coop. with UC Berkeley, n.d.); Morgan, *West of William H. Ashley*, 149-153; John E. Sunder, *Bill Sublette, Mountain Man* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959), 64.

<sup>18</sup> Campbell, "Narrative," 4.

<sup>19</sup> Lyndon S. Clayton, "The Role of the Iroquois in the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company and Expansion of the Fur Trade: Western Canadian Interior, New Caledonia, Columbian Enterprise and the Snake Country, 1790-1825," (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1999); John P. Reid, *Contested Empire: Peter Skene Ogden and the Snake River Expeditions* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), 103-13. While Ogden's brigade encamped on the river, one of John Weber's groups, under the direction of Johnson Gardner, attempted to lure Ogden's men away by promising higher wages and by claiming the British men were trespassing on American soil. The next morning a contingent of Americans waving flags confronted Ogden and told him he must leave or be driven out. Gardner's ploy worked. The Americans received 700 beaver pelts and were joined by 29 of Ogden's men. In reality, the British and Americans were both trespassing on Mexican soil and the only man possibly possessing a Mexican license, Etienne Provost, remained aloof from the conflict. Provost was but one of a number of Americans and Mexicans operating out of Taos and Santa Fe, trading and trapping in the southern and central Rockies. Jack B. Tykal, *Etienne Provost: Man of the Mountains* (Liberty, Utah: Eagle's View Publishing, 1989), 48-54; David J. Weber, *The Taos Trappers: The Fur Trade in the Far Southwest, 1540-1846* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), 49.

<sup>20</sup> Campbell, "Narrative," 14-15; Morgan, *Jedediah Smith*, 179; John C. Jackson, *Shadow on the Tetons: David E. Jackson and the Claiming of the American West* (Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing Co., 1993), 124; Vivian L. Talbot, *David E. Jackson: Field Captain of the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade* (Jackson: Jackson Hole Museum and Teton County Historical Society, 1996), 69-70.

Flatheads and Nez Perce by honoring their request that his men not hunt buffalo in the Bitterroot Valley for a week or two. Campbell's friendship had a profound influence upon Flathead Chief Insillah, who was among the first Indians baptized by Catholic Father Pierre Jean De Smet. Father Adrian Hoecken wrote Father De Smet from Flathead Camp in the Blackfeet country that:

Among our dear Flatheads, Michael Insula or Red Feather... Is well known and much beloved by the whites, who have had occasion to deal with him, as a man of sound judgment, strict integrity, and one whose fidelity they can implicitly rely. A keen discerner of the characters of men, he loves to speak especially of those whites, distinguished for their fine qualities, that have visited him, and often mentions with pleasure the sojourn among them of Colonel Robert Campbell, of St. Louis, and of Major Fitzpatrick, whom he adopted, in accordance with Indian ideas of courtesy, as his brothers.<sup>21</sup>

While returning to the Three Forks, Blackfeet attacked Campbell's party along the Jefferson River and killed the Iroquois Chief Pierre Tevanitagon, for whom Pierre's Hole is named.<sup>22</sup> Following the incident, the Iroquois and freemen decided they would go no further and desired to return to the Flathead camp to spend the winter. Campbell's hunt had been very successful, averaging 70-75 skins per man. Though he needed to remain close to keep his Iroquois trappers from British influence, Campbell traveled through deep snow to report the fall hunt results to the partners wintering at Cache Valley. As Utah, western Wyoming, and southern Idaho produced ever decreasing numbers of beaver due to the extensive trapping of the previous four years, Smith, Jackson & Sublette turned their attention northwest to Flathead country and northeast to Crow territory. Campbell's brigade trapped the Big Horn, Wind, Tongue, Rosebud, and Powder rivers, concentrating on the area in eastern Wyoming between the Big Horn mountains and Black Hills. Part of the area he trapped in during 1828 and 1829 is now part of Campbell County.<sup>23</sup>

In 1828 Campbell led a brigade to the Crow territory along the Yellowstone and its tributaries. As they moved east, Campbell's brigade cached 150 pelts at the junction of Little Wind and Wind rivers. A band of Crows discovered and raided their cache. Campbell confronted their chief, Arapooish, to implore him to find out who stole the pelts and have them returned to their proper owners. Amazingly, Campbell's reputation among the Crows, particularly his friendship to the principal chief of the Crows, Long Hair (Old Burns), enabled him to get the stolen skins back.<sup>24</sup>

Campbell related "I went into that country trapping as before stated. I then went up to the Cache river at

Po-po-agie, where it joins the Wind river, and made a cache there to put in my beaver. A war party of Crows that had been down to the Cheyennes and Arapahos, were returning and found my cache. They took 150 skins." Campbell was staying in the lodge of the principal chief of the Mountain Crows, Eshelhunsa (Long Hair, Old Burns). Some Crow warriors brought in some scalps and held a scalp dance during which some of them recounted their exploits. "Among other things they boasted of having found my cache. The old Chief then came into my lodge and said to me 'Have you been catching beaver?' 'Yes'!, I answered. 'What you do with it?' asked the chief. 'Put it in the ground,' said I. 'Where is it?,' he enquired. I drew a plan of the ground, where my beaver had been cached. The old chief then said, 'You talk straight about it!'" Long Hair related that there had been no white traders among them for four years and that a war party had found Campbell's cache and opened it, taking 150 skins. Exhibiting both integrity and charity, the chief told Campbell "Now don't let your heart be sad. You are in my lodge, and all these skins will be given back to you. I'll neither eat, drink nor sleep till you get all your skins. Now count them as they come in! He then mounted his horse and harangued the village, saying to his people that he had been a long time without traders, and they must not keep one skin back."

<sup>21</sup> Hiram Chittenden and Alfred Talbot Richardson, ed., *Life, Letters and Travels of Father Pierre Jean De Smet, S. J. 1801-1873* 4 vols. (New York: Francis P. Harper, 1905), 1231-32. In 1832, four Nez Perce Indians ventured to St. Louis to learn more about Christianity. Following their visit, Robert Campbell encouraged the establishment of missions among the Flatheads in the 1830s when he wrote on April 13, 1833, that "the Flat Head Indians are proverbial for their mild disposition and friendship to the whites and I have little hesitation in saying a missionary would be treated by them with kindness." Cited in Hiram M. Chittenden, *The American Fur Trade of the Far West* (1902, reprint, New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1935), 637, 902-03.

<sup>22</sup> Campbell witnessed his first scalping when the Iroquois retaliated for the mutilation of Old Pierre by killing two Blackfeet. Campbell, "Narrative," 16.

<sup>23</sup> Organized on May 23, 1911, with Gillette as the county seat, Campbell County represents the seventh largest county in Wyoming covering 4,761 square miles. Campbell County, Wyoming, received its name for Robert Campbell and Wyoming's first territorial governor, John A. Campbell. Marie H. Erwin, *Wyoming Historical Bluebook* (Cheyenne: Wyoming State Archives, n.d.), 1163. Charles G. Coutant, *History of Wyoming and the Far West*, 2d ed. (New York: Argonaut Press, Ltd., 1966), 132.

<sup>24</sup> During this visit, the famous chief honored Campbell by allowing him to measure his hair, which Campbell found to be more than eleven feet long. Morgan and Harris, *Anderson*, 199-200. For a full account of Campbell's negotiations with Arapooish (Rotten Belly) see Coutant, *History of Wyoming*; Washington Irving, *Adventures of Captain Bonneville, U.S.A., in the Rocky Mountains and the Far West*, Rev. ed. (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1868), 239-248.

Nearly all of the skins were returned, Campbell and Long Hair were both satisfied, and the chief broke his fast.<sup>25</sup>

Some tribes, such as those belonging to the Blackfoot Confederacy—Blackfeet, Piegans, Bloods, and Atsinas (Gros Ventres or Grovan of the River)—did not welcome American trappers and traders because they realized the rendezvous system aided their rivals, providing armaments and supplies to Shoshones, Utes, Crows, Flatheads, and Nez Percés. Confederacy members had benefitted from trading with the British along the Saskatchewan River and did not want to lose the advantages the British traders provided them. As hundreds of mountain men and thousands of Indians gathered to resupply and to participate in games and recreation, the presence of many trade goods and the huge horse herds served as the ultimate temptation for Plains Indians. As could be expected, several major encounters took place during the rendezvous era. Blackfoot raiders traded the horses and furs that had been stolen from the Americans with British traders for guns and tobacco. Fear of Blackfoot hostilities forced Americans to keep their brigades large enough to withstand an attack but large parties reduced trapping efficiently.<sup>26</sup>

When Blackfeet attacked the trappers' Indian allies, mountain men usually joined them in battle to support their friends. Such was the case of the two attacks at the Bear Lake rendezvous in 1827 and 1828. At the first one, a Blackfoot war party surprised and killed five Shoshones. Shoshone Chief Cut Face asked the mountain men to show their friendship and loyalty by assisting them in mounting a counterattack. William Sublette gathered nearly three hundred trappers and charged the enemy. Campbell recounts how the powder brought out in 1827 was so poor his men joked how they could pull the trigger and lay the gun down before it actually fired. In 1828, Blackfeet once again attacked Campbell's men at Bear Lake, killing his cook. Campbell led the men to some willows for protection and after nearly four hours of fighting and with ammunition running low, Campbell and another volunteer broke through the fray and rode eighteen miles to Bear Lake where men awaiting the rendezvous came as reinforcements. The Blackfeet, correctly interpreting Campbell's intentions, retreated before the relief party arrived.<sup>27</sup>

The last major incident Campbell had with Atsinas occurred near Pierre's Hole in present-day Idaho when Atsinas attacked mountain men leaving the 1832 rendezvous for the fall hunt near Teton Pass.<sup>28</sup> The Atsinas made a fortification in the willows and fought tenaciously against the trappers and Indian allies so word was sent to the men in Pierre's Hole of the battle and Campbell

and Sublette brought reinforcements. After several more hours of fighting, during which Sublette received a shoulder wound, the Atsinas tricked the trappers into thinking a large party of Blackfeet were now attacking the unprotected men, women, and children at the rendezvous. The trappers raced back to Pierre's Hole and the Atsinas fled under the cover of darkness. Several mountain men and Indians died and many were wounded while Atsina casualties totaled between 27 and 50.<sup>29</sup> These attacks by members of the Blackfoot Confederacy demonstrate just how critical it was to make it through these skirmishes unscathed. Campbell was lucky and received no wounds while Milton Sublette, William Sublette, and Thomas Fitzpatrick did.

Despite Blackfeet hostilities, Campbell had befriended Iroquois, Crows, and Flatheads, and exhibited genuine friendship with Ishkatupa, Insillah, and Eshehunska. After retiring from the mountains, Campbell served as a liaison for the government. His vast knowledge and association with dozens of Indian tribes resulted in two appointments as Indian Commissioner. The first was in 1851 when he joined Pierre De Smet, Thomas Fitzpatrick Jim Bridger, and David D. Mitchell for the important Treaty of Fort Laramie and met with 10,000 Indians from tribes representing the Sioux, Cheyenne, Arapaho, Snake, Bannock, Crow and others on Horse

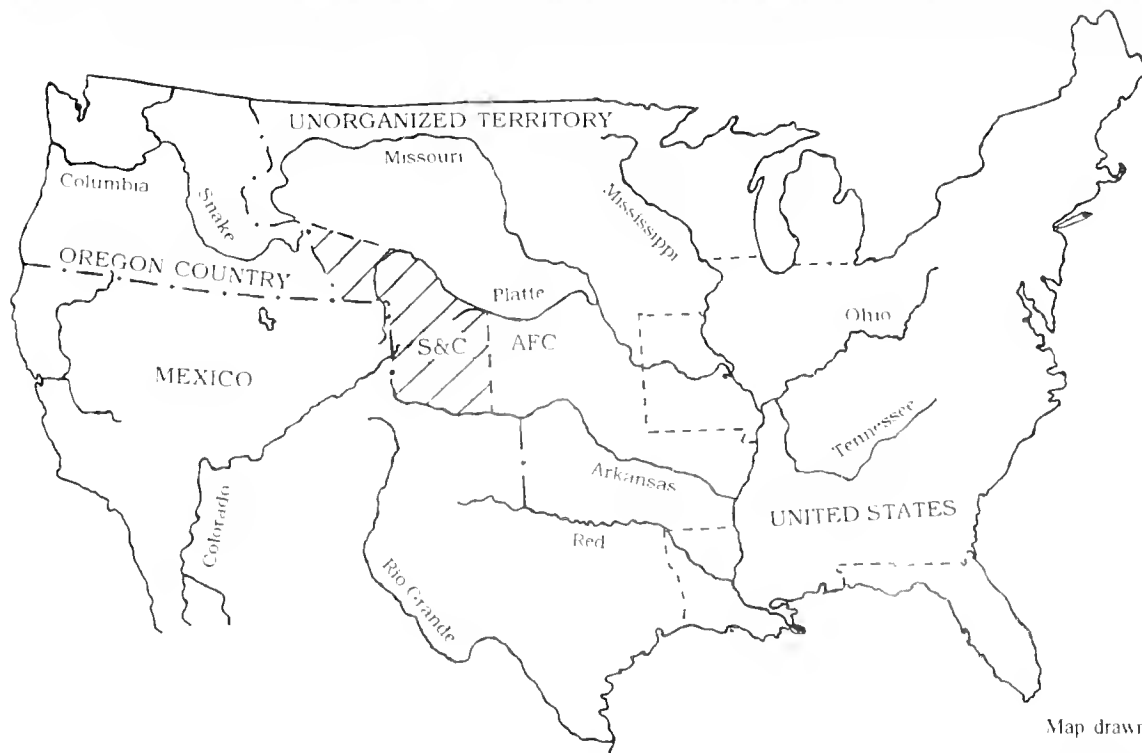
<sup>25</sup> Campbell, "Narrative," 21-22.

<sup>26</sup> Oscar Lewis, *The Effects of White Contact Upon Blackfoot Culture With Special Reference to the Role of the Fur Trade* (New York: J. J. Augustin, 1942), 36-40; John C. Ewers, *Blackfeet: Raiders on the Northwestern Plains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958). In 1837, the artist Alfred Jacob Miller estimated Blackfeet and Atsina killed between forty and fifty mountain men a year during the fur trade. Marvin C. Ross, ed., *The West of Alfred Jacob Miller* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1951), 148.

<sup>27</sup> Campbell, "Narrative," 19-20. Beckwourth claims it was he and not Campbell who rode through the line. Delmont R. Oswald, ed., *The Life and Adventures of James P. Beckwourth, Mountaineer, Scout, Pioneer and Chief of the Crow Nation of Indians as told to T. D. Bonner* (London, 1892; reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972), 101-10.

<sup>28</sup> LeRoy R. Hafen, ed., [Warren A. Ferris] *Life in the Rocky Mountains, A Diary of Wanderings on the Sources of the Rivers Missouri, Columbia, and Colorado 1830-1835, with Supplementary Writings and a Detailed Map of the Fur Trade* (Denver: Old West Publishing Co., 1983), 222-3; The Atsina had probably taken the flag earlier when they had massacred a party of British rather than of having received it from the British as the Americans believed. W. F. Wagner, ed., *Adventures of Zenas Leonard, Fur Trader and Trapper, 1831-1836* (Cleveland: The Burrows Brothers Company, 1904), 111-118; Washington Irving, *Bonneville*, 73-80.

<sup>29</sup> Robert Campbell, writing a letter to his brother Hugh just before the battle began, provided the very best primary account of the events of the battle. Campbell, *Rocky Mountain Letters*, 7-11. William H. Garrison, ed., *The Life and Adventures of George Nidever* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1937), 26-30.



Map drawn by author

Creek of the Platte (south of Ft. Laramie). The Great Council lasted eighteen days and out of it grew the Treaty of Fort Laramie. After the demise of the AFC in 1865, Campbell turned his attention to try and eliminate corruption among the Indian agents on the upper Missouri and called for the abolition of the inadequate treaty system. President Ulysses S. Grant appointed Campbell to the Board of Commissioners for the Interest and Civilization of the Indians, which in 1870, established more amicable relations between the U. S. government and the Indians.<sup>30</sup>

Campbell's involvement in the fur trade increased during the 1830s. His intellect and courage had brought him to positions of leadership and responsibility for Ashley & Smith and SJ&S. Following the 1829 rendezvous, SJ&S entrusted Campbell to transport the furs back to St. Louis where he arrived in late August. Campbell received \$3,016 for his four years of services to Ashley-Smith, and Smith, Jackson, and Sublette.<sup>31</sup> Fur traders Lucien Fontenelle and Andrew Drips proposed forming a threesome but Campbell declined, informing them he intended to form a partnership with his friend Jedediah Smith in the near future. Letters from his mother Elizabeth, sister Ann, and brother Hugh, along with family financial concerns finally convinced Campbell to take leave of the mountain business for a time and return to Ireland.<sup>32</sup>

After returning from Ireland to St. Louis in July 1831, Ashley employed him in clerical work that fall while

Campbell waited for his friend Smith to return from Santa Fe.<sup>33</sup> During Campbell's absence, SJ&S had sold out to the Rocky Mountain Fur Company (RMFC), made up of Thomas Fitzpatrick, Jim Bridger, Milton Sublette,

<sup>30</sup> Traveling with William Faye (who recorded Campbell's *Narrative* at this time) Campbell's goodwill mission took him to Fort Laramie where he parlayed with Red Cloud about issues such as American encroachment into the Black Hills. Nadeau, *Fort Laramie and the Sioux Indians*, 161. Hiram M. Chittenden and Albert L. Richardson, eds., *Life, Letters and Travels of Father Pierre-Jean de Smet, S. J. 1801-1873* (4 vol.; New York: Francis P. Harper, 1905), 673-75.

<sup>31</sup> Morgan and Harris, *Anderson*, 272. Actual wages may have been \$2,927.87 according to Ashley's account records. Morgan, *West of William H. Ashley*, 198-202, 319.

<sup>32</sup> Lucien Fontenelle and Andrew Drips to Robert Campbell, Council Bluffs, August 9, 1829. Campbell Papers, Missouri Historical Society. The pleading for Robert to leave the land of the "Blackfooted, Blackheaded and Blackhearted Savages" and to come home filled nearly every letter from his family. An example is a letter written from Hugh to Robert on November 13, 1828 saying "I conjure you to abandon it [the mountain trade]. . . Sell everything and come work with me. . . Return to civilization & Security. Do not--do not refuse me." See also Ann Campbell to Robert Campbell, June 5, 1827, and June 11, 1829, asking Robert to return home. Campbell Papers, Missouri Historical Society.

<sup>33</sup> Campbell wrote a letter to John O'Fallon to hear where Smith was. O'Fallon wrote back on June 30 that unconfirmed rumors reported the party had crossed the Arkansas without incident. He did not know that Smith was already killed. John O'Fallon to Robert Campbell, June 30, 1831, St. Louis. Campbell Papers, Missouri Historical Society. Morgan and Harris, *Anderson*, 272-3. Smith had sent Robert's brother Hugh a letter in November 1830 and told him that he would have eight to ten thousand dollars to invest with Robert. Morgan, *Smith*, 323-4, 357-8.

Henry Fraeb, and Jean Gervais following the 1830 rendezvous. Smith, Jackson, and Sublette retained the right to serve as middlemen, sell the company's furs, and provide supplies at the rendezvous, provided the RMFC notified them in time. With SJ&S dissolved, Smith wanted to form a partnership with Campbell but since the latter was in Ireland, Smith purchased his own outfit and joined with Jackson and Sublette in trying his luck on the Santa Fe Trail. Unfortunately, Comanche warriors killed Jedediah Smith while he scouted ahead searching for water along the Cimarron Cutoff.<sup>34</sup> Jackson and Sublette reached Santa Fe on July 4 before being joined by Fitzpatrick, who purchased supplies from the men and headed north through Taos, picking up Kit Carson and several others to help him take the supplies to the Rockies for distribution that fall and winter. Jackson and Sublette decided to end their partnership. With Jackson heading for California, Sublette returned to Missouri as the only possible supplier to the RMFC for the following year.

In October, Campbell traveled to Lexington where he met Thomas Fitzpatrick, who had just recently returned from the mountains, and William Sublette, newly arrived from Santa Fe. Together they formulated their plans for 1832.<sup>35</sup> Sublette, who had just returned from the Santa Fe Trail, decided to outfit a train to supply the RMFC at the 1832 rendezvous. Robert Campbell bought his own outfit and accompanied him. Campbell employed five men and purchased ten pack horses laden with goods for his own small venture that he joined to Sublette's caravan.<sup>36</sup> On April 25 Sublette received a two-year license to trade with the Indians from Superintendent of Indian Affairs William Clark, which included provisions to take 450 gallons of whiskey.<sup>37</sup> Leaving Independence in mid-May, Sublette's train of some 60 men departed with Campbell bringing up the rear. Traveling up the Platte until they reached buffalo country near the Black Hills (Laramie Range), they reached the Black Hills a month later.<sup>38</sup> They continued west, crossed South Pass and Teton Pass and descended into the Teton Basin, just west of the Tetons on the Wyoming-Idaho border. What was to become the largest and grandest rendezvous of the fur trade, the 1832 Pierre's Hole gathering was a gaudy affair with hundreds of men from the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, the American Fur Company, free trappers, engages, and thousands of Flathead and Nez Perce Indians.<sup>39</sup>

Because of so much competition, Campbell needed to deal effectively with competition and display flexibility and innovation due to the changing circumstances. Two of the competitors Campbell faced during his decade in the Rockies were the Hudson's Bay Company

and the American Fur Company. The Hudson's Bay Company's Snake River brigades had been quite successful in keeping American trappers from venturing further west than present-day Idaho. One of Campbell's successful diplomatic encounters with the HBC came in February 1828 when he and two companions traveled by snowshoes back to his men camped on the Snake River. On February 17, 1828, instead of finding his men, he arrived at the snowed-in Hudson's Bay Company camp of Peter Skene Ogden at the confluence of the Portneuf and Snake rivers. Campbell, after traveling 44 days on snowshoes, could barely walk and needed to nurse his sore ankles. Even as a guest at a competitor's camp, Campbell was firm with Ogden, informing him that two of Ogden's trappers, Goodrich and Johnson, still owed considerable debt to SJ&S and had not been released from service and requested that they return. Ogden reminded him of the incident in 1825 when his Iroquois and a large catch of fur fell into American hands at Deserter's Point on the Weber River. Campbell used both skill and diplomacy in keeping his Iroquois trappers from defecting back to the British, in getting Goodrich and Johnson to rejoin him to repay their debts, and later in persuading the Flatheads to trade with the Americans instead of the British.<sup>40</sup>

Campbell's challenge to John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company proved more difficult since the AFC was the most successful large-scale American fur company with trading operations extending from the Columbia to the Missouri. By the 1830s, they began attending the rendezvous. Following the 1832 rendezvous, the RMFC agreed to pay William Sublette nearly \$16,000 to be settled the following year. Campbell arranged to

<sup>34</sup> Since Campbell was in Ireland, Smith had appointed newly elected congressman Ashley to serve as executor in the event Campbell was not present. As it turned out, both served as executors of Smith's will in the late summer of 1831. *Papers of the St. Louis Fur Trade*, Part Three: "Robert Campbell Family Collection," (Bethesda: University Publications, courtesy, Missouri History Society, 1991-1994) reel 15, series 2, part 2, frames 44-47.

<sup>35</sup> Talbot, *Jackson*, 93; Hafen, *Broken Hand*, 98-9.

<sup>36</sup> "The 1832 Account Book of Robert Campbell," *Papers of the St. Louis Fur Trade*, Part Three: "Robert Campbell Family Collection," reel 15, series 2, part 1.

<sup>37</sup> Sublette Papers, Missouri Historical Society.

<sup>38</sup> Most likely this is when Robert Campbell chiseled his name on Independence Rock in Wyoming. Robert Campbell to Hugh Campbell, July 18, 1832, Lewis' Fork (Snake River). Campbell, *Rocky Mountain Letters*, 7-11.

<sup>39</sup> Gowans, *Rendezvous*, 73-95.

<sup>40</sup> Glyndwr Williams and David E. Miller, eds., *Peter Skene Ogden's Snake Country Journals, 1827-28 and 1828-9* (London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1971), 62-66. Reid, *Contested Empire*, 184-86. Morgan and Harris, *Anderson*, 272.

sell most of his merchandise, sent the men out on the fall hunt, and retained a few men to help him transport the furs to St. Louis.<sup>41</sup> By October 3 he had made arrangements with Ashley to sell the 169 packs of beaver pelts and then he faithfully nursed his friend back to health at Sublette's Sulphur Springs ranch on the outskirts of St. Louis. While there the two discussed the developments of the past year and plotted together on how to capitalize on the future. On December 20, 1832, they formed the Sublette & Campbell firm of St. Louis (S&C) and planned their strategy to compete with their American Fur Company rival.<sup>42</sup>

The early 1830s marked the heyday of the Rocky Mountains fur trade. The RMFC faced new competition from Boston merchant Nathaniel Wyeth, army officer Benjamin L. E. Bonneville, and various independent trapping parties like Gant and Blackwell, James O. Pattie, Joshua Pilcher, Charles and William Bent, Ceran St. Vrain and others who edged in and garnered a portion of the beaver trade. With all of these new companies competing for pelts, the RMFC's returns began to diminish and even though S&C held the exclusive rights to supply the rendezvous, they realized that to survive they needed to diversify their portfolio and decided to challenge the American Fur Company on the Missouri River by building rival posts adjacent to those of the AFC. The firm saw the benefits of trading with Indians for buffalo hides in the growing robe trade. Moreover, S&C hoped to force the giant fur company to make concessions to keep the AFC stayed out of the mountain trade in exchange for S&C to withdraw from the Missouri or at least put enough pressure on them to produce a buyout.

Campbell had an insider's perspective on the fur trade, had lived through its dangers, and had contacts to procure merchandise and provide financing. With the political clout and financial resources of the Astors of New York and the Chouteaus of St. Louis, the AFC posed the most viable threat to take control of the Rocky Mountain fur trade in the 1830s. John Jacob Astor's company had recently moved west from the Great Lakes and Mississippi River regions and appeared content for a time to dominate the river trade. In 1832 the AFC decided to try its hand in the Rocky Mountains and sent out Lucien Fontenelle, Henry Vanderburgh, and Andrew Drips. Vanderburgh and Drips let others lead them to the furs and then outlasted them through cutthroat competition (ie. charging lower prices, using liquor to secure the Indian trade, etc.). Moreover, competition increased the use of liquor to gain an advantage and put competitors out of business. With so much rivalry, there were simply not enough furs to go around.

With the Rocky Mountains crowded, Sublette and Campbell saw the wisdom in establishing a river trade to try and break the AFC's monopoly on the Missouri River. Additionally, S&C had the powerful political and financial backing from Ashley, now a congressman, who honored their drafts, handled their accounts, gave them cash advances at six percent interest, and sold their furs for a two and one-half cent commission.<sup>43</sup> Although S&C owed Ashley upwards of \$27,500, the partners had \$46,750 coming from the RMFC as well as 11,000 pounds of fur to sell. They also reached an agreement to supply the RMFC at the 1833 rendezvous. Though Sublette and Campbell's ambitious undertaking to oppose the giant AFC appeared foolhardy at first glance, conditions seemed right for such a challenge. Astor, nearing 70 years old, had already contemplated retirement and 1833 marked the end of the American Fur Company's 25-year charter granted by the New York legislature in 1808. Astor foresaw a complete reorganization of the company headed by his son William in New York and Ramsay Crooks and Pierre Chouteau in St. Louis. While in Europe in 1832, Astor saw his first silk hat and recognized the beaver trade would soon decline. He saw the expedience of making profits from beaver pelts before the demand for them further diminished.<sup>44</sup> Despite the AFC's apparent uncertain future, few bankers and suppliers offered S&C financial support. Undaunted, Campbell and Sublette combined their determination, experience, and confidence with Ashley's credit, business contacts, and political clout to give their opposition to Astor real promise.

Campbell and Sublette traveled east in December 1832 to learn the market conditions firsthand and to establish business contacts in Washington, New York and Philadelphia who would be willing to supply them during their forthcoming year. Yet even with Ashley's instructions and letters of introduction, few Washington money brokers willingly offered the partners assistance until Ashley made a speech in the House of Representatives praising the partners' abilities, character, and predicting their eminent success.<sup>45</sup> Several bankers and

<sup>41</sup> Articles of Agreement between the RMFC and Sublette quoted in Hafén, *Broken Hand*, 116-8.

<sup>42</sup> Ferenc Morton Szasz, *Scots in the North American West, 1790-1917* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000), 31; Sunder, *Sublette*, 112-3.

<sup>43</sup> Clokey, *Ashley*, 186.

<sup>44</sup> David Lavender, *The Fist in the Wilderness* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964), 411-2.

<sup>45</sup> Sunder provides an excellent description of the pair's travels. Sunder, *Sublette*, 116-23. John U. Terrell, *The Six Turnings: Major Changes in the American West, 1806-1834* (Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1968), 221.

supply houses took this speech to mean Ashley was reentering the fur trade and so they quickly offered Campbell and Sublette credit. Of particular assistance was Robert Campbell's brother Hugh, now part of Gill, Campbell & Company who operated a Philadelphia store at 94 Market Street. While Campbell and Sublette enjoyed Christmas Eve at his home. Hugh agreed to supply S&C with the majority of their dry goods. Sublette and Campbell wrote Ashley requesting \$2000 and informed him of their decision to go to New York for their hardware. They asked for his assistance in notifying Reddle Forsyth & Co. of Pittsburgh to get two new keelboats that would handle 18 to 20 tons. On March 8, Ashley's New York broker Frederick A. Tracy completed the sale of Campbell and Sublette's furs and by the end of the month, S&C had paid off all their debts and still had nearly \$15,000 left over to outfit their forthcoming enterprise.<sup>46</sup>

With their finances in order, the two partners implemented their plan. Campbell hired 25-year-old Frenchman Charles Larpenteur as a clerk, received their license to trade on April 15 from William Clark, and started west. Campbell drove along livestock—20 sheep, two bulls and four cows—the sheep to supplement their diet of bacon and hard-tack until they reached buffalo country, and the cattle to start a herd at their post at the confluence of the Yellowstone of the Missouri.<sup>47</sup> Due to Campbell's organization and efficient leadership the caravan traveled rapidly, successfully beating the AFC's supply train led by Lucien Fontenelle to the 1833 rendezvous and enforcing the RMFC obligation to purchase supplies from S&C. Rival trader Nathaniel Wyeth commended Campbell's caravan "for efficiency of goods, men, animals, and arms, I do not believe the fur business has afforded a better example of discipline."<sup>48</sup>

The competition between the AFC, the RMFC, and the HBC, in addition to the added pressures from Bonneville and small outfits, had taken its toll and few trappers garnered any significant profits. By the rendezvous' end, Campbell had doubled his profits by trading \$15,000 in goods for fur worth at least \$30,000. Campbell left to find Sublette, whom he expected to meet near the mouth of Yellowstone, taking the profitable years' furs with him. Campbell avoided misfortune once again when his bull boat capsized and he went under the water three times before making it to shore. He arrived at the confluence of the Yellowstone and Missouri rivers near Fort Union on August 28.<sup>49</sup>

Meanwhile, Sublette boarded the steamboat *Otto* and with a large keelboat full of a valuable cargo of merchandise, supplies, equipment, and 30 men, set out for the upper Missouri establishing 12-13 new posts at strategic

points to trade with the Sioux and other tribes and to compete with the AFC. The most important post would be located near Fort Union at the confluence of the Yellowstone and Missouri rivers.<sup>50</sup> Upon Campbell's arrival at the Yellowstone's mouth on August 28, he waited for Sublette, who arrived two days later with his large keelboat full of supplies and an abundance of liquor for the Indian trade.

Campbell took responsibility of building Fort William, named in Sublette's honor, while Sublette, his brother Milton, and nine or 10 men left in late September and floated the summer's furs down the Missouri to St. Louis.<sup>51</sup> In a letter to his mother written before Sublette left, Campbell recalled how "after both [had] travelled nearly 4,000 miles in four months" that their planning and timing enabling them to meet within two days was truly remarkable. He told her that he and his 60 men had already completed four houses in 10 days and that he expected to stay there all winter trading with the

<sup>46</sup> Sublette mentions Tracy gave him \$176,500 at Ashley's request. See Robert Campbell and William Sublette to General William H. Ashley, Philadelphia, December 24, 28, 31, 1832, and January 8, 1833. Campbell Paper, Missouri Historical Society.

<sup>47</sup> Sublette and Campbell's trading license enabled them to trade at 33 places in Indian country for a year and a half. Sunder, *Sublette*, 124. Campbell's 45-man train, with supplies valued at \$15,000, moved with precision, leaving Lexington, Missouri, on April 28. Carter, "Robert Campbell," 55. Ashley always praised his efficient co-adjutants Campbell and Sublette for a "great deal of his success in the government of his men" while he was in the fur trade and that they excelled in keeping the men under strict rules and thorough discipline. The regularity of their marches and order in their camps became adopted as the rule or code for all American traders traveling to the mountains. W. G. Eliot, Jr., 1838 memorial address cited in Morgan, *The West of William H. Ashley*, 317n. Larpenteur spent the next 40 years on the upper Missouri, the majority of the time as an AFC clerk. Elliot Coues, ed., *Forty Years a Fur Trader on the Upper Missouri: The Personal Narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872* vol. 1 (New York: Francis P. Harper, 1898), 11-67. An enjoyable account of the 1833 Campbell caravan and its members is told in Mae Reed Porter and Odessa Davenport, *Scotsman in Buckskin: Sir William Drummond Stewart and the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade* (New York: Hastings House, 1963), 27-28.

<sup>48</sup> Nathaniel Wyeth to Mr. F. Ermatinger, Green River Rendezvous, July 18, 1833. F. G. Young, ed., "The Correspondence and Journals of Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth 1831-6." *Sources of the History of Oregon* (1899): 69.

<sup>49</sup> Campbell, "Narrative," 29; Brooks, "Campbell's Private Journal," 117; Terrell, *The Six Turnings*, 225.

<sup>50</sup> The identifiable posts built by Sublette & Campbell of St. Louis include: Fort William on the Upper Missouri; a small post near Fort Jackson, sixty miles above Fort Union; a Mandan trading house near old Lisa's Fort; a tiny post on White River near Fort Kiowa; a trading group at Crow Camp on Wind River; a post near Fort Tecumseh and Fort Pierre; and a Yellowstone post eight miles from the rivers' mouth. Sunder, *Sublette*, 127n.

<sup>51</sup> Coues, *Larpenteur*, 50n., 53.

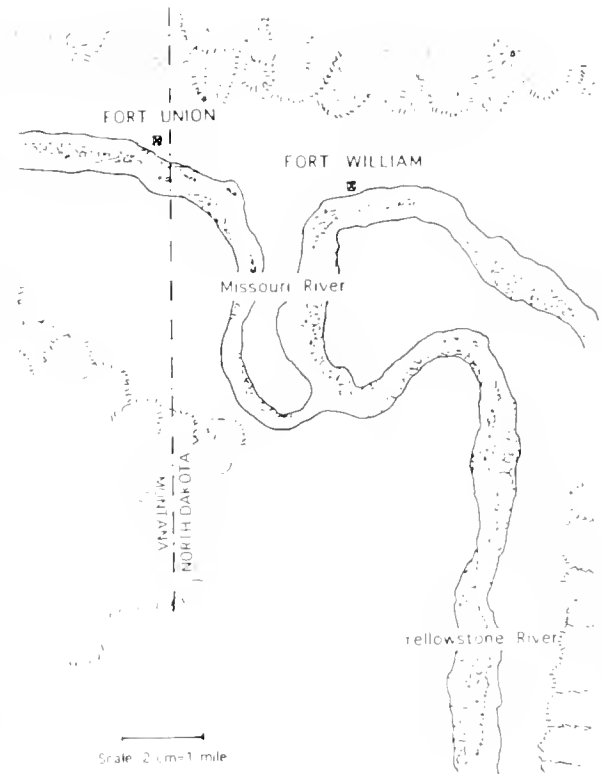


Crees and Assiniboines for beaver skins and buffalo robes. In a letter to his sister Anne, Campbell explained his real reason for staying in the fur trade was not the excitement or love of adventure, but that his primary objective was "to make money" and "were it not this we would all endeavor to fashion ourselves to civilized life and no doubt feel ten times the happiness which we enjoy here."<sup>52</sup>

To Campbell fell the full responsibility of building his main operation post. Campbell deftly organized the men and instructed them to cut cottonwood pickets. Located two miles by land, six miles by water below Fort Union, the fort was 150 feet by 130 feet with a stockade of eighteen-foot cottonwood pickets. "The boss' house stood back, opposite the front door; it consisted of a double cabin, having two rooms of 18 x 20 feet, with a passage between them 12 feet wide. There were a store and warehouse 40 feet in length and 18 feet in width, a carpenter's shop, blacksmith's shop, ice house, meat house, and two splendid bastions."<sup>53</sup> By November 15, only a few buildings remained unfinished so Campbell sent most of the men out to find Arapahos, Cheyennes, Crows, Sioux, and other Indian tribes to alert them of the new fort and invite them to come and trade. Shortly thereafter, a large village of Assiniboines assembled near the fort.

Campbell's Fort William journal demonstrates that the handful of successful entrepreneurs like Campbell were not a reckless breed of men and did not fit the devil-may-care stereotype. For the most part, they were serious-minded, sober, and often religious. Campbell let his men have Sunday off and devoted time to reading the Bible, writing family and friends, and fasting. He expressed gratitude to God "for his gracious goodness in preserving me through all the dangers I have passed" and prayed for wisdom, understanding, and judgment "to lead well and incline his heart to seek after thee as the one thing needful without which all worldly gain is but dross."<sup>54</sup>

Campbell found loving his neighbor quite difficult, especially when the resourceful McKenzie at Fort Union was willing and able to drive out competition through threats, purchase, and cutthroat competition. As the chief upper Missouri outfit post for the AFC, Fort Union represented the finest, largest post for hundreds of miles. With more than 500 men employed and thousands of dollars in trade goods, McKenzie could afford to feel confident.<sup>55</sup> McKenzie began driving fur prices out of Campbell's reach, sent spies to watch and report on the activities at Fort William, used homemade liquor from his still to insure Campbell could not secure any of the Indian trade, and even stole Campbell's favorite dog.<sup>56</sup>



Of greater consequence, however, was the fact McKenzie gave his agents carte blanche permission to pay any price to secure the Indians' furs. This costly method wiped out some of the profits, but it effectively enabled his agents to undersell Campbell on all parts of the river. McKenzie's ploy worked and by spring Campbell only had 100 packs of buffalo robes (10 robes to the pack) while McKenzie had 430 packs.<sup>57</sup> By com-

<sup>52</sup> Robert Campbell to his mother Elizabeth and sister Ann, Junction of the Missouri and Yellowstone, September 12, 1834, Campbell Papers, Missouri Historical Society.

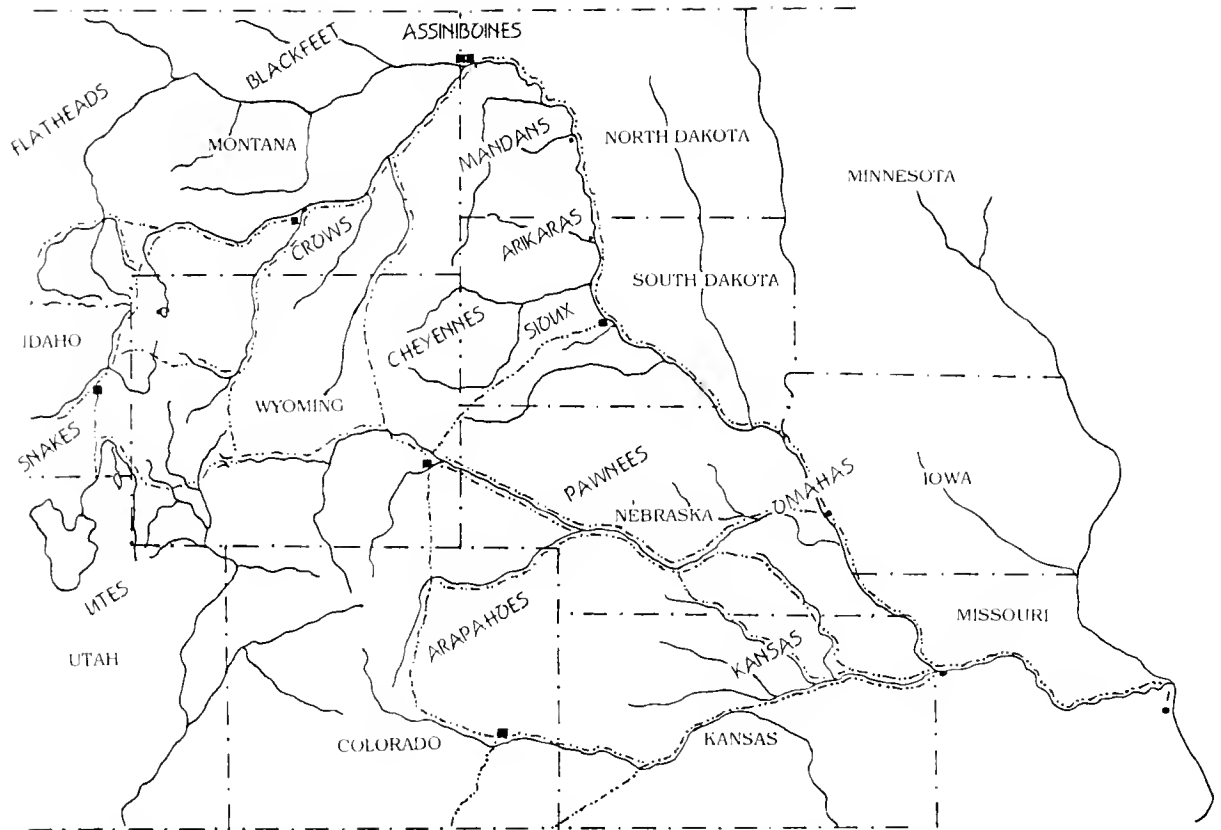
<sup>53</sup> Coues, *Larpenteur*, 61.

<sup>54</sup> Brooks, "Campbell's Private Journal," 118.

<sup>55</sup> Fort Union had 12 clerks and 129 men on its payroll in 1833. Ray H. Mattison, "The Upper Missouri Fur Trade: Its Methods of Operation," *Nebraska History* 42 no. 1 (March 1961): 5; Ray H. Mattison, "Fort Union: Its Role in the Upper Missouri Fur Trade," *North Dakota History* 29 (Jan-April, 1962); Barton H. Barbour, *Fort Union and the Upper Missouri Fur Trade* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001).

<sup>56</sup> McKenzie paid Francois Deschamp \$40 for information on the happenings at Fort William and \$700 per annum for his services. Brooks, "Campbell's Journal," 115.

<sup>57</sup> Campbell and Sublettes' other forts also fared poorly. In addition to buffalo robes, Campbell had traded for packs of beaver (five), wolf (six), and fox and rabbit (one). Coues, *Larpenteur*, 59-64; Ferrell, *The Six Furrings*, 228n.



peting vigorously at the various rival posts near the 13 S&C established, McKenzie compelled the partners to divide their forces, weakening them for their eventual overthrow, McKenzie only had to wait for his eventual victory.<sup>58</sup>

Yet despite McKenzie's apparent victory, the AFC desperately wanted to put the damaging publicity they received for operating the liquor still at Fort Union behind them. American Fur Company officials met with Sublette in New York in January and February for a week's worth of negotiations that resulted in their buying out the competition.<sup>59</sup> In a letter to McKenzie dated April 8, 1834, AFC officials explained that they had reached an agreement with Campbell and Sublette to "keep them from purchasing a new equipment" available to them because of their esteemed reputations and the backing of Ashley.<sup>60</sup> The AFC agreed to retire for one year from the Rocky Mountain area with the condition that Campbell and Sublette relinquish their attempts to trade on the Missouri. Additionally, the company promised to purchase Campbell and Sublette's posts and their merchandise. Campbell arranged with McKenzie to sell the partners' merchandise and Missouri trading posts, sent part of his men south to Fort William on the Laramie, and was back in St. Louis by early August.<sup>61</sup>

Dwindling profits and the increased competition at the last few rendezvous indicated to Campbell and Sublette that the beaver trade was dwindling. For the

last ten years, transporting goods from the east to supply the mountain men and hauling the 100 pound packs of beaver from the mountains to St. Louis had been the

<sup>58</sup> The American Fur Company records are full of letters on how to crush Sublette & Campbell by paying extravagant prices to keep the robes and trade flowing to the AFC. Mattison, "Upper Missouri," 15-16.

<sup>59</sup> Sunder, *Sublette*, 134-35; Lavender, *Fist in the Wilderness*, 416-18. Don Berry, *A Majority of Scoundrels, an Informal History of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961), 344-54.

<sup>60</sup> Cited in Chittenden, *American Fur Trade*, 354.

<sup>61</sup> Campbell, "Narrative," 30, 45. Campbell, "Private Journal," 115-18; Hugh Campbell to Robert Campbell, Philadelphia, February 14, and April 5, 1834. Campbell Papers, Missouri Historical Society; Carter, "Robert Campbell," 67; "Correspondence of Robert Campbell, 1834-1845," edited by Stella M. Drumm and Isaac H. Lionberger, *Glimpses of the Past*, 8 (Jan-June, 1941): 3-65; Coeus, *Larpenteur*, 63n: The actual contract of the transfer and reorganization was signed June 3, 1834. James L. Clayton, "The American Fur Company: The Final Years," (Ph. D. diss., Cornell University, 1964), 152, 170-210. With the negotiations completed, a potential rival bought out, and his monopoly of the Missouri River trade restored, John Jacob Astor retired from the fur trade several months later. On June 1, 1834, Astor sold the Northern Department to Ramsay Crooks and the Western Department to Bernard Pratt, Pierre Chouteau and Company. Evidence suggests the AFC wished to engage Campbell as a partner, which, in light of the competition between Campbell and McKenzie, would have been interesting.

<sup>62</sup> LeRoy R. Hafen and Francis F. Young, *Fort Laramie and the Pageant of the West, 1834-1890* (Glendale: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1938), 25-26.

rule. Ashley's rendezvous system had been revolutionary, adequate for beaver skins wherein mountain men could be the chief suppliers. Now, Campbell and Sublette saw the wisdom in returning to the old, established method of trading with the Indians for fur, particularly tanned buffalo robes. They had the foresight to perceive the beaver trade was nearly over and the next big wave would be bulky buffalo robes transported east in wagons. The post trader would replace the mountain man and rendezvous system. In fact, this proved true as only five small AFC rendezvous occurred after 1834. Campbell and Sublette, therefore, made plans to establish a central trading post to control the vast interior.<sup>62</sup>

The establishment of such a post part-way between St. Louis and the fur trapping areas meant a much shorter distance for transporting supplies and furs to and from the mountains. Located just 800 miles from St. Louis and fewer than 30 days march from Independence, Missouri, a fort on the Laramie River would serve as a type of oasis in the desert, provide a storage facility for the bulky buffalo robes, and offer protection from the elements, Indian raiding parties, and rival companies. Not only would the shorter trip be less hazardous, the fort could operate year-round due to its favorable location and easy access to both trappers and Indians.

Because a large part of Campbell and Sublette's financial success depended upon Indians, location of the post was critical. The partners agreed that the second Fort William (Campbell later renamed it Fort Laramie) should be located in the heart of buffalo country at the junction of the Laramie and Platte rivers. Situated between the Missouri River and the Rocky Mountains, they recognized it as an excellent gathering place for a large number of Arapaho, Cheyenne, and Sioux Indians, who could come and go, bringing their furs in at any time. The site also served as an intersection of the great Platte route to the mountains, the trappers trail from Fort Pierre south to Colorado, Taos, and Santa Fe, and the only permanent post between Fort Union in Montana and Bent's Fort in Colorado and their 1834 license granted them the right to trade there.<sup>63</sup>

With the AFC out of the way in the Rocky Mountain trade, Campbell and Sublette prepared for a prosperous year in 1834. Campbell and Sublette gained a profit from the sale of their posts and supplies, but even though they had an agreement meant the AFC could not send a supply caravan to the 1834 rendezvous but Nathaniel Wyeth had already left Independence on April 28 on his way to supply the rendezvous.<sup>64</sup> Wyeth had an agreement with Thomas Fitzpatrick and Milton Sublette to supply RMFC in 1834 but they owed Campbell and Sublette a large sum of money. The RMFC agreement



Interior of Fort Laramie Painting by Alfred Jacob Miller

with Wyeth represented their desire to get out from under the domination of Campbell and Sublette. Sublette realized that if Wyeth beat him to the rendezvous, he and Campbell would lose out. He quickly caught up with Wyeth's train by mid-May and when he arrived at the Laramie River at the end of May, he had a three-day lead on Wyeth.<sup>65</sup>

Campbell and Sublette carried out their plans to build a fort near the confluence of the Laramie and North Platte rivers to effectively enter the buffalo robe trade of the Plains and be close enough to the mountains to supply the mountain men. About three-quarters of a mile up the Laramie River from its junction with the Platte, Sublette crossed over to the west bank and dispatched a dozen men with provisions to begin construction on the second Fort William (Laramie).<sup>66</sup> With fewer

<sup>63</sup> Merrill J. Mattes, *The Great Platte River Road* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1969), 481. Fort William's establishment marked the decline of the rendezvous system and the establishment of the first of the great permanent supply depots for the Indian trade and overland migration: Ferrell, *The Six Turnings*, 237-9. Hubert H. Bancroft, *History of Nevada, Colorado, and Wyoming, 1540-1888* vol. 25, (San Francisco: History Company, 1890), 683. Their bond listed at \$1500 and the capital employed at \$2957.12. "Abstract of Licenses issued to trade with the Indians," *House Document* 97, 33rd Cong., 2nd sess.; *Senate Document* 69 Series 268, Jan 21, 23rd Cong., 2nd sess., (Washington, 1835).

<sup>64</sup> Clokey, *Ashley*, 196.

<sup>65</sup> Terrell, *The Six Turnings*, 236. Remi Nadeau, *Fort Laramie and the Sioux Indians* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1967), 3.

<sup>66</sup> Hafen and Young, *Fort Laramie*, 27.

provisions to carry, Sublette moved quickly, easily beating Wyeth to the Ham's Fork rendezvous and, since he was the RMFC's principal creditor, the RMFC was obligated to purchase his supplies before Wyeth arrived. After affecting the dissolution of the debt-ridden RMFC, Sublette left the rendezvous on July 10, taking 60-70 packs of beaver and arrived back at Fort William [Laramie] ten days later. Sublette reached Missouri in late August with his load of furs.<sup>67</sup>

The Rocky Mountain Fur Company had a disappointing beaver hunt. Too much competition and sinking profits caused the company to dissolve. Despite Campbell and Sublette's agreement with the AFC dividing the mountain and river trade in 1834, an AFC party under Lucien Fontenelle and Andrew Drips trapped in the partner's territory in 1834. Toward fall, Fitzpatrick, Milton Sublette, and James Bridger joined Fontenelle and Drips, to form Fontenelle, Fitzpatrick, & Company. With the Rocky Mountain Fur Company dissolved, this new AFC controlled company purchased the mountain interests of Sublette and Campbell, including a provisional offer to buy Fort William [Laramie] the following year. In less than a year, the AFC had gained control of both Fort Williams, but Campbell and Sublette had made a substantial profit from their business dealings.<sup>68</sup>

On April 9, Robert Campbell left St. Louis for Fort William [Laramie] to transfer the fort to Fontenelle, Fitzpatrick, & Company and to bring down accumulated beaver pelts and buffalo robes. Leaving St. Louis with two companions, Campbell made excellent time, reaching the fort in May. Campbell spent 15 days finalizing the transfer arrangements with Fontenelle, Fitzpatrick, & Company. After collecting his employees' furs at Fort William [Laramie], Campbell, Andrew Sublette and 12 companions built several bull boats to transport the 460 buffalo robes back to St. Louis. A land party took the 630 beaver pelts back on the mules Campbell had brought the supplies on.<sup>69</sup> Robert Campbell became the first American to successfully navigate the North Platte for a considerable distance. The shallow river provided multiple dangers, but until quicksand forced him to land near Scott's Bluff, he proceeded on without much difficulty.<sup>70</sup> Just below the forks of the Platte, Campbell encountered a hostile Arikara village. Using sign language and a gift of tobacco, Campbell got his party safely through. Traveling on the north shore, they rode their mules as fast as they would carry them until they reached the Pawnee Loupes village on the Loupes Fork of the Platte, passed Lucien Fontenelle's AFC caravan and a group of Oregon bound missionaries before arriving in St. Louis in August.<sup>71</sup>

Campbell had the luck to survive dangers, the pluck to successfully compete with larger rivals, and the vision to foresee the decline of the beaver trade and the increase in the robe trade.

Robert Campbell wisely left the mountains before the beaver trade collapsed. Too many trappers relying on too few resources nearly brought the beaver to extinction. Coincidentally, the fashionable French silk hat became affordable, striking the death knell for the beaver trade. Even in 1834 when Campbell and Sublette built Fort William (Laramie) they realized buffalo hides would be the next major fur commodity. The financial panic of 1837 brought a sudden end to the high prices for fur. The dwindling beaver supply, an overabundance of competitors, and the success of Fort Hall, Fort William (Laramie), and Bent's Fort brought an end to the rendezvous system in 1840. The qualities of leadership and enterprise that brought Campbell success in making money in the fur trade carried over into his St. Louis business affairs upon his return to civilization and he became one of St. Louis' leading citizens and wealthiest merchants. Campbell engaged in various merchandising ventures, including real estate, invested in railroads and steamships, and mercantilism. Supplying western forts from his mercantile store in St. Louis, Campbell continued to participate in the fur trade.

In 1836 Campbell and Sublette commenced several business ventures in St. Louis. Campbell operated a general mercantile store at 7 North First Street. In addition to receiving the majority of business coming in from Santa Fe and Chihuahua, Campbell supplied explorers such as Fremont, fur companies, gold rushers and other overlanders, opposition groups to the AFC, as well as treaty presents and annual Indian annuities.

<sup>67</sup> Sublette and Campbell had thus put down the potential threat of Nathaniel Wyeth, who, upon being beaten to the rendezvous, took his forty-one men and merchandise on to the Snake River. Wyeth's group arrived a little above the Portneuf and Snake confluence on July 14th and began building Fort Hall. Hafen, *Broken Hand*, 140-43.

<sup>68</sup> It appears that after the Rocky Mountain Fur Company (comprised of partners Milton Sublette, Thomas Fitzpatrick, Jim Bridger, Jean Gervais, and Henry Fraeb) dissolved after the 1834 Ham's Fork rendezvous, Campbell and Sublette decided to focus on their St. Louis plans to settle down and "entirely withdraw from the Indian country." Sunder, *Sublette*, 144.

<sup>69</sup> Campbell recorded in a July entry about 630 beaver skins; 386 skins #1 grade, 118 #2, 30 #3, and 96 small #2. He listed 460 buffalo robes: 50-60 damaged, 50-60 painted, 15 yellow calves, about 25 rub, and 3 others damaged. *Papers of the St. Louis Fur Trade*, Part 3 "Robert Campbell Family Collection," series 2: 82.

<sup>70</sup> Campbell, *Rocky Mountain Letters*, 21-3.

<sup>71</sup> *Niles Weekly Register* 48 (8 August 1835): 406.

Campbell also provided merchandise for Fort William (Laramie), Fort Kearny, the majority of goods sold at Bent's Fort, and commodities bought and shipped by Judge William Carter at Fort Bridger.<sup>72</sup> In 1855 an army officer related how Campbell's name was good for any amount of money and more highly valued than government currency.<sup>73</sup>

Campbell's reputation as the leading financier and main competitor to the American Fur Company and the Chouteau coalition emerged. As historian John Sunder wrote, "to upper Missouri fur trade investors in St. Louis and the East, Campbell represented anti-Chouteau capital in its purest form."<sup>74</sup> Through thrift, sound judgment, and persistence, Campbell used his financial assets and political connections effectively and continued to prosper from the fur trade from his St. Louis operation base, only now it was buffalo hides rather than beaver pelts that garnered high profits. Campbell continued to antagonize the American Fur Company throughout the 1840s, 50s, and 60s. He provided the financial backing for Alexander Harvey and Charles Primeau in the late 1840s and 50s to challenge the AFC on the upper Missouri. Harvey, Primeau & Co. built Fort Campbell on the opposite bank of the river from Fort Benton. Fort Campbell did a surprisingly good business in buffalo robes and garnered about half that of Fort Benton. For a time, the firm of Robert and William Campbell (no relation) continued operations until Robert's brother Hugh joined him in St. Louis in 1859.<sup>75</sup> A year before, former St. Louis mayor John F. Darby honored Campbell as one of the 31 pioneers in business who helped build St. Louis. St. Louis historian J. Thomas Scharf said that Robert Campbell "did as much perhaps as any other single individual to give St. Louis her early fame in the far West" and was "for nearly a half century a conspicuous figure in St. Louis business and social circles, and in every relation of life was eminently worthy of the regard in which he was universally held."<sup>76</sup>

While Campbell never enjoyed the mountain man lifestyle, he willingly faced the dangers to earn money. He put the capital to use in his St. Louis business ventures and was a courageous leader who displayed exemplary character and shared his considerable wealth with others. A very successful entrepreneur, Campbell lived to become a millionaire. He owned a handsome

mansion on Lucas Place (now a museum, located on 15th and Locust Streets), as well as a great deal of real estate in Missouri and Illinois.<sup>77</sup> His story provides an important connection of the economic development of half a continent and a closer look at the forces which projected St. Louis as the crossroads to trade, empire, and the western movement and illuminates the life of an enterprising young pioneer who helped open the West through the search of furs and profits.

<sup>72</sup> It was during this time that one of Campbell's clerks at his St. Louis store abbreviated "Fort William, on Laramie River" to "Fort Laramie." The mistake caught Campbell's attention and he recognized it as the proper name for the fort. Robert Morris stated, "Mr. Campbell changed the name of the fort. I have this fact from Mr. Campbell himself." Campbell carried on a significant amount of correspondence with Fort Laramie's post sutlers Seth Ward, William Bullock, and John Hutton. Agnes W. Spring, ed., "Old Letter Book," *Annals of Wyoming* 13.4 (1941), 239n, 237-330. Coutant, *History of Wyoming*, 301-02.

<sup>73</sup> Campbell, *Rocky Mountain Letters*, 5. Martlyn I. Holt, "Joined Forces: Robert Campbell and John Dougherty as Military Entrepreneurs," *Western Historical Quarterly* 30 (Summer 1999): 183-202.

<sup>74</sup> John F. Sunder, *The Fur Trade on the Upper Missouri, 1840-1865* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), 92-3.

<sup>75</sup> He also bought a steamboat named the *Robert Campbell*. Joel Overholser, *Fort Benton: World's Innermost Post* (Helena, MT: Falcon Press Publishing Co., 1987), 15-41. R. G. Robertson, *Competitive Struggle: America's Western Fur Trading Posts, 1764-1865* (Boise: Tamarack Books, 1999).

<sup>76</sup> Walter B. Stevens, *St. Louis, The Fourth City, 1764-1909* (St. Louis-Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1909), 990.

<sup>77</sup> *The Campbell House: A Romantic Survival of Early St. Louis* (St. Louis, privately printed), 3. St. Louis' leading citizens built mansions all along Washington Avenue, Olive Street, and in particular along Locust Street (formerly Lucas Place). Charles Van Ravenswaay, *Saint Louis: An Informal History of the City and Its People, 1764-1865* (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1991), 434.

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# SEVENTY TIMES SEVEN

by

LARRY K. BROWN



Herman  
"Bert"  
Barker, born  
Oct. 30,  
1893, near  
Aurora,  
Missouri,  
moved at age  
10 with  
family to  
Webb City,  
Missouri. At  
the age of 15,  
he was  
arrested for  
stealing  
chickens.

From "Actual Detective Stories of Women in Crime"

The sky, like a moist sponge, bathed Cheyenne in a grey pall that Monday, August 1, 1927.<sup>1</sup> And yet Wyoming's capital buzzed with a festive air as folks rushed through streets still stained by scat left from the previous week's famed Frontier Day's horse parades.<sup>1</sup>

But the dark-eyed Carol Hamilton, with hair the sheen and hue of a blackbird's wing, did not share that joy. Well-groomed in a large hat and dark blue dress, the 37-year-old sat in her Chrysler and tried to read as her beau, "Bert," walked toward the American National Bank at 16<sup>th</sup> and Capitol Avenue.<sup>2</sup> He had gone there in his grey suit and a cap to cash some travelers checks gained from a heist in Buffalo, Kansas, that past December. They would need the cash, Bert said, for their trip back to Oklahoma – the state of Carol's birth as well as the home of his "Ma," the matriarch of the infamous Barker crime gang.<sup>3</sup>

In what seemed like a blink, Bert rushed back with his cobra eyes cast down and went to Carol's side of their two-door car. "I got a rumble in the bank," he said. Though chilled by his words, Carol tried to stay calm as she stepped out on the road and let him get in through her door. They had bags and camp gear lashed to the running board on the driver's side.<sup>4</sup>

Just then, a "tall ... stout" young man walked up with three checks in his hand and asked the pair to drive back to his bank. There seemed to be some concerns about the business

Bert had just done there. They said they would. But, when the stranger had gone, Bert backed up their green

coach, drove down a few blocks, then whipped on to the Lincoln Highway and sped off.<sup>5</sup>

For the best part of an hour, the pair raced toward the Wyoming-Nebraska line. Then, just one-and-a-half miles west of Pine Bluffs, Wyoming, they saw a man – Laramie County Deputy Sheriff Art Osborn – speed toward them. Carol said, he drove

<sup>1</sup> Mike Couch, National Weather Service, Cheyenne, Feb. 11, 2003: "Slayer Eludes Officers in Manhunt." *Wyoming Eagle* (Cheyenne), Aug. 5, 1927, 1: "False Reports Great Hindrance to Local Force Hunting Killer," *Wyoming Eagle*, Aug. 5, 1927, 2.

<sup>2</sup> "Carol Hamilton. #38 [Colorado State Penitentiary #14172]." Wyoming Women Inmate Records, Wyoming State Archives, Cheyenne; also "Statements of Defendant Made in the Sheriff's Office, City and County Building, Cheyenne, Sep. 20, 22, and 24, 1927," State v. Carol Barker (Hamilton), First Judicial District Court Record, held in [Robert] Nelson Museum of the West, Cheyenne, pp. 4,10,32; "Woman Says Husband Shot Osborne [sic]," *Wyoming State Tribune & Sunday State Leader*, Cheyenne, Sep. 19, 1927, 1,2. In fact, Bert "limped noticeably" to the bank.

<sup>3</sup> "Statements of Defendant...." 7-8,9-10,27,32,33; "Slayer Eludes Officers..."; "Arthur E. Osborn Murdered Monday," *Pine Bluffs Post*, Aug. 4, 1927, 1; "Find No Trace of Slayer of Art Osborne [sic]," *Wyoming State Tribune*, Aug. 3, 1927, 1, 6. They were American Express Travelers Checks and, though accounts vary, some say he cashed them for from \$20 to \$30.

<sup>4</sup> "Statements of Defendant...." 4,19,27; also "False Reports Great Hindrance to Local Force Hunting Killer," *Wyoming Eagle*, Aug. 5, 1927, 2. When Barker endorsed the check at the bank, he signed his name as "R.D. Snodgrass," confusing officials for some weeks as they searched for that fictitious individual.

<sup>5</sup> "Statements of Defendant...." 6,9,29. The Lincoln Highway was, and is U.S. Highway 30.

a rather old car; it did not have a top . . . or it was down: and signaled us to stop. We drove beyond him just a short distance before we stopped and he came around the side . . . where Bert was sitting.<sup>6</sup>

They could see he did not have a gun in his hand as he strode towards them. "I think you are the people I want," the lawman said with a grin.<sup>7</sup>

"Surely not, officer, you must be mistaken; we haven't done anything," Carol replied as she forced a smile of straight white teeth.<sup>8</sup> With that, Bert raised his nickle-plated .32 caliber Colt automatic from his lap. "Put them up and come around and get in," he barked. In Carol's haste to make way, she slipped as she got out. And, as she fell, she heard at least three shots. Stunned, she stood to find the poor Osborn face down in the dirt on the far side of their car - his revolver still holstered at his side.<sup>9</sup>

Just then, with a west-bound sedan in sight, she fought off her fright and dragged the wounded man to the north side of the road, into the ditch. Then, she rushed back to her seat as the vehicle passed on its way.<sup>10</sup>

When once more in flight, her fears roared back. "Daddy," she screamed, "What did you do it for?" Bert said he had to shoot when the lawman tried to grab the gun from his hand. But, Carol would have none of it.<sup>11</sup> "If I thought you were going to do anything like that I would leave you right now... Let me out of this car; please put me and my things out on the highway," she pled.<sup>12</sup> But Bert stayed the course. "I need you too bad," he said as he drove on till they reached the State Line road. There, they turned right and, with a plume of dust in their wake, made their way through fog and rain to the top of Cemetery Hill. From there, they sailed southeast, down a spine of buttes, till they crossed into Colorado's wild Weld County.<sup>13</sup>

Within a half-hour or so, they stopped at a school house near Pawnee Butte, some 13 miles southeast of Grover, Colorado. There, with the sun still high, they stripped their stuff from the large blue trunk on the rear rack of their vehicle, then dumped it at the side of the road. They hoped that would so change the look of their car the law would be thrown off their track.<sup>14</sup>

As Carol and Bert fled the high plains, officer Osborn died about 3:20 p.m. - "within ten minutes after being



Nelson Museum of the West, Cheyenne

Arthur E. Osborn, Laramie County deputy sheriff, died Aug. 1, 1927, after Herman "Bert" Barker shot him on the old Lincoln Highway about two miles west of Pine Bluffs.

<sup>6</sup> "Statements of Defendant...." 9,10-11,28; and "Search for Slayer of Officer is Fruitless," *Wyoming State Tribune*, Aug. 2, 1927, 1, 2; "Find No Trace of Slayer of Art Osborne [sic];" "Arthur E. Osborn Murdered Monday," *Pine Bluffs Post*, Aug. 4, 1927, 1.

<sup>7</sup> "Sheriff Carroll Pays High Tribute to Arthur Osborn," *Pine Bluffs Post*, Sep. 29, 1927, 1; "Woman Says Husband Shot Osborne [sic].": "He (Osborn) was such a pleasant man, he had such a nice smile," said Carol. Later, she also told Sheriff Carroll, "I will never forget that friendly smile, those kindly blue eyes."

<sup>8</sup> Alvin Karpis, as told to Bill Trent, *Public Enemy Number One: The Alvin Karpis Story* (Toronto Montreal: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1971), 106

<sup>9</sup> Coroner's Inquest, Arthur E. Osborn, Pine Bluffs, Aug. 1, 1927.

<sup>10</sup> "Statements of Defendant...." 11,13,20,21,27,39,40,42,43,44. Osborn's revolver was a .32-20 caliber Colt Army Special. Barker's pistol was a .32 rimless caliber Colt automatic and Osborn's revolver was a .32-20 caliber Colt Army Special.

<sup>11</sup> "Statements of Defendant...." 10,12,20: "Woman Says Husband Shot Osborne [sic]."

<sup>12</sup> "Statements of Defendant...." 11,12

<sup>13</sup> "Statements of Defendant...." 11: "Woman Says Husband Shot Osborne [sic].": *Wyoming Atlas & Gazetteer: Topo Maps of the Entire State -Public Lands -Back Roads* (Freeport, Maine: Delorme Mapping, 1992), 25; *Colorado Atlas & Gazetteer: Topo Maps of the Entire State -Public Lands -Back Roads* (Freeport: Delorme Mapping, 2002), 94

<sup>14</sup> "Statements of Defendant...." 11,14-15,20,44: "Woman Says Husband Shot Osborne [sic].": "Finds Trunk of Slayer of Arthur E. Osborn," *Pine Bluffs Post*, Aug. 25, 1927, 1; "Find Trunk of "Slayer Deputy Sheriff Osborne [sic].": *Wyoming Eagle*, Aug. 19, 1927, 1; Author conversation with William "Bill" Bashor, Grover, Feb. 17, 2003.

taken back to Pine Bluffs” – or just a bit more than an hour after he had left town on his fatal mission.<sup>15</sup>

When Laramie County Sheriff George J. Carroll learned that one of his best men had been brought down, he sent a posse of “practically every able bodied man in Pine Bluffs and the surrounding farming territory” in search of the man, who had passed the bad checks in Cheyenne. The sheriff described the culprit as being

about forty years; height about five feet seven inches; weight about 150 pounds; smooth shaven” and his spouse “. . . being of dark complexion and weighed about 170 pounds.<sup>16</sup>

But, when the police failed to find their prey the next day, Carroll cast a nation-wide net with the bait of more than \$1,200 in rewards.<sup>17</sup> He also had more than 1,600 circulars sent to every state, plus Canada, as he asked for leads – *any* leads – that might land those, who had killed one of his deputies.<sup>18</sup>

\* \* \*

The rest of Carol’s and Bert’s trip seemed but a blur until they reached Tulsa, Oklahoma, on Saturday, August 5, just four days after the deputy’s death. There, as “Mrs. and Mrs. Smallwick,” they rented a room for a few days to rest.<sup>19</sup> And – once more to thwart the law – they swapped their soiled Chrysler for a Ford coupe that would take them on to a farm Carol *claimed* she owned northeast Hebrner Springs, Arkansas.<sup>20</sup>

Though she tried to convince Bert he should stay with her until things cooled off, he left a few days later to, once more, “pull a job.” Where, she did not know.<sup>21</sup> It would be late September before she would learn that Bert had died by his own hand that past August 29 when police stopped him in Wichita after he had robbed an ice company in nearby Newton.<sup>22</sup>

The Barkers immediately had their eldest son’s corpse brought back to Oklahoma so they could put him to rest in the Williams Timberhill Cemetery at the town of Welch. When Carol learned of their plans, she bought a bus ticket from Arkansas, but *claimed* she arrived too late for his funeral that Wednesday, August 31.<sup>23</sup> So, a friend drove her from Miami, Oklahoma – the Barkers’ hometown – some 15 miles west, so she could see her lover’s grave, “a big rounded-up pile of dirt.” There, she dropped to her knees and cried, “Oh, Bert. Bert, you poor, poor fool. If we would only have lived decent... if we would ...” As her voice failed, she took flowers from the box she had brought with her, then placed them with care on the fresh earth. “Good-by... Honey,” she said as she stood and wiped tears from her eyes, then turned and ran back to the car.<sup>24</sup>

When authorities – including Sheriff Carroll from

Wyoming – learned she had been seen that night at his grave, they set a trap. But, it failed. They caught her, however, about 8 a.m., on Friday, September 16, at the farm home of “relatives” some seven miles west of Neosho, Missouri. She had gone to that town, she said, “to buy her Bert a tombstone before,” as she put it, “I ended it all.” But, when faced with the law, she said, “I know what you want. I’ll go with you without any trouble ... All I want now is for the State of Wyoming to end me – and I don’t mean life imprisonment.”<sup>25</sup>

Sheriff Carroll left with her that same day en route to

<sup>15</sup> “Search for Slayer...”; “Find No Trace of Slayer of Art Osborne [sic]”; “Arthur E. Osborn Murdered Monday.” Laramie County Coroner Bayley H. Finkbinder, accompanied by Dr. J.H. Conway held their inquest on August 2, in Pine Bluffs. According to the August 2 *Tribune* story, “One shot had entered Osborn’s left arm, about four inches above the elbow, passing through his arm with a downward slope, entering his left side just above the hip bone, lodging the hip join on the right side. The second shot entered his back just above the left kidney and lodged in his right shoulder, indicating by the direction of the bullet that he must have been falling or in a stooping position when the shot was fired.” The following day, the *Tribune* added that Dr. M. L. Morris [in whose office Osborn died] “reported Osborne had been wounded three times, and, presumably by two shots as the course of one bullet appeared to be through the arm and into the body where it perforated the intestines in six places and lodged in the lower pelvic region. The second shot was apparently from the back and through the left shoulder.”

<sup>16</sup> “Woman Says Husband Shot Osborne [sic]”; Robert Winter, *Mean Men: the Sons of Ma Barker* (Danbury, Conn.: Rutledge Books, 2000), 17-18.

<sup>17</sup> “Proclamations of the Governor, 1890-1959,” Book 1 & 2, 1890-October 1954, pp. 547-548, Wyoming State Archives.

<sup>18</sup> “Woman Says Husband Shot Osborne [sic]”; “State of Wyoming v. Carol Hamilton (aka Barker),” First Judicial District Court, Laramie County Criminal Case file #6-460, Wyoming State Archives; author telephone conversation with Maxwell E. Osborn, the son of Deputy Sheriff Art Osborn, Sun Lakes, Ariz., Jul. 14, 2002.

<sup>19</sup> Winter, 17; also “Woman Says Husband Shot Osborne [sic],” *Wyoming State Tribune & Sunday State Leader*, op. cit.

<sup>20</sup> Winter, 18; E-mail from Charles Stuart, Cleburne County Historical Society, Heber Springs, AR, to author, Mar. 7, 2003

<sup>21</sup> “Woman Says Husband Shot Osborne [sic].”

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, Karpis, *Public Enemy Number One*; “Woman Says Husband Shot Osborne [sic]”; Robert Winter, *Mean Men: the Sons of Ma Barker*, 96; Rick Mattix and William J. Helmer, “Evolution of an Outlaw Band: The Making of the Barker-Karpis Gang,” Part 1 - website: <http://www.oklahombres.org/barker1.htm>, Feb. 18, 2002; website <http://www.dillingertthehiddentruth.freeseervers.com/photo4.html>, Feb. 18, 2002

<sup>23</sup> “Widow of Bandit Arrested Near Neosho,” Neosho, Mo., Sept. 17, 1927, 1.

<sup>24</sup> “Woman Says Husband Shot Osborne [sic]”; Carol Hamilton Barker (as told to Harlan Mendenhall), “My Life as a Gang Leader’s Wife,” *Actual Detective Stories of Women in Crime* (Chicago: December 1938), 42. Welch, Okla., is in Craig County, 14.3 miles west of the Barkers’ home in Miami (Ottaway County), Okla.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*; “Woman Says Husband Shot Osborn”; “Widow of Bandit Arrested Near Neosho,” Sep. 17, 1927, 1.



Cheyenne, where he and his staff soon learned from her not only how and why their deputy had died, but what the pair had done in those months prior to that crime. Bert, they learned, had been wounded by a shotgun blast January 17, 1927, at his gang's hideout in Cartersville, Missouri, following a failed heist of a bank safe at the town of Jasper, 32 miles north of Joplin.<sup>26</sup>

When Missouri officials failed to make a case against Bert for his role in that crime, they turned him over to the Arkansas authorities to stand trial for his past crimes in that state. While in the Fayetteville jail, however, Bert escaped. That is when, Carol said, they fled to the West Coast... so he might mend in the sun there.<sup>27</sup> But, while en route back to Oklahoma, Bert tried to pass the stolen checks in Cheyenne and that is when his life began to fade to black.<sup>28</sup>

As for Carol, her mood so improved through confession and reflection that, in a jail chat with a reporter later that same month [September], the "apparently refined, well mannered woman" said,

I want to live, I want to go through with this thing, meet the requirements of the law, and then devote my life to righting the wrongs that my dead husband committed. My husband, even though he did not live as he should, was a good man. At heart there wasn't a bad thought in him.

As she and the scribe talked, she glanced at a small photo she held of Bert. "Oh, Mr. Reporter," Carol continued,

he was so good to me; I loved him so much; he tried so hard to do nice things for me; and never once did he say an unkind word to me . . . And now to think that he is dead; that I shall never see him again.

When asked why then had Bert shot poor Osborn, she said,

Oh, I do not know; I can't understand. I am sure that if he had thought it over and not acted on the spur of the moment he would not have done so. Really, Mr. Reporter, he didn't want to hurt anyone.<sup>29</sup>

But her version of his life failed to jibe with the facts known by the men of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, as well as many others in law enforcement.

The Bert they knew – the eldest of four sons born to George Elias and Arizona Donnie (nee Clark) Barker – had been born on October 30, 1893<sup>30</sup> in or near Au-

Actual Detective Stories of Women in Crime



Carol Hamilton Barker

rora, Missouri. About 1903, the Barkers moved in-state to Webb City, where he and his brothers, Lloyd William, Arthur Robert "Doc," and Freddie went to grade school. Five years later, following brief stay in Joplin, the family had moved to Tulsa, where the police arrested the 15-year-old for stealing chickens and sent him to jail for a year.<sup>31</sup> Such sins, however, would be the start of a life on the lam that so scarred history that there are still but few, who have not heard of the feared Barker gang.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Winter, 77-78. Though nearly two dozen pellets later would be plucked from his hide, one left under his left knee cap caused him to limp "noticeably" the rest of his life.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*; Winter, 73-74

<sup>29</sup> "I Must Live to Right My Dead Husband's Wrongs," – Widow of Osborne's [sic] Slayer," *Wyoming Eagle*, Sep. 23, 1927, 1.

<sup>30</sup> Winter, xviii

<sup>31</sup> "Woman Says Husband Shot Osborne [sic]"

<sup>32</sup> "The Kidnaping of Edward George Bremer, St. Paul, Minnesota. History and Early Association of the Karpis-Barker Gang Prior to the Abduction of Mr. Bremer," Federal Bureau of Investigation Barker-Karpis Gang Summary (RCS ID, I.C. #7-576), Nov. 19, 1936, Winter, 5, 6, 12-14, 15-18



William J. Riner, judge in the First Judicial District

Wyoming State Archives

\* \* \*

Back in Cheyenne, thanks to Carol's cooperation, Sheriff Carroll lost no time in taking the "well dressed, and apparently well composed... Mrs. Barker" on Monday, September 26, before the First Judicial District Court. There, as she stood just a few feet from his bench, Judge William A. Riner read the charge: that she had tried to help a felon – Herman "Bert" Barker – in his flight from the law.<sup>33</sup> How would she plead, he asked.

"Yes, sir," she sobbed.

"You mean you wish to plead guilty?" Roche Mentzer, the Laramie County Attorney and Prosecutor, inquired.

"Yes, sir."

When asked by the judge if she wished to say more before he read his sentence, she tried, but could not control her voice. So, Judge Riner deemed that, because "...she had not taken part in the actual murder of Deputy Osborne," she would serve at least two years, but no more than four in the Colorado State Penitentiary. Wyoming had no such facility for their women criminals. Carol began to cry and, as the sheriff took her back to her cell, she "only with difficulty...restrained a complete breakdown."<sup>34</sup>

Three days later – September 29, 1927 – Sheriff Carroll drove her to Canon City, Colorado, where, as Inmate #14172, she answered questions put to her by the clerk, who logged her into the prison: Occupation? "Housewife." Parents? "Mother." [Her father had died in 1915.] Children? "No." Religion? "Catholic." Then, a doctor weighed her – "180 lbs" – and measured her height – "5' 6-1/4'" – and examined her skin for marks and scars.<sup>35</sup>

Once in the Women's Ward cell in which she would be forced to live for the next two years,<sup>36</sup> Carol recalled "Our lovely, white-haired matron, Mrs. [Hannah L.] Campbell, made it as easy on us as

Colorado State Archives



Carol Hamilton as Inmate No. 14172, Colorado State Penitentiary

possible, and was very encouraging to us all. I worked in the laundry, went to chapel on Sundays."<sup>37</sup> Such experiences, not all unlike those she must have known as a child, may well have caused her to cast back in her mind to the time when her life began on April 16, 1890, in Sapulpa, Oklahoma. There, as Mary Carol, she seemed to have a happy childhood as the second of six children born to Cornelius D. "Tony" Antone and his wife, Lydia.<sup>38</sup>

Tony, an Oneida Indian from New York, had gone southwest in 1886 to help move logs from the Sapulpa area – fifteen or so miles southwest of today's Tulsa – to the railroad terminal at Red Fork, also in that area. The prior year, Lydia Van Loon had left Missouri to "see the Pacific Ocean." But, when she reached Red

<sup>33</sup> "Art Osborne [sic] Slayer's Wife Sent to Prison," *Wyoming State Tribune*, Sep. 26, 1927, 1; State of Wyoming v. Carol Hamilton (aka Barker), Laramie County Criminal Case file.

<sup>34</sup> "Art Osborne [sic] Slayer's Wife Sent to Prison"; State of Wyoming v. Carol Hamilton: "Wife of Slayer Receives Penitentiary [sic] Sentence," *Pine Bluffs Post*, Sept. 29, 1927, 1. Convicted Wyoming women felons were imprisoned under contract from Oct. 6, 1909, until May 21, 1921, at the Colorado facility.

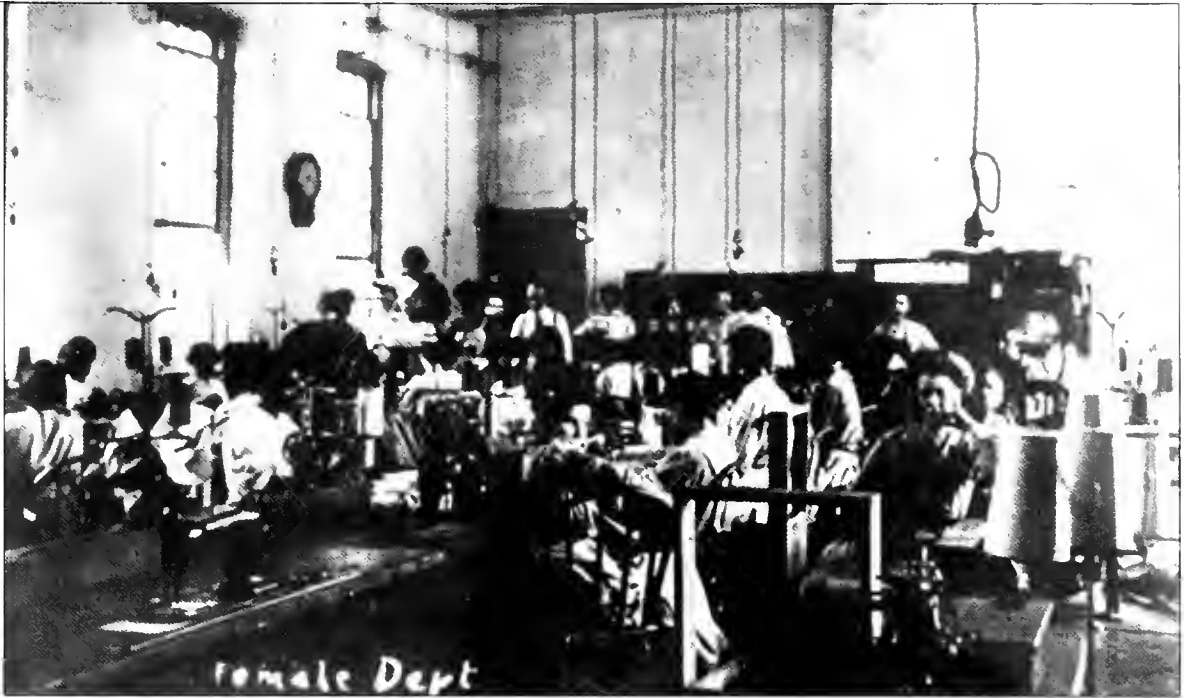
<sup>35</sup> "Carol Hamilton, #38." Wyoming Women Inmate Records: Winter, 48. On her upper left arm, he found a vaccination scar, plus as a faint scar on her inner forearm and a "jagged scar" that crossed the back base of her left index finger. On her right arm, he saw a "large jagged scar" caused by the botched removal of a tattoo as well as a faint horizontal scar at the inside bend of her wrist. And, while examining her head, he made note of a small black mole on her right ear and a U-shaped scar near the hair at the center of her forehead. According to Winter, the tattoo consisted of the initials "FEM."

<sup>36</sup> "My Life as a Gang Leader's Wife," 42.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> E-mails from Penny Boren, Skiatook, Okla., Dec. 4, 2002 and Mar. 8, 2003; *Sapulpa, Oklahoma, 74066*, compiled by the Sapulpa Historical Society (Sapulpa, OK: Sapulpa Oklahoma Historical Society), 1979, 94; Certificate of Death, #622307, Carol Tankersley [sic], State of Oklahoma, Department of Health, Oklahoma City, Nov. 19, 2002

Colorado State Prison Museum, Canon City



Colorado State Penitentiary for Women where Carol Hamilton was incarcerated after her conviction.

Fork, she took a job and that is where she met Tony. They married there on June 9, 1886, and moved to Sapulpa, where she would gain some fame as the first white woman to live in that area. She and Tony built the first house there from logs they cut on the banks of Rock Creek. Though poor, the proud and respected Antones seemed to do well as Carol and her siblings joined their lives.<sup>39</sup>

At about age thirteen, Carol's folks sent her to the Chilocco Agricultural School, a Catholic institution just north of Newkirk, near the Oklahoma-Kansas line, to gain a basic education as well as skills that might help her lead a useful life. But, soon she ran back home. She *claimed* she left school, because "...papa is almost down with the consumption, he is not able to work and mama needed help." But her mom, she said, "...dont [sic] like for me to miss school." So, a contrite Carol penned a note on January 5, 1904, and asked Colonel S.M.M. Cowan, the institution's superintendent, to let her return "...on my own expence [sic]." And, she did go back to graduate with her eighth-grade class.<sup>40</sup>

Though it is not clear what life she lived in the next two decades, she said she met her Bert in August 1924.

I was 24 [sic: 34] and he was nearly 33 . . . I was working as a waitress in a café. Bert often ate at the place where I was working . . . (He) said his name was Herman Hamilton . . . He was refined, spoke softly and seemed to be a perfect gentleman. He said he dealt in cattle – a lucrative trade in Oklahoma at that time.<sup>41</sup>

Following a courtship of "dates, dinners, dances, and

parties," she said she "was desperately in love . . . I even loved to hear the name 'Bert' which he wished me to call him."

Marriage, she *claimed*, came that November in Crowder, Oklahoma, when a Justice of the Peace made her the wife of "Herman Hamilton." She did not learn his true name, however, till "several months later," after they had rented a home in Wichita Falls, Texas. Then came "the most terrible shock" of her life. She said she went to bed early as Bert sat and read in their parlor. "I'll leave the bedroom door open so I won't be lonesome," she told him as she kissed him goodnight.

"That's swell, honey. Now you run ahead and get your beauty sleep. I'll be along pretty soon."

About two hours later, she woke up to find the bedroom door closed and she heard voices in the parlor. Though she caught but bits of what they said, she knew they argued.

Robbery...well, kill him then...don't wait ... we've got to get more money ...money ...four thousand dollars... we'll stick up that ...<sup>42</sup>

<sup>39</sup> *Sapulpa, Oklahoma*, 74066, 94, 202; "C. D. Antone, First Sapulpa Citizen, Passes," *Sapulpa Herald*, May 5, 1915, 1; *Creek County Burials, 1917-1975*, Nancy Green Chapter NSDAR, Sapulpa, Okla., n.d., 71.

<sup>40</sup> Letter, "Mayme" (Mary Carol) Antone, Sapulpa, I.T. [Indian Territory], to S.M.M. Cowan, Superintendent, Chilocco Indian School, I.T., Jan. 5, 1904; Letter, Cowan to Miss [sic: Mrs.] Lizzie Antone, Sapulpa, I.T., Jun. 26, 1905; E-mail from Penny Boren, Dec. 4, 2002.

<sup>41</sup> "My Life as a Gang Leader's Wife," 9.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 9-10.

Stunned, she said she slipped out of bed and tiptoed to the door. "Elmer's got all the dope on this store in Electra [about 26 miles northwest of Wichita Falls]," she heard one say. "It's a cinch. I tell yuh, we can get four thousand bucks just as easy as that."

"Well don't get so loud," Bert warned.

Through the keyhole, she saw six men. Bert sat in a chair at the table with a pencil in hand. The others grouped about him. "Well, it sounds all right to me," Bert said. "We'll pull it all right. Now here's the details again. All you guys get 'em clear. Bill you drive the car. Pale, you ..."

When the gang had gone and Bert had joined her in bed, Carol wailed. "Bert, you lied to me . . . you lied to me." Yes, he had lived a life a crime, he said. "But I'm still in love with you, Carol. If you think you don't want to live with me I won't try for one minute to keep you. You can leave me and just forget that we ever met."<sup>43</sup>

So, with more sleep and the next day's dawn, she once more caved in and said she'd stay. "That's the girl," he laughed. "You'll never regret it."

But she *did* as she met more and more of those in Bert's gang: - a veritable "who's who" of criminals in the late 1920's and '30s. In fact, some of the worst of those bad folks proved to be Bert's mom, the notorious "Ma" Barker and his brothers. And, the more she lived their kind of life, the more she took on their taint.

I was soon worked into the middle of the gang's activities [she said], not in the actual pulling of jobs, as they speak of robberies and holdups and murders, but in the "casing" of the towns where the particular job was to be pulled.

She also began to smoke, drink liquor, and talk as tough as those with whom she spent so much time. But though that kind of life crushed her "...conscience into the ground," she said she "couldn't get away from (her) home training...couldn't forget that (she) was doing wrong."<sup>44</sup>

Though she had long known of her mother-in-law's vile reputation, Carol said she did not meet the infamous "Ma" till her youngest son, Freddie, had been arrested near the Barker's home in Tulsa in the spring of 1926 and sent to Fort Smith, Arkansas, "where he was wanted on a charge of some kind."<sup>45</sup> According to Carol,

Ma called us at once to tell us what had happened and asked Bert to send money to spring Freddie. So Bert gave me ten \$100 bills and I got on a train and went to Tulsa. I hated that trip worse than anything I had done since I had married Bert. But there was nothing else I could do but go ahead with it. Mrs. Barker and I went

over by bus to Fort Smith, sprang Freddie and brought him back to Tulsa.<sup>46</sup>

Two days later in Wichita Falls, Carol remembered a call she had received from her mother. "'Carol,' Mother said. I could detect a note of anxiety in her voice. 'Something must be wrong. Some officers were just at the house here asking about you. Are you in any kind of trouble?'

"Some officers?' I gasped, then tried to talk calmly. 'Did they say what they wanted with me?'

"No, they didn't say anything about that," her mom replied.

"Well, don't you worry any, Mother... A friend of ours got drunk up at Muskogee the other day, and ...and ran into a filling station. They probably just wanted to know if I knew where he was." Carol later bemoaned, "How it hurt me to lie to my mother, but I couldn't stand to have her find out the terrible mess I was in...or my connection with the gang."<sup>47</sup>

So, with the law on their heels, Carol and Bert left Wichita Falls in haste and made their way toward Oklahoma, "because they'll least suspect," said Bert, "that we're coming back ... and besides I know some good hiding-places there."<sup>48</sup>

Once they crossed the Texas state line, they drove to Radium Springs, a spa just a mile or so south of Salina in the northeastern part of the state. "These springs are a good place to cool off," Bert said. "We'll just lay low here in these mountains for a while."<sup>49</sup>

That the authorities still looked for the pair did not seem to stir Bert in the least, but Carol so rued their plight she "hardly could enjoy the beautiful scenery because of the terrible fear." In fact, as days dragged on, she nagged Bert that they should leave before the law found them there. Finally, he gave in and said they would go to see one of his old cronies at Picher, Oklahoma, not far north of his family's home in Miami.<sup>50</sup>

Once they reached the house where that friend lived, Bert went in search of his pal's room while Carol walked back to the car get their bags. Later, she said,

I was inside the car, had my luggage and was almost ready to go back into the house when I happened to look out of the glass in the rear of the car. I stopped

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>45</sup> Karpis, as told to Bill Trent, 83.

<sup>46</sup> "My Life as a Gang Leader's Wife," 14.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

suddenly. I didn't know what to do. There were two policemen in uniform looking at our license tag and checking it with a number they had written on a small pad . . . I knew that if I went back into the house where Bert was the officers probably would get both of us. But I thought I might be able to go in exactly the opposite direction and maybe not even be caught. With my heart pounding in my throat, I got out of the car and as nonchalantly as possible started walking away . . . and the house where Bert was. Then I heard one of the officers say: "There . . . isn't that her . . . ?" I wanted to run, but I thought I had a better chance if I didn't. I walked faster. Then I heard the other officer say: "She fits the description we got of the woman." Then I heard them start toward me. The feeling I experienced when I heard their footsteps is one I hope and pray I never experience again. I wanted to control myself, but I couldn't. I dropped my suitcase and started running just as hard as I could.

"Hey, you . . . stop!" one of the lawmen shouted. When she failed to do so, officer U. S. Jennings gave chase and, after they had run a block or so, he grabbed her arm and snapped a pair of cuffs on her wrists.

"Where's your husband?" Jennings asked.

"I don't know," she snapped. Then, with her next breath, she said, "I don't have a husband. I'm just traveling by myself." But those lies failed to sway Jennings as he whisked her off to jail. There, for the first time in her life, she found herself in a cell, but it would not be her last time in such a place. Later, she would recall,

I was completely broken in spirit. I wanted to kill myself, and I think that perhaps if I had a gun I would have done that very thing. I was never so disgusted with myself in all my life.<sup>51</sup>

Regardless, because Carol led the law astray that day, Bert could have escaped. Instead, he stayed. Worse, that night he drank too much, then went to the jail to demand her release. But the authorities, stunned by his stupidity, instead tossed him in the same cell with Carol.<sup>52</sup>

Despite all that, their luck held as a friend called Ma Barker, who soon came on the fly with Q. [Quilliki] P. McGhee, a Miami, Oklahoma, attorney, who had long served their gang. And with his help, Carol and Bert found themselves out on bail, though it took most of their cash.<sup>53</sup>

"Listen, Carol," Bert said as they drove back that night to Tulsa, "I'm going to send you on the train to Memphis, Tennessee . . . I'll follow through in the car in a few days. Gettin' out of jail there at Picher cost too much money. I'm 'bout broke again."

So, as he wished, Carol went on to Memphis, where she *claimed* she got a suite in a fine hotel, bought new clothes, and lived "like a queen."

Perhaps you wonder at my living so luxuriously when Bert had mentioned that he was almost broke [Carol explained] . . . he considered himself "about broke" unless he had at least more than \$5,000. I had taken \$2,000 with me to Memphis, and that sum had to last me about two weeks – until Bert arrived there with more.<sup>54</sup>

The "more" – about \$25,000 worth of jewels Bert had fenced for \$15,000, plus "quite a bit of cash" – had come from a theft that May 1926 from the Newton Jewelry Store at McAlester, Oklahoma.<sup>55</sup>

Flush once more with their new found wealth, they planned a night on the town. But, as they left their room, three armed detectives stepped forth. "All right, you two, you're under arrest." McAlester authorities had tracked Bert to Tennessee and, with the help of local lawmen, they nabbed the pair as suspects in the Newton Jewelry Store robbery.<sup>56</sup>

But once more, as if by magic, Q. P. McGhee came on-scene. This time, with a fake warrant, he swore Ketcham, Oklahoma, authorities wanted the pair for a bank robbery there. And with such guile, he not only squirreled Bert and Carol out of the Memphis jail that June 2, but out of the "Volunteer State."<sup>57</sup>

Once more out of the law's hands, Carol's thoughts turned back to that time they had gone to the resort in Oklahoma. "Do you think we'll be able to buy that property at Radium Springs now?" she asked Bert.

"I'm still planning on it, Carol, Bert replied, "and sometime soon, too." Though she vowed not to know the details, she *claimed*, "...we had the Radium Springs property a little less than a month later.<sup>58</sup> I was so happy to get it. My husband made it out in my name."<sup>59</sup> But her joy proved to be short lived. In reply to a note she had written, inviting her mother to join her and Bert at the resort for a vacation, she received the following from one of her kin:

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, 49.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, 50.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*.; Winter, 52-55.

<sup>57</sup> "My Life as a Gang Leader's Wife," 42; Winter, 55-56.

<sup>58</sup> Mattix and Helmer, 4.

<sup>59</sup> Telephone conversation between Mrs. Betty Lou Thomas, Pryor, Okla., and the author, Mar. 4, 2003

Carol: Your Mother... cannot come to visit you because (she is) dead. (She) died grieving over your actions. (She) learned all about you and your marriage... Please don't come to see us any more.<sup>60</sup>

Shamed by thoughts that her sins had killed her mother and had torn her family ties to shreds, she once more considered taking her own life. "But I didn't have the nerve," she said. Instead, she turned to whiskey. "It was my only source of relief – it lasted only for a short time – and after it had worn off I felt more miserable than ever," she said. "So I plunged recklessly into crime along with the rest of the gang. It proved to be a trail she could not get off."<sup>61</sup>

Nor would life improve for Bert. Following still another arrest and conviction, this time for a failed bank job in Jasper, Arkansas, authorities sent him to jail in Fayetteville. In the meantime, once more on the loose, Carol took a room in a Tulsa boarding house. In the meantime, Ma went to see her imprisoned son. On one such visit, she slipped to him four hacksaw blades she had stashed in her clothes. And, with those tools, he sawed his way free, then ran to the edge of town where he linked up with "Pa" Barker, who waited in a car. His dad then took him straight to Carol's apartment.<sup>62</sup>

But, though glad to see him, the strain of all that had past between them and the sight of his wounds took their toll on Carol. In fact, her smile soon changed to tears as she cried out, "Oh, Bert, why did I ever marry you," then threw herself in bed, where she sobbed herself to sleep. When she woke up in the dark, she found Bert gone, but he had left her a note:

Honey, we're going to go on a long trip to the West – where we'll be safe. Just you and me. We'll leave tonight. I'll have the car ready when I get back. We both need a good, long rest. - Bert

Soon, he returned to their room and said with a smile, "We'll, are you about ready to go?"

"I believe I am," she replied as if there had been no spat. "I think it will be a lot of fun." In fact, it proved to be a dream come true as Carol had long wished for a trip through the West. Within an hour, they were on their way. The date: March 27, 1927. "The night was clear," she said. "Stars filled the heavens and the moon was the most beautiful I had ever seen."<sup>63</sup>

The next two or three weeks at their hideaway on the West Coast, according to Carol, "(it was) the best time I had had in ages." Bert too seemed to enjoy the experience. "Why can't it be this way always?" she asked. "Why don't we stay out here and never go back.

Why don't we change our names and you get a respectable job, and we'll forget all of the past."

But the die had been cast. "Ma says everything is all right down there [in Tulsa], and for us to come back," Bert said as he returned to their room, after having talked to her by phone. Despite Carol's pleas, Bert vowed they must go home...to Oklahoma...to his gang. That decision proved fatal for him and helped put Carol in the Colorado State Penitentiary.<sup>64</sup>

Fortunately, though, her time in the pen seemed to pass "...quite rapidly." And, on September 26, 1929, authorities approved Carol's parole to her old friend and attorney McGhee, who had offered her employment back in Oklahoma.<sup>65</sup>

Though it's not clear what type of work she performed for McGhee, those who knew Carol best have said she moved back to Sapulpa and took a room in the Carleton Hotel, where she picked up "...a few dollars as a hus-

<sup>60</sup> "My Life as a Gang Leader's Wife." 50.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 33-34.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 41-42.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 42; Wyoming's Charities and Reform Board, Book J, Sep. 16, 1929, p. 340; "Cora Hamilton, #38," Wyoming Inmate Records, Wyoming State Archives, Cheyenne.



Actual Detective Stories of Women in Crime

Dorothy E. Slaymon, Carol's niece

tlar.” Then, once she gained her “sovereign” release from the law on May 19, 1930, she went to West Tulsa.<sup>66</sup> There, with thirteen diamonds that Bert had left her, she sold one by one for cash on which to live. Finally, with but four left, she *claimed* she “. . . got a job working in a café. It was a very nice café, too – one of the best in Tulsa.” Perhaps she did. But, once more, some of her crime cronies have sworn she made more – much more – through prostitution.<sup>67</sup>

Regardless, as she walked home one evening, she unexpectedly met her eighteen-year-old niece, Dorothy Slaymon.<sup>68</sup> “Why, Aunt Carol, where on earth did you come from? I heard that you had been killed.” Those words pierced the Carol’s heart. “They had told her that,” she thought, “perhaps, so she wouldn’t ever find out what a terrible thing her Aunt Carol had done.” As they hugged in the lamp light, Carol explained her “‘mysterious’ disappearance” by lying that she had been “out in California working” and had just returned. And she excused herself for having failed to stay in touch with her family by adding, “I always was a bad hand at writing.” With that, Dorothy, who worked as a stenographer, suggested they share an apartment “to cut down expenses.” At first, Carol balked in fear Dorothy might learn of her past with Bert as well as how she supplemented her income. But, she gave in, because, “I was awfully hungry for companionship.” Besides, she thought, “(Dorothy) would help me forget the past. We would start life out together anew.”<sup>69</sup>

How prophetic those words proved. Within a year, she and Dorothy moved to a “jazzy new apartment there in Tulsa, where Carol managed what at least one Barker gang member called a “massage parlor.”<sup>70</sup>

Late 1930 brought more changes. That is when her Carol *claimed* to her kin she had wed the new love of her life: Seth Camberlin Tankersley.<sup>71</sup> But, if they did marry, that relationship did not last long. Seth took a new spouse but two years later.<sup>72</sup>

Though few seem to know how Carol spent the last three decades of her life, it seems she lived much of that time in Oklahoma City as “Mrs. Seth Tankersley.” There, under the care of Dr. John J. Batchelor for some five years, Carol suffered from diabetes and related ills till she died at age seventy-two at St. Anthony’s Hospital on December 31, 1962. Cause of death: “Thrombosis-Cerebral-hemiplegia” [blocked blood vessel(s) in the brain, resulting in a stroke]. It had been brought on four days earlier by diabetes-induced damage to her vascular system.<sup>73</sup>

Following a funeral mass at St. Joseph’s old cathedral, where she long been a member of the Roman

Catholic church, her family buried her on January 2, 1963, in the Fairlawn Cemetery at Oklahoma City.<sup>74</sup>

Soon after, her sister, Elizabeth and brother, Tom, may have found, as they cleaned out her home at 100-1/2 West Grand, the small Bible Carol had kept and cherished since age eight. Her mother, who had given her that book also had written the following on its flyleaf: “To my baby Carol, from Mother . . . God forgives not seven times but seventy times seven times.”<sup>75</sup> At first, Carol said she did not fully understand the meaning of that inscription. But, with Bert’s death, she said she knew, “I could be forgiven . . . I could start over again.”

<sup>66</sup> Karpis, 106-107.

<sup>67</sup> Mattix and Helmer: “My Life as a Gang Leader’s Wife,” 34; Karpis, 106-107. According to Karpis, she moved to West Tulsa, because “. . . the hustling (there) was more lucrative.”

<sup>68</sup> *Creek County Burials, 1917-1975*, the Slayman [sic: Slaymon] family.

<sup>69</sup> “My Life as a Gang Leader’s Wife,” 42-43.

<sup>70</sup> Karpis, 106-107; “Alvin E. Karpis of Tulsa, Okla., and Miss Dorothy E. Slaymon [sic: Slaymon],” Kiefer, Okla., Marriage Records, State of Oklahoma, Creek County, Sapulpa, Okla., Sept. 26, 1931.

<sup>71</sup> Karpis, 106-107; “My Life as a Gang Leader’s Wife,” 43.

<sup>72</sup> Telephone conversation, Joel Tankersley, Green River, Wyo., and author, Jan. 6, 2003.

<sup>73</sup> E-mail from Courtney A. Brown, M.D., Louisville, KY, to author, Feb. 26, 2003.

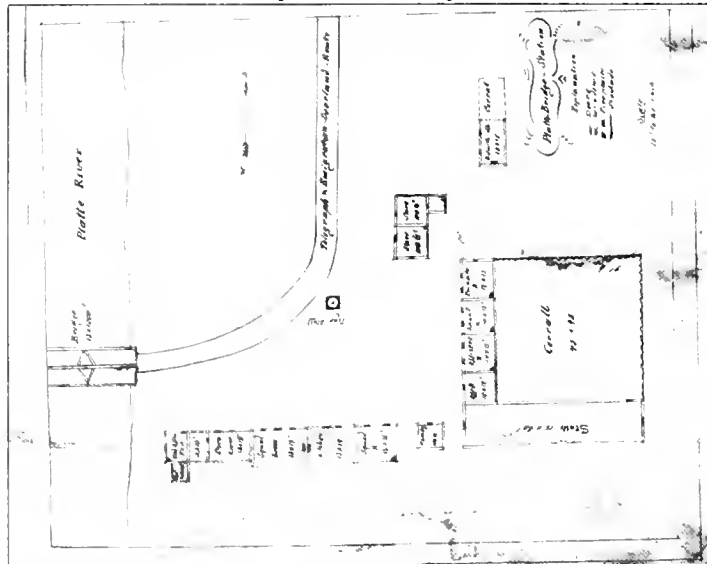
<sup>74</sup> Certificate of Death re Carol Tankersley; also “Mrs. Carol Tankersley,” *The Daily Oklahoman*, Oklahoma City, Okla., Jan. 1, 1963, 27.

<sup>75</sup> Bible, New Testament, St. Matthew, Chap. 18:21-22. “. . . Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.”

*Larry Brown is author of seven books and numerous articles. He also has written short stories published in prestigious magazines. Wyoming Writers, Inc., honored his Hog Ranches of Wyoming: Liquor, Lust and Lies Under Sagebrush Skies, with a “Western Horizon” Award in 1995. His Petticoat Prisoners of Old Wyoming won the Wyoming State Historical Society “Publications” award in 2001. Brown has been a frequent contributor to Annals.*

# Victory Gardens and Fort Caspar Artifacts

By Reid May



During World War II the concept of "victory gardens" became quite popular. It was decided that our small church group, under the direction of President MacFarlane of the Casper Branch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, plow and plant some virgin bottom land quite close to the North Platte River near Casper and raise some corn and tomatoes. MacFarlane either owned or had leased this parcel.

My father, Frank P. May from Midwest, Wyoming, volunteered to do the plowing. This was done probably on a Saturday in early May of either 1943 or 1944. My brother Joseph Allen May from Evanston, and I went with Dad on that spring day. Joe was about 12 years old at the time and I would have been about ten.

Shortly after Dad put the plow to the soil, we discovered an artifact or two. At first our discoveries were rather modest—several ox shoes and yoke keys. Later, we found dozens of more significant items including 10-12 lead bullets or slugs. (All but one of these slowly disappeared over the years at "show-and-tell" sessions of the four boys that were born to our family. I managed to retain one of these and it is one of my most prized possessions).

One item, that we kept in a drawer of Mom's Singer sewing machine, was a blue-gray medicine bottle about seven or eight inches long and in perfect condition. It was rather square in form, not round like most medicine bottles, and one very distinguishing feature—on

one side was embossed the word "cocaine." None of us has a clue of what became of this fantastic artifact.

There were several brass military uniform bottles among the items we found that day. We also found three or four human skulls, apparently Native American, which my father turned over to the MacFarlane family. However, the biggest find (other than the human remains mentioned above) came a few weeks later. My brother Joe was hoeing corn when his hoe struck metal. He dug into the soft soil and unearthed a brass U. S. Army cavalry belt buckle. He has it to this day and proudly tells the story of its discovery at every opportunity!

The men of the group surmised that they had discovered the site of the original Fort Caspar, but apparently, no one contacted the sheriff's office or any historians. I would be interested in knowing if there are any other reports regarding this discovery.

*The author was born at the "Institute" near Worland where his father was the irrigation supervisor. The family moved to Casper where he and his brother Joe attended McKinley School. They later moved to Midwest. Brother Dean L. May, born in Worland in 1938, was a well-known Western historian at the University of Utah. He died May 6, 2003. The author now lives in Saratoga, Calif.*



# Wyoming Picture

From Photographic Collections  
in Wyoming



*The ten young women pictured were members of the University of Wyoming Women's Athletic Association. The photograph, unlabeled as to names of the women and the man pictured with them, dates from about 1930. From an album labeled "W. A. A.", the photograph is from the Louise Thouin and Ruth Campbell Collection, Accession #6817, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.*

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# *Annals of* **WYOMING**

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The Wyoming History Journal

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## The Cover Art

### ***“Air Mail Service Station, Cheyenne, Wyoming”***

*Postcard from the collections of the American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming*

*This postcard illustrates the linking of the nation through the U.S. Air Mail Service. The first air mail service began in May 1918 with flights between New York and Washington, D.C. During the next two years the service moved slowly west and on September 8, 1920, the country celebrated the beginning of the transcontinental air mail service. On that day, planes flying east and west landed in Cheyenne, one of the main stops along the route. Flying east out of Cheyenne, the De Haviland Four biplanes landed in North Platte, Nebraska, on to Omaha, eventually to New York. Flying west, the planes stopped in Rock Springs to refuel, next to Salt Lake City, and ended their flights in San Francisco. According to a newspaper report of the time published in the Casper Daily Tribune, “the transcontinental daily air mail is the most difficult flying project yet undertaken. It involves daily operation over a route nearly 3,000 miles long with flying frequently under most trying conditions.” The account also discussed the weather, an important consideration for the pilots flying the biplanes, and stated “the greatest difficulty in this respect . . . will be encountered by westbound planes between Cheyenne and Laramie.” Of course, it was the wind which provided the greatest obstacle. Because of the air mail service, Cheyenne became an important stop on the transcontinental air route, a distinction held by Wyoming’s capital city until the mid-1940s.*

### Information for Contributors:

The editor of *Annals of Wyoming* welcomes manuscripts and photographs on every aspect of the history of Wyoming and the West. Appropriate for submission are unpublished, research-based articles which provide new information or which offer new interpretations of historical events. First-person accounts based on personal experience or recollections of events will be considered for use in the “Wyoming Memories” section. Historic photo essays for possible publication in “Wyoming Memories” also are welcome. Articles are reviewed and referred by members of the journal’s Editorial Advisory Board and others. Decisions regarding publication are made by the editor. Manuscripts (along with suggestions for illustrations or photographs) should be submitted on computer diskettes in a format created by one of the widely-used word processing programs along with two printed copies. Submissions and queries should be addressed to: Editor, *Annals of Wyoming*, Dept. 3924, 1000 E. University Avenue, Laramie WY 82071, or to the editor by e-mail at the following address: [rewig@uwoyo.edu](mailto:rewig@uwoyo.edu)

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# Annals of WYOMING

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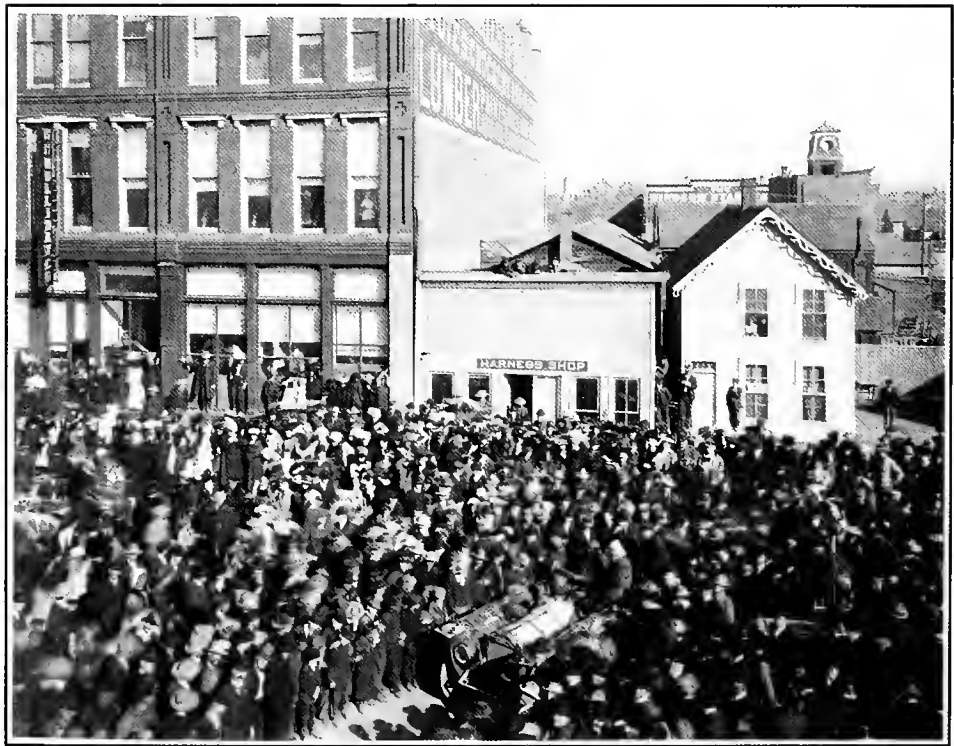
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# Wyoming's Transportation History

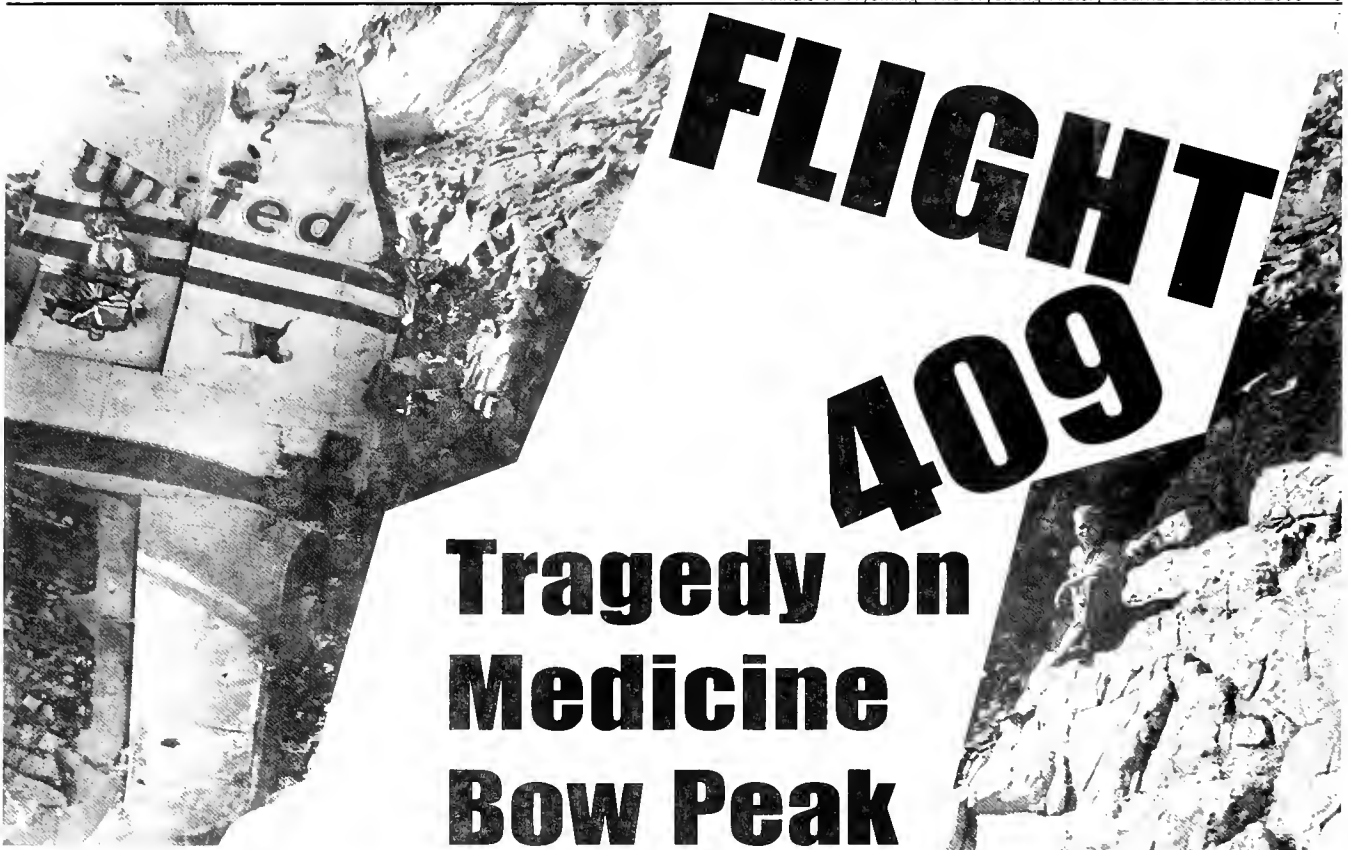
John R. Waggener, Guest Editor

When I was a boy growing up in Green River, one of my biggest thrills was hearing Dad yell out to us kids in the sandbox, saying, "Kids, let's go to Little America and get an ice cream cone." With Mom and Dad up front and we kids in the back, the 1969 Ford Galaxy 500 was off-rolling west down I-80. Though I have to thank Mom and Dad for treating me to those wonderful ten-cent cones, I also have to thank Mr. S.M. Covey for making them available. He saw an opportunity in Wyoming. He saw an opportunity centered on transportation, and he constructed his fine roadside stop (complete with an ice cream machine) to serve the needs of travelers going east or west on the nation's great corridor, US 30. Transportation has always been a rich component to the history of Wyoming. A physiographic feature known as the Wyoming Basin allowed much of this history to happen. Southern Wyoming acted, and still acts, as a corridor for moving people, goods, and services across this nation. The fact that Wyoming is a corridor makes it one of the most vitally important states linking the west to the east – something Lewis and Clark attempted to do two hundred years ago. But saying Wyoming is just a corridor does not tell the whole story. In this special edition of *Annals of Wyoming*, "Linking Wyoming to the Nation," four articles have been selected to share some of Wyoming's other fascinating stories about transportation. Mel Duncan, in his article, "Flight 409: Tragedy on Medicine Bow Peak," tells the reader this airline crash was the nation's worst airline crash to that date. He describes how the crash was pivotal to the eventual overhaul of the nation's air traffic control system. When reading Michael Kassel's article, "The United Airlines Stewardess School in Cheyenne, Wyoming," the reader will discover United Airlines was the first airline in the world to have trained female flight attendants on its aircraft and that those first eight stewardesses and literally thousands of others were trained in Cheyenne. Even peripheral transportation-related things, like Wyoming's official road map, have made a national impact. In my article, "Putting Wyoming on the Map: The Story of the Official Wyoming Map," you will learn why Oregon dubbed Wyoming's map the "king of them all." Finally, Heyward Schrock will allow the reader a place to spend the night, when he describes the development of lodging in "A Room for the Night: Evolution of Roadside Lodging in Wyoming." When viewing the "Wyoming Picture," featured on the back page, you will discover that the electric garage door opener, something most Americans take for granted today, was invented in Wyoming in 1918. As guest-editor of this edition, I hope you find these articles beneficial to your understanding of Wyoming's transportation history. I also hope this issue rekindles memories for you like it did for me. Enjoy Wyoming's rich transportation heritage!



A harness shop served as the backdrop for this 1908 photo of the Thomas Flyer horseless carriage as it stopped at Lovejoys Garage in downtown Laramie before it headed back out on the road. The eventual winner of the New York to Paris Road Race, the Thomas Flyer completed the round-the-world race in 169 days proving the automobile could and would replace the horse. Elmer Lovejoy Collection, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.





By Mel Duncan

The aircraft was demolished on impact. This was the worst accident to that time in the history of commercial aviation in the United States.

**O**n October 6, 1955, a United Airlines DC-4 crashed into Medicine Bow Peak, killing all 66 people on board. The aircraft was demolished on impact. This was the worst accident to that time in the history of commercial aviation in the United States.

Flight 409 originated at New York's Idlewild Airport at 7:10 p.m., on October 5, 1955. Its destination was San Francisco, California, with intermediate stops scheduled for Chicago, Omaha, Denver, and Salt Lake City. Delayed by weather, the flight arrived in Denver on Thursday, October 6, at 5:51 a.m., one hour, eleven minutes late. A routine crew change was made and the new crew consisting of Capt. Clinton C. Cooke, Jr., First Officer Ralph D. Salisbury, Jr., and Stewardess Patricia D. Shuttleworth took over the flight duties. Cooke and Salisbury were making the trip together for the first time. The company dispatcher briefed Cooke on the en route weather.

Cooke was well acquainted with the route, having flown it forty-five times in the previous year. He was thirty-five years old and had accumulated 9,807 flying hours, making him one of the airline's most experienced pilots. Salisbury was thirty-three years old and the father of two. He had worked for the company since 1952 and had accumulated 2,418 flying hours. Salisbury was a promising young pilot who held a degree in aeronautical engineering and was devoted to the many aspects of aviation.

The aircraft was refueled to a total of one thousand gallons of fuel, bringing its takeoff weight to 64,147 pounds. The maximum allowable weight for the DC-4 was 64,800 pounds.

The flight left Denver's Stapleton Field on the morning of October 6, bound for Salt

Information from this article comes from the "United Airlines Flight 409 Crash Collection," Acc. 10494, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming (3 boxes) and from subject file, "Aircraft Accidents - Wyoming - Medicine Bow Peak," which is held at the American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming, and from references cited in the booklet, "Flight 409" copyrighted in 1996, revised 2002, by Mel Duncan, Cheyenne, Wyoming.

Lake City. Cooke called the company dispatcher and reported his takeoff time as 6:33 a.m., now one hour and twenty-three minutes late. These were the last words the world would hear from flight 409. Carrying sixty-three passengers and three crewmembers, only one seat had remained unfilled. Two of the passengers were infants. Less than one hour later, flight 409 made history.

The flight was scheduled to fly north from Denver, over Laramie, then make an almost 90-degree turn at the Rock River radio beacon to continue west to Salt Lake City. Flight 409 failed to report passing Rock Springs at the scheduled time of 8:11 a.m. A routine radio search was initiated with negative results. The Civil Aeronautics Agency was notified of the missing aircraft at 10 a.m., on the morning of October 6.

At that time there was no radar coverage to mark the time and place of disappearance. In the event of suspected crashes, initial air searches were normally conducted along the planned flight path. The search was initiated along this route.

The flight had been cleared from Denver to Salt Lake City via Victor 4 to Laramie, V-118 to Rock Springs, V-6 to Fort Bridger, and V-32 to Salt Lake City. The company operating rules stated that pilots would follow these air routes even under visual conditions. The operating manual further stated that for unpressurized aircraft, "Flight will normally be conducted at levels not to exceed 12,000 feet." This would include the unpressurized DC-4.

Most of the commercial DC-4 aircraft were manufactured during World War II as C-54s and were later released for civil aircraft fleet use. This particular aircraft, N30062, was manufactured as a C-54, serial number 18389, during the war year 1943. The aircraft had accumulated 28,755 hours of use. Nine hundred fifty-four of these aircraft were manufactured before the Douglas Aircraft Company began building the replacement DC-6. In 1955, the newer DC-6 was plagued with problems and the veteran DC-4s were kept in service beyond their expected service life.

The DC-4 was powered by four Pratt and Whitney R-2000 engines, each producing 1450 horsepower. The Hamilton Standard propellers were fourteen feet in diameter. It was capable of cruising at about 230 miles per hour. By the early 1950s it was being replaced as U.S. airlines sold their older airplanes to foreign airlines. However, the U.S. Navy continued to use a version of the aircraft well into the Vietnam War era. The DC-4 was not pressurized and normally flew at about ten

thousand feet. The seating capacity was sixty-four passengers.

The aircraft was reported missing about an hour after its scheduled reporting time over Rock Springs. In answer to the missing aircraft alert, the Wyoming Air National Guard launched two search aircraft from Cheyenne: a two-seat T-33 piloted by Mel Conine and a single seat F-80 piloted by Ed Weed. They intuitively pointed their aircraft toward the highest mountains in the region, Elk Mountain and Medicine Bow Peak. With Conine as pilot and an observer in the rear, they were able to conduct an effective search.

Aircraft wreckage had been reported on Elk Mountain but proved to be wreckage from a prior aircraft accident. They then turned south to search the Medicine Bow Mountains. Just southwest of the highest portion of Medicine Bow Peak they spotted first the black stain on the mountain and then the actual wreckage at 11:40 a.m. Extreme turbulence prevented them from flying close enough to spot any possible survivors and they turned to return to the base. As they turned, they were contacted by a United Airlines DC-3 also searching in the area. Conine was asked to direct the UAL aircraft to the crash scene. This aircraft, piloted by Frank Crismon, also encountered extreme turbulence near the mountain.

After the discovery of the wreckage on the face of the cliff, and no visible indication of the forward portion of the fuselage, it was, for a time, thought that the forward portion of the aircraft must be over the crest of the ridge. A C-47 from Cheyenne was launched to search the area for the remainder of the aircraft. Nothing was found and with ground crews arriving on the scene, that part of the search was terminated.

Information was relayed to the 44<sup>th</sup> Air Rescue Squadron, stationed at Lowry Air Force Base in Colorado, and an SA-16 rescue aircraft was dispatched to the scene. Although the rescue aircraft had the capability of dropping a parachute team, none were dropped, due partially to high winds over the crash scene.

At the Salt Lake City airport friends and relatives waited with increased anxiety with each passing hour. By mid-morning those inquiring about flight 409 were ushered into a company room for a briefing as the events transpired. It was afternoon before the company could confirm their worst fears: the aircraft had crashed. There was a lingering hope that there could be survivors; however, as the afternoon wore on it became increasingly apparent that there would be no survivors. Finally, by the evening of October 6, it was announced that there were

indeed no survivors.

Between seventy and one hundred would-be rescuers made their way to the crash scene by Thursday evening, only to determine that all aboard had died in the crash. Carbon County Sheriff John Terrill of Rawlins was one of the first on the scene and took charge of early rescue attempts. When it became apparent that there were, in all likelihood, no survivors, and in the face of snow and howling winds, he called off all efforts at dusk and ordered all rescuers to return to the base camp about a mile away.

The high winds and falling snow drove the rescuers to seek shelter in the closest buildings to the crash scene, the University of Wyoming Science Camp some six miles away. Here a meeting was held on the evening of the crash to determine how the task of removing the victims of the crash could best be accomplished. It was determined that the help of experienced mountaineers was required and that the University of Wyoming Outing Club and their Colorado counterparts should be summoned to the scene. By Friday morning every available ambulance and hearse in the region was brought in to transport bodies to Laramie.

about six miles away. In addition, a line was laid to Centennial and then, by interconnecting lines utilizing the U.S. Forest Service, Union Pacific, and Little Laramie Telephone Company lines, to the Connor Hotel in Laramie. News coverage and recovery coordination was handled at the operation center in the hotel.

The Wyoming Air National Guard sent a World War II combat ambulance to the scene and began making runs from the base camp at Mirror Lake, down to the University of Wyoming Science Camp. The science camp was turned into a temporary morgue.

By Friday morning, October 7, virtually every newspaper in the United States featured an article on the crash. At first they reported sixty-four people killed, then sixty-five, and with the discovery of another infant on board, the toll was set at sixty-six killed.

More than three hundred workers were on the scene, including the national guard, Civil Air Patrol and state, county, and local law enforcement officials. The Wyoming Army National Guard, led by Capt. Kenneth T. McGinness, headed for the mountain with four trucks and a jeep. The Civil Air Patrol sent representatives. The Carbon County Sheriff's department, led by Terrill, had



*Rescue personnel scour the crash scene at the base of the cliffs where much of the wreckage settled American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming*

Workers from Mountain Bell Telephone Company were summoned from all across the state. After meeting with United Airlines personnel they were requested to lay wire from the old science camp to the crash scene,

been the first to arrive on the scene. Albany County Under-Sheriff Ingram arrived shortly after, and a discussion transpired to determine in which county the crash was located. After a time it was determined that

the crash site was indeed located in Carbon County. John Hill of the University of Wyoming was later called in to survey the crash site and determine an accurate location. The Wyoming Highway Patrol was also dispatched to the scene. From Rawlins, Father John Meyer and Father Michael Butler of Saint Joseph's Church left for the crash site. The Red Cross also arrived to lend support to the rescue teams.

Arriving at the scene, the first thing apparent was the gigantic smudge on the rock cliff high above the base camp. As one moved toward the base of the mountain the first portion of the aircraft to come into view was a portion of the main landing gear and two tires that had rebounded some 1500 feet from the point of impact.

The first of the rescuers said they found the first bodies 500 feet from the point of impact. The media of that time were more graphic in their descriptions of accidents, especially when describing human remains. One reporter described the headless body of a young woman, another described the orange color of the bodies, and another the personal effects scattered about the scene--all with considerably more detail than recent reports.

A major portion of the aircraft was lodged on a ledge high up the vertical cliff. It was apparent that experienced mountain climbers would be required to remove the bodies. The University of Wyoming Outing Club was notified and subsequently ten members of the Rocky Mountain Rescue Group from Boulder, Colorado, and four members of the Colorado Mountaineering Club were flown to Laramie to assist in the recovery. Friday was the first day of recovery operations. An unexpected break in the weather brought clear, relatively warm weather with little wind, unusual for that time of year in the Medicine Bow Mountains.

However, a light mantle of snow covered the scene making the slopes slippery and hazardous. Six teams of about six men each were formed. Each team included a UAL employee. These teams consisting of about half experienced and half inexperienced mountaineers were designated to work on the crash scene high up on the mountain. Additional teams were designated to work the lower slopes. One of the first tasks required was to secure the precariously balanced tail section to the mountain.

The first day of recovery efforts produced several problems. Workers high on the cliff were dislodging rocks and aircraft parts, which tumbled down the slope endangering those working below. Although the cliffs were extremely steep, the method of lowering the remains by rope proved to be very difficult. As the remains were

being lowered they often became lodged in the rocks and required additional climbers to free them. As the work progressed it became apparent that there were too many workers on the slope and they were a danger to one another. Only four bodies were delivered to the temporary morgue that day.

On Friday evening another meeting was held at the University of Wyoming Science Camp and a revised plan was established between the climbers and UAL. It was agreed that only two teams were to work on the high slope. In addition, a party of two would climb to the top of the cliff where they could survey the scene and locate bodies from above. A nylon and steel line from high on the cliff was extended to the base of the mountain. A trolley consisting of a ten-inch snatch block pulley was attached and a 1,200-foot nylon line was attached to be used as a brake and hauling line.

More than half of the bodies were located in and around the rear portion of the aircraft lodged on the ledge. Some twenty bodies were scattered sixty feet above and sixty feet to the left of the ledge. One body was found 150 feet above the ledge and required a climber to rappel down the cliff to wrap and secure the remains.

The airline company contracted with a local rancher to furnish pack animals to pack in needed supplies and equipment and to pack out the bodies. At first, each body was wrapped in new white canvas but before long the more traditional body bags were made available to the workers.

A preliminary effort was made at identification of the bodies at the science camp. Further efforts were made at the Laramie mortuary. At the time it was announced that all the bodies had been accounted for and identified. Recovery efforts were completed by Tuesday afternoon, October 11. The cold snowy weather resumed the following day.

From all of the collected information, the accident can be at least partially reconstructed. After leaving the Denver area, the aircraft apparently deviated from its planned flight path and crossed the Medicine Bow National Forest on a heading of approximately 300 degrees. A few minutes after 7 a.m., a logging crew saw a large aircraft, flying low in a northwest direction. One eyewitness later testified he heard a distant noise, like a mining blast, a few minutes after the aircraft passed, but at the time did not associate it with the aircraft.

Among the sixty-six people killed were five members of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, nineteen military members, two infants, and the crew of Cooke, Salisbury, and Shuttleworth.

Aboard the flight was 436 pounds of mail. A high priority was placed on recovery but only about one hundred pounds were recovered, and of that only thirty-two pounds were in condition to forward to its destination.

The steepness of the talus slopes made the investigation difficult and hazardous. The investigation team climbed part of the way to the crash scene but due to hazards of falling rocks and snow-covered boulders, the team climbed no higher than 11,275 feet. The team was severely limited by the terrain and weather conditions. They did, however, determine that the aircraft was intact at the time of impact. It was also determined that all four engines were operating at the time of impact. All of the engines and the twelve propeller blades were accounted for. Number three prop hub was taken to Denver for further study. Several other pieces of wreckage were also removed from the mountain for further study.

A preponderance of the evidence indicated that the aircraft hit the mountain in a nose high attitude. The windshield was shattered but still in its frame; the windshield wiper was still attached. Quite possibly the crew saw the mountain during the last seconds and attempted a pull-up. Further evidence indicated that the aircraft contacted the mountain in a 15-degree left wing down attitude. A flash fire had apparently occurred at contact and some parts were still smoldering the evening of the crash.

Upon conclusion of their investigation, the board released the crash remains to the company. To discourage curiosity seekers from climbing the mountain and removing debris, the airline company requested military destruction of the remains left on the mountain. A team from Fort Carson was called in to shell the site. At first a small cannon and then explosives were used in an attempt to dislodge the tail section from its lofty perch and to bury the wreckage. This was only partially successful.

Through direction of the National Guard Bureau in Washington, D.C, a flight of Colorado Air National Guard Lockheed F-80 Shooting Star fighter aircraft was selected for another attempt to destroy the remains. Led by then Lt. Colonel Walt William, the seven aircraft took off from Buckley Field near Denver. Loaded with two tanks of napalm each, the flight reported fourteen direct hits on the crash site. These aircraft were

subjected to powerful downdrafts as they pulled up from their target, posing a question of whether these same downdrafts or wind currents could have been related to the cause of the crash.

The next few months were spent inspecting the wreckage parts that were taken to Denver and interviewing associates of the crew and eyewitnesses who had seen the aircraft. Cooke had a spotless reputation and although the investigators were inclined to blame the accident on the pilot, considerable pressure was put on them by the Airline Pilots Association to investigate more thoroughly.

On August 27, 1956, almost a year after the crash, the Civil Aeronautics Board returned to the crash site, still not satisfied that they had investigated every possible shred of evidence. The group consisted of not only Civil Aeronautics Board members but also members of the Airline Pilots Association and representatives of the airline. Three days were spent on the mountain examining and re-examining the components they were able to find. The focus of this examination was any component which could have caused incapacitation of the crew. The cockpit combustion heater was a prime suspect and a concentrated effort was made to find it. Remarkably it



*United Air Lines requested a military unit to shell the crash site to remove any loose rock and to further destroy any remaining parts. A unit from Fort Carson (Colorado) was brought in to carry out this mission. The area was later napalmed. American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.*

was located and examined for any indication of a failure, which could have fed carbon monoxide into the cockpit.

However, it was so badly damaged that a positive conclusion could not be made.

In the final analysis, the board determined that either a shortcut was being attempted or that the crew was incapacitated and the aircraft was flying without assistance. The board was reluctant to blame the pilot, but nevertheless stated that he must have purposefully deviated from the prescribed flight route for reasons unknown. The eyewitness accounts of the aircraft flying low across the mountains just minutes prior to the crash, and the apparent climb to a higher altitude, were the most incriminating facts against the pilot.

The area of the crash debris is covered by snow for a major portion of the year and the talus slopes make for a rather difficult climb into the area. In 1991 and 1992, a less than normal snowpack and a warm summer allowed for easier access to the area and much of the crash material was exposed. Literally thousands of fragments are found among the rocks. Peering down between the rocks one can see aluminum shreds, wiring and aircraft parts that are almost completely disintegrated. A few larger parts can be seen lying on the surface. Most are not readily identifiable. However, three of the Pratt and Whitney R-2000 engines are still on the rocky slopes and can be readily identified. Most of the cylinders are still attached although trophy seekers have removed some. In 1969, some of the spark plugs remained undamaged, though by 1996 all removable spark plugs had been taken. A couple of the piston rods still move as smoothly as they did when assembled. Thousands of aluminum shards are scattered among the rocks. Electrical wiring is wound around the boulders. A few heavy ferrous metal parts are still intact, somewhat rusty, but solid. The stainless steel shines as brightly as the day it left the factory. On one larger piece, the UAL blue trim is chipped and faded, but still identifiable. Through the years many parts have been removed from the site, and until the site becomes fifty years old, it is not protected from removal efforts by anyone so inclined.

But even today, lingering questions remain. Was the crew incapacitated? Was the peak obscured by clouds? Was the altimeter setting correct? Was there turbulence and downdrafts near the mountains? Why was the aircraft some twenty miles off course? Was it any single factor, or was it a combination of events that caused the accident? Apparently we will never know the exact cause; we can only speculate.

A bizarre after-effect took place less than a month after the Medicine Bow crash. Another UAL flight, this time flight 629, a DC6 following the same route, crashed

after leaving Denver. On November 1, 1955, at 6:52 p.m., the evening sky near Loveland, Colorado, was lit up by two flashes of light and the aircraft with its forty-four occupants was scattered onto the farmland below.

After an extensive investigation, John Gilbert Graham was brought to trial for the bombing of the aircraft. Speculation was that after hearing of the flight 409 crash, he developed the morbid inspiration to destroy the aircraft and rid himself of his mother. During the trial it was speculated that Graham had calculated the flight time to the same area and set his bomb to explode at the approximate location of the previous DC-4 crash. He had seemingly reconciled with his mother, packed her bags (which included fourteen pounds of dynamite), and purchased a large insurance policy on her for the flight. His plans were thwarted when the aircraft was delayed so that the bomb instead exploded near Loveland. This was the first terrorist-style bombing of a commercial airliner. Of note, the insurance policy was void, as Graham forgot to have the insured sign the required application.

The Medicine Bow crash remained the worst air disaster for less than a year. On June 20, 1956, a Venezuelan Lockheed Super Constellation crashed off the New Jersey coast, killing all seventy-four persons aboard. Ten days later a Super Constellation and a DC-7 collided over the Grand Canyon, killing 128 people. This series of accidents was the impetus that drove Congress to appropriate money to update the air control system, adding radar and procedures to promote flying safety.

On August 25, 2001, a commemorative bronze memorial plaque was unveiled during a formal ceremony



*During the August 25, 2001, ceremony, onlookers point toward the October 6, 1955, crash site. The plaque, yet to be unveiled, is just to the left. American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.*

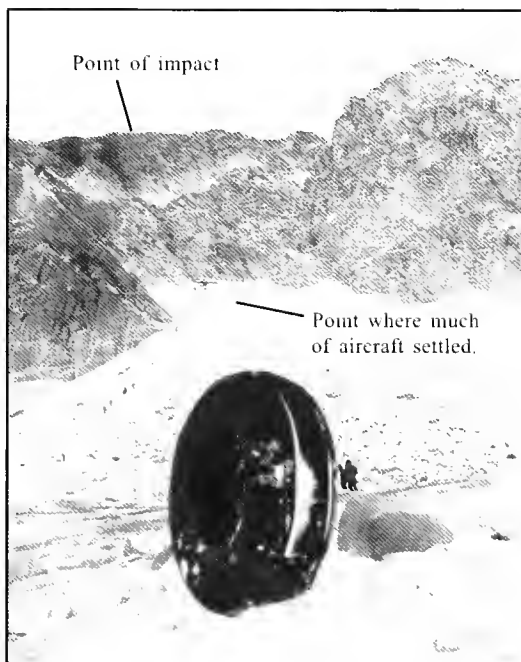
at the Miners Cabin Scenic Overlook. More than 130 people attended the ceremony including family members of those who perished in the crash. On the plaque is inscribed "In memory of the 66 passengers and crew that perished on Medicine Bow Peak, October 6, 1955."

### Crash Analysis

The Civil Aeronautics Board investigation makes no specific conclusion of the speed and attitude of the aircraft on impact. However, the accident report contains numerous references, which give some indication of these parameters:

"A propeller governor was also located on the talus slope." The propeller governor is mounted in the prop dome and would be one of the first components of the engine assembly to make contact in a head-on crash. The governor was certainly damaged but the control head was removed and installed on a serviceable governor and it was determined that the control head was positioned for 2080 engine rpm. The fact that the control head was not completely demolished indicates that the engine and prop assembly did not contact the escarpment at anywhere close to 90 degrees nor at a speed approaching the 200 miles per hour cruise speed.

"The left windshield, with windshield wiper attached, was found, its frame twisted, and the glass was shattered."



*This view of the crash site shows the point of impact visible by the black oil streaks on the cliff wall. Much of the wreckage, including a wing, can be seen at the base of the cliff, and a tire rests at the foot of the mountain. American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.*

If had the nose of the aircraft made a head-on direct impact at cruise or even climb speed, the windshield and the entire nose would have been demolished into innumerable unidentifiable fragments. It seems apparent that the aircraft contacted the mountain in a nose high attitude, possibly close to stall speed.

"The four engines were located and examined." Although the engines were severely damaged, the very fact that they were intact sufficiently to allow inspection indicates that they did not contact the cliff at climb or cruise speed.

"All 12 propeller blades were accounted for..." Although twisted and bent, they were nevertheless identifiable, again indicating that contact was made at reduced speed and probably a nose high attitude. At least one prop blade was thrown high over the ledge. It was later recovered and is now in the American Heritage Center collection.

Further reference to aircraft components adds to the theory that impact forces were not as great as would be assumed with a high speed and close to 90-degree contact. "Both large CO<sub>2</sub> bottles were found." Although their heads were broken and the bottles empty, they were nevertheless intact. "Oxygen bottles were also recovered with valves attached." The tail section was generally still intact and although severely damaged, the CAB inspectors remarked, "the right stabilizer received only minor damage."

While these findings of the investigation board indicate that the aircraft did not contact the cliff during a normal flight attitude, the board made no mention of speed and attitude in their report. Perhaps it was so obvious that they merely neglected to mention it. Perhaps they determined that in reality it made no difference what the airspeed or attitude was. In their final analysis they determined "that the probable cause of this accident was the action of the pilot in deviating from the planned route for reasons unknown."

In addition, examination of the remaining parts on the slope tends to bolster the theory that the aircraft contacted the mountain at less than climb or cruise speed. In 2001, one of the propeller spider gears became visible. It may have been on the talus surface for all these years or may have recently moved to the surface in the constantly shifting rocks and debris. The gear is made of ferrous metal and has rusted but remains identifiable. The thrust nut is still installed and pinned. The prop spurs are also rusted but intact. The blades were apparently thrown off by the force of the impact and the inherent centrifugal force.

Other parts, although uniformly damaged, remain in large pieces. Until recently the left nose sheet metal, with the company red, white, and blue paint was still visible and remained on the slope. Photographs taken at the time of recovery illustrate that many large pieces including one wing were not completely demolished as would be expected in a high-speed crash.

In conclusion, it seems apparent that the flight crew

saw the mountain and attempted to pull up, but when considering the power available and the probable downdraft, it was too little and too late. <sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Information for this analysis was obtained from "United Air Lines Flight 409 Crash" Collection, Acc. 10494, Box 1, Folder 4, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.



*A rescuer pauses for a photo opportunity next to the tail section of the DC-4. American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.*

*Mel Duncan, who retired several years ago from the Wyoming Air National Guard, is author of two books about the Medicine Bow Mountains. This article is derived from a program he presented to the Albany County Chapter, WSHS, in 1996. Some 200 people attended the program, the most well-attended in the chapter's history. He also spoke at the dedication of the marker, described in the article.*



## The United Airlines Stewardess School in Cheyenne, Wyoming



By  
Michael Kassel

*Often referred to as "The Original Eight," the first graduating class poses in front of one of the fleet's eight 18-passenger Boeing Model 80As for this May 1930 shot at the Cheyenne Airport. Left to right on the top row are Ellen Church and Alva Johnson. Left to right on the lower row are Margaret Arnott, Inez Keller, Cornelia Peterman, Harriet Fry, Jessie Carter, and Ellis Crawford. Courtesy United Airlines Archive.*

However, from 1947 to 1961, the airline industry maintained a presence in the Capital City with a training school for stewardesses operated by United Airlines.

Cheyenne's municipal airport has played a significant role in the development of early aviation in America. To the average resident of the city, this may be something of a surprise. Currently, the airfield seems more like a small regional airport like many thousands of others found throughout the country. In the early days of aviation, however, Cheyenne's airport was one of the finest in the nation and one of the principle centers of the airline industry. Unfortunately, technology and the demand for efficiency necessitated the gradual decline of Cheyenne's role in this area of transportation after World War II in favor of those advantages provided by larger cities, particularly Denver.<sup>1</sup> However, from 1947 to 1961, the airline industry maintained a presence in Wyoming's Capital City with a training school for stewardesses operated by United Airlines. This was a substantially reduced role for the Cheyenne

<sup>1</sup> Roger D. Launius and Jessie L. Embry, "Cheyenne Versus Denver: City Rivalry and the Quest for Transcontinental Air Routes," *Annals of Wyoming*, Vol. 68 (Summer 1996): 22.

airport as only two years before the field was used as United's principle "roundhouse"<sup>2</sup> for the repair and overhaul of its entire airliner fleet, its main flight training center and, during the war, one of the largest modification centers for American bombers during the conflict.

To explain why any of these things happened here in this relatively small western city, it is necessary to describe the nature of air travel during the early 1930s. Beginning in 1920, Cheyenne served as one of the principle stops on the first transcontinental air mail route. A significant number of communities were selected to be stops on the route because of the limited range of the aircraft, the limited capacity of the airplanes (in this case the ability to fly over high mountains), and its location on one of the principle geographic guides leading from east to west, the Union Pacific Railroad.<sup>3</sup> In 1927, the Boeing Air Transport Company was established and was contracted to take over the air mail service leaving Cheyenne for Los Angeles.<sup>4</sup> Within the next two years the Boeing Air Transport Company began to haul passengers, as well as the mail, and absorbed or joined several smaller airlines to become what was to be known as United Airlines.<sup>5</sup> In that same year, the Boeing Air Transportation Company established its main overhaul base in Cheyenne. The growing trend would continue for the next two years, as Cheyenne became the principle maintenance facility for the airline.<sup>6</sup>

It was in this environment that Cheyenne had its first experience with airline stewardesses. In 1930, Steve A. Stimpson, manager of the Boeing Air Transport Company's Pacific Coast division, and Ellen Church, came upon the idea of hiring women as liaisons between the airline and its passengers.<sup>7</sup> He noticed how having someone available with information about connecting flights and time delays, and who could offer simple services greatly enhanced the enjoyment of the passengers' experience.<sup>8</sup> At first, management was skeptical but Stimpson ultimately prevailed. Stimpson envisioned the role women would play to be similar to that of stewards on ocean liners.<sup>9</sup> In Stimpson's mind, nurses were the logical choice to become the first airline stewardesses. They would be able to help passengers who became ill, would be sensitive to individual needs, and have a strong empathy with the passengers.<sup>10</sup> In his original proposal of the stewardess concept, Stimpson wrote: "The average graduate nurse is a girl with some horse sense and is very practical and has seen enough of men to not be inclined to chase them around the block at every opportunity."<sup>11</sup> Other requirements for the job were that the candidates had to be unmarried, be no older than

twenty-five, be a height no greater than five feet four inches tall, and weigh no more than 115 pounds.<sup>12</sup> The height and weight requirements were practical considerations. The aircraft of the time were tiny by modern standards with narrow aisles and small engines. Any extra weight on the plane beyond that of the passengers and their luggage would have a significant impact on performance.<sup>13</sup>

Eight candidates applied and met the criteria Stimpson set. Boeing Air Transport Company then flew them to Cheyenne to be trained.<sup>14</sup> Two of the stewardesses recalled their experience. "When Jessie Carter told her folks she was flying to Cheyenne to learn about her new job, they thought she said China. This news spread quickly throughout surrounding communities, met always by disbelief and shock. Flying halfway around the world was not the objection. No one, it seems, could understand how Mr. and Mrs. Carter would allow their daughter to fly anywhere, unescorted, with men."<sup>15</sup> Many years later Harriet Fry Iden recalled her trip to Cheyenne in detail:

<sup>2</sup> Works Progress Administration History Project File #1376 – Transportation, "History of the Cheyenne Municipal Airport," Wyoming State Archives, Cheyenne.

<sup>3</sup> Launius and Embry, "Cheyenne Versus Denver," p. 14.

<sup>4</sup> Frank J. Taylor, *High Horizons: Daredevil Flying Postmen to Modern Magic Carpet – The United Airlines Story* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc. 1951), p. 190.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 191.

<sup>6</sup> David Haring, "Cheyenne Airport 2000 Economic Impact Study," Cheyenne, January 2002, p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Susan Dittman stated in a letter to the author dated September 16, 2003, that she believed Ellen Church, the first stewardess hired by the company, proposed the possibility of using trained nurses as stewardesses to Stimpson prior to his submitting the idea to the Boeing Air Transport Company. In Mrs. Dittman's view, Church should be credited with the original concept. See also David Fisher and Bill Garvey, "Seventy-five Years United," *Hemispheres*, April 2001, p. 91.

<sup>8</sup> Gwen Mahler, *Legacy of the Friendly Skies: A Pictorial History of United Airlines Stewardesses and Flight Attendants* (Marceline: Walsworth Publishing Company, 1991), p. 29.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* On page 60, Mahler quotes an experience of one early stewardess, Inez Keller, when her plane tried to pass over a mountain range in Wyoming: "The pilot made a pass at the mountain at least three times and couldn't get over it. So he went back to land, opened the door and asked me to get out. He immediately took off and made it over the mountains." Mahler records that Ms. Keller firmly believes that the plane only made it over the mountain because it was 120 pounds lighter.

<sup>14</sup> LeClérque Jones, *Cheyenne Landmarks* (Cheyenne: Laramie County Historical Society, 1976), p. 72.

<sup>15</sup> Mahler, *Legacy of the Friendly Skies*, p. 68.

I remember we met at 7 a.m. in Chicago for the flight to Cheyenne, Wyoming, for training. I was a red haired country girl from Polo, Ill., and I had never flown before, but I loved it when the plane left the ground.

Later, something went wrong with one of the motors. I don't know why we all didn't get cold feet and run, but we didn't. I don't think any of us ever got nervous about flying. We sort of took the difficulties for granted.<sup>16</sup> There were many difficulties to be taken for granted, as the future stewardesses were to find out.

At first pilots and crews wanted little to do with the new stewardesses. Men of the airline had a widely held opinion that it made as much sense to fly with one wing as to fly with women.<sup>18</sup> However, these eight women, followed by hundreds of others, soon proved their worth to the crews, passengers, and the public at large by working hard, being unflappable in difficult circumstances, and doing their utmost to make flying a pleasant experience. By the end of the decade, the stewardess had become an indispensable part of the airline industry.

For the Cheyenne airport, things were looking good



Five weeks of "sky girl" (as stewardesses were often referred) schooling at the Cheyenne stewardess school of United Airlines are capstoned during this May 10, 1953, graduation ceremony at Denver. Mr. O. C. Enge, general manager of passenger services, pins the silver wings of a full-fledged stewardess on Scotty Sinclair while her Instructress Ruth Dean watches. Courtesy United Airlines Archive.

The eight stewardesses arrived in Cheyenne on May 15, 1930, to start four days of intense training. But, as comes as no surprise to anyone who ever lived in Wyoming, snow arrived shortly afterward and a four-day training period lengthened to two weeks. This was the only time that the original eight stewardesses were to be together.<sup>17</sup> After their brief stay in Cheyenne, the eight young women went their separate ways on different airline routes and in doing so created a legacy that has become an institution in commercial flying.

<sup>16</sup> "It Started in Cheyenne 40 Years Ago," *SunDAY Magazine*, May 24, 1970, p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> Mahler, *Legacy of the Friendly Skies*, p. 60. It is of interest to note that Mahler mentions that during this time all eight stewardesses were caught on film. Whether this means a motion picture cannot be sure. What can be sure is that there were at least two photographs taken here in Cheyenne with all eight women posing by an early Boeing 80A trimotor.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

by the early 1940s. The business of commercial aviation was good, but things got decidedly better with the coming of the Second World War. In support of the war effort, United's maintenance facility was absorbed by the federal government and expanded to become the Cheyenne Modification Center, responsible for the upgrade of thousands of B-17 bombers for the war in Europe.<sup>19</sup> While the facility employed many hundreds of people in the work for the military, United as a civilian operation was not idle. In 1942, the company moved its flight training division to Cheyenne from California.<sup>20</sup> Operations in the city ran continuously until the end of the war, when many of the airline-related industries abandoned Cheyenne. Time would prove that the next few years would be bleak with the sole exception of the stewardess school.

United Airlines expanded its routes in 1947 by inaugurating flights to Hawaii.<sup>21</sup> What made this possible was the introduction of the large and powerful DC-6 to United's inventory.<sup>22</sup> After the introduction of the new aircraft, the maintenance facility, which had been in Cheyenne for eleven years and had been a model of production during the Second World War, was moved to San Francisco to a new facility that was specifically tailored for the new aircraft.<sup>23</sup> The loss of four hundred jobs associated with the maintenance facility was devastating for the Cheyenne economy.<sup>24</sup> To add to the calamity for the community, the training facility located there since 1942 moved to Denver.<sup>25</sup> In what the Cheyenne airport administration considered to be a conciliatory move,<sup>26</sup> United relocated its stewardess school to Cheyenne. The man placed in charge of this transfer was Jack Hayes.

Hayes began his tenure with United Airlines fresh from high school in 1935. A native of Nebraska, he started with United because of a friend already working for the company. Hayes' specialty in high school was electronics. It so happened that United had positions available working with radios to communicate weather conditions to incoming aircraft. Before he could enter this profession, however, Hayes needed to become a licensed radio operator. While he studied to become certified, Hayes spent nearly three years in Iowa City doing basic house keeping, punching tickets, fueling planes, and other odd jobs. After Iowa City, he accepted a position in Jersey City, New Jersey. It was during this time that he became a licensed radio operator and worked for nearly four years doing the job for which he had originally applied. As World War II began, Hayes found himself intimately involved in the huge task of using the airline's

planes to help the federal government fly materials to Britain. Through this experience, he became familiar with how to supervise airline operations at a major airfield. Hayes' reputation grew with his involvement in air operations and during the course of the war his old Iowa City supervisor offered him a position as assistant director in Philadelphia where he was then working. Within a very brief period of time, Hayes assumed the duties of director for United's Philadelphia operations. After a brief period, he became the director of United's station at Akron, Ohio. From his own account, things in Akron were very good for his career, but before long Hayes was offered an opportunity he could not refuse.<sup>27</sup>

After two years as director of Akron's United facilities, Hayes was offered the better paying position of instructor at the airline's training school in Chicago, which he accepted. Hayes soon was fully involved with the training of pilots, stewardesses, and ground crews. It was in 1947 that United placed him in charge of opening a new stewardess training facility in Cheyenne. His account of why the airline chose to move the school from Chicago to Cheyenne differs from that of the official Cheyenne Municipal Airport administration reports. The move may not have been a conciliatory move for the loss of the maintenance facility. According to Hayes, the post-war period was one of explosive growth and new facilities were becoming essential. The move to Cheyenne was necessary due to the fact that United was expanding its hangar facilities in Chicago and had subsequently torn down the training center there.<sup>28</sup>

At the time Hayes did not see the transfer to Wyoming as a positive development in his career. He remembered that he drove to Cheyenne with another man. Neither of them was enthusiastic about moving from Chicago to what they considered to be a small town in the middle of nowhere. Already in bad humor

<sup>19</sup> Taylor, *High Horizons*, p.128.

<sup>20</sup> Haring, "Cheyenne Airport," p. 5.

<sup>21</sup> Mahler, *Legacy of the Friendly Skies*, p. 99.

<sup>22</sup> Taylor, *High Horizons*, p. 150. The DC-6 was a technological leap forward for United. This Douglas aircraft was capable of speeds up to 300 mph, was pressurized, and could carry fifty passengers. In contrast, the famed Douglas DC-3, which formerly comprised the bulk of the airline's fleet, could only fly 180 mph and carry twenty-one passengers.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, photography plates between pages 142-3.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Gilbert Robbins conducted by Jean Brainerd, OH-1586, Wyoming State Archives, Cheyenne.

<sup>25</sup> Haring, "Cheyenne Airport," p. 6.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Personal interview with Jack Hayes, Cheyenne, Wyoming, April 15 and 22, 2003. It should be noted that in telling the story, Hayes was not able to recall the exact dates of these transfers.

<sup>28</sup> Hayes interview.

about coming to Cheyenne, the men decided to make the best of things before reporting to work. Both Hayes and his companion were golfers and sought out the nearest golf course. To their shared horror, Cheyenne's municipal golf course at the time was nothing more than a few holes dug in the ground. All the grass was brown and there was nothing that looked like a golf-course green. Disgusted, the two men decided that the only thing left to do was get to work. When the two men found the hanger they were to use for the school they discovered it was in disarray with a great deal of "residue" left over from the maintenance operations. Apparently Hayes had arrived almost immediately after the transfer of maintenance operations from Cheyenne to San Francisco. Cleaning the building and getting it ready for the stewardess candidates was a big job. He remembered that the only positive thing about the facility was that the cafeteria for the Cheyenne Modification Center was still there. Under Hayes' direction, the upper level of the maintenance facility was converted into dormitories and training rooms for the stewardess candidates. Immediately upon their completion, the new candidates began to arrive. All he recalled was that "there were a lot of people. It was a lot of fun."<sup>29</sup>

The stewardess training was rapidly accomplished, as the airline always needed new stewardesses as those who served only had an average tenure of twenty-six months.<sup>30</sup> United found it difficult to maintain the six hundred stewardesses necessary for all its flights. Some of the women found other jobs after finding the lifestyle did not appeal to them, but most left their positions for a very simple reason; they got married. Unable to convince stewardesses that their jobs were much more important than romance and family, the operation of a fast-paced training program was a vital necessity for United. Upon arriving in Cheyenne, candidates were subjected to an intense three-week course that trained them how to use more than "2,000 separate items in eleven service kits"<sup>31</sup> aboard each plane. Conditions were primitive and the training was intense, but the glamorous job of stewardess still had a great deal of appeal for young women. One woman lucky enough to be one of the early graduates of the Cheyenne Training School was Jane Forbes.

Forbes recalled that she first became interested in flying when she took an aviation course at her Hillsboro, Illinois, high school in 1944. She was the only girl in the class and remembered the boys did not much care for her being there. The course did not involve any flying, but instead relied on books to teach the basics of flight. After her graduation, Forbes took flight training at Stevens'

Private College in Columbia, Missouri. Soon after her graduation in 1948, fortune seemed to smile on Forbes as circumstance soon provided her an opportunity to join United. She remembered she came out west to join her boyfriend at a Phi Delta Formal Spring Dance being held at the University of Colorado in Boulder. The date did not go well, but she never went back home. While at the dance, Forbes met a friend who worked for United. He relayed to her the company was in desperate straits for new stewardesses and she should apply. When Forbes did so she found that at only twenty years of age she was too young to join. Instead of becoming a stewardess, Forbes worked in the payload control office at Denver, regulating the seating on flights. She thought the job was decent, but she wanted to fly.<sup>32</sup> The requirements she had to meet were different than those of the first eight stewardesses who came to Cheyenne nineteen years before. Stewardesses were to be a minimum of twenty-one years of age and no older than twenty-seven,<sup>33</sup> had to have two years of college or previous working experience with United (the nursing requirement was dropped in 1942),<sup>34</sup> and had to be between five foot three inches and five foot six inches tall. Forbes barely passed the height requirement. She arrived in Cheyenne in 1949, just after the worst spring snow storms the state had ever recorded, thinking it was the end of the world.<sup>35</sup>

Like most other women who attended the program, Forbes found the following days of training a blur of activity. She was supposed to be trained through a standard three-week program, but remembered doing it in ten days.<sup>36</sup> The training schedule, which eventually stabilized in 1951 to be about five weeks long, consisted of classes for eight hours a day, five days a week. "The training consisted of meteorology, communications, principles of aeronautics, infant care, graceful walking, flight connections, and general geography."<sup>37</sup> Other courses included lectures on the history of the airline and the serving of in-flight meals and other duties aboard

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* Hayes laughingly recalled that one of the few things he remembered about the other man was that he was a fantastic golfer. Upon discovering the condition of what Cheyenneites called a golf course, the man was furious. Hayes decided to sell his golf clubs and has not played since. Instead, he took up tennis, a game he continues to play to this day.

<sup>30</sup> Taylor, *High Horizons*, p. 186.

<sup>31</sup> Mahler, *Legacy of the Friendly Skies*, p. 99.

<sup>32</sup> Personal interview with Jane Forbes, Cheyenne, Wyoming, April 13 and 21, 2003.

<sup>33</sup> Mahler, *Legacy of the Friendly Skies*, p. 119.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>35</sup> Forbes interview.

<sup>36</sup> Forbes interview.

<sup>37</sup> Mahler, *Legacy of the Friendly Skies*, p. 119.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 121.

the aircraft.<sup>38</sup> Models of the DC-6 were used and full-scale simulators recreated conditions in a flight cabin.<sup>39</sup> As remembered by Forbes, these simulators were constructed in the old hangar formerly used for aircraft maintenance and did not take up much room. In these simulators instructors walked the candidates through every aspect of a typical flight: how to take care of passengers, how to learn their names, how to fasten seatbelts, and how to train for emergencies.<sup>40</sup> Classes on handling emergencies consisted of first-aid training,<sup>41</sup> and how to use fire extinguishers and oxygen masks.<sup>42</sup> In Mahler's book, *Legacy of the Friendly Skies*, the author recorded that Sue Kundig, a 1951 graduate of the school, recalled that during training sessions candidates had to wear suitable attire. This attire consisted of wearing heels and stockings, a girdle, and a full slip. It was also required that the ensemble must be finished off with red nail polish.<sup>43</sup> This was done to train the candidates to look and act like stewardesses.

At night, the stewardess candidates stayed at a two-room dormitory located at the training center. Conditions

were spartan and privacy almost non-existent. Each room housed twenty stewardesses who each had a bed and a dresser.<sup>44</sup> It was here that most took the time to study for the next day's classes, socialize, and get what little relaxation they could.<sup>45</sup> With weekends off, the stewardess candidates and their instructors hit the town. Forbes remembered one of the popular haunts of the students was the Little Bear restaurant north of Cheyenne. "It was a nice place to go though it was very small. The food was very good and people entertained themselves by telling stories. Some danced. The dance floor was

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>40</sup> Forbes interview. She admitted she did not recall whether or not these simulators were installed at the time she actually got involved in the training. However, she did remember using them when she returned to the school as an instructor in 1952. As the DC-6 was quickly becoming the principle aircraft of United's inventory, there is a strong likelihood they were there.

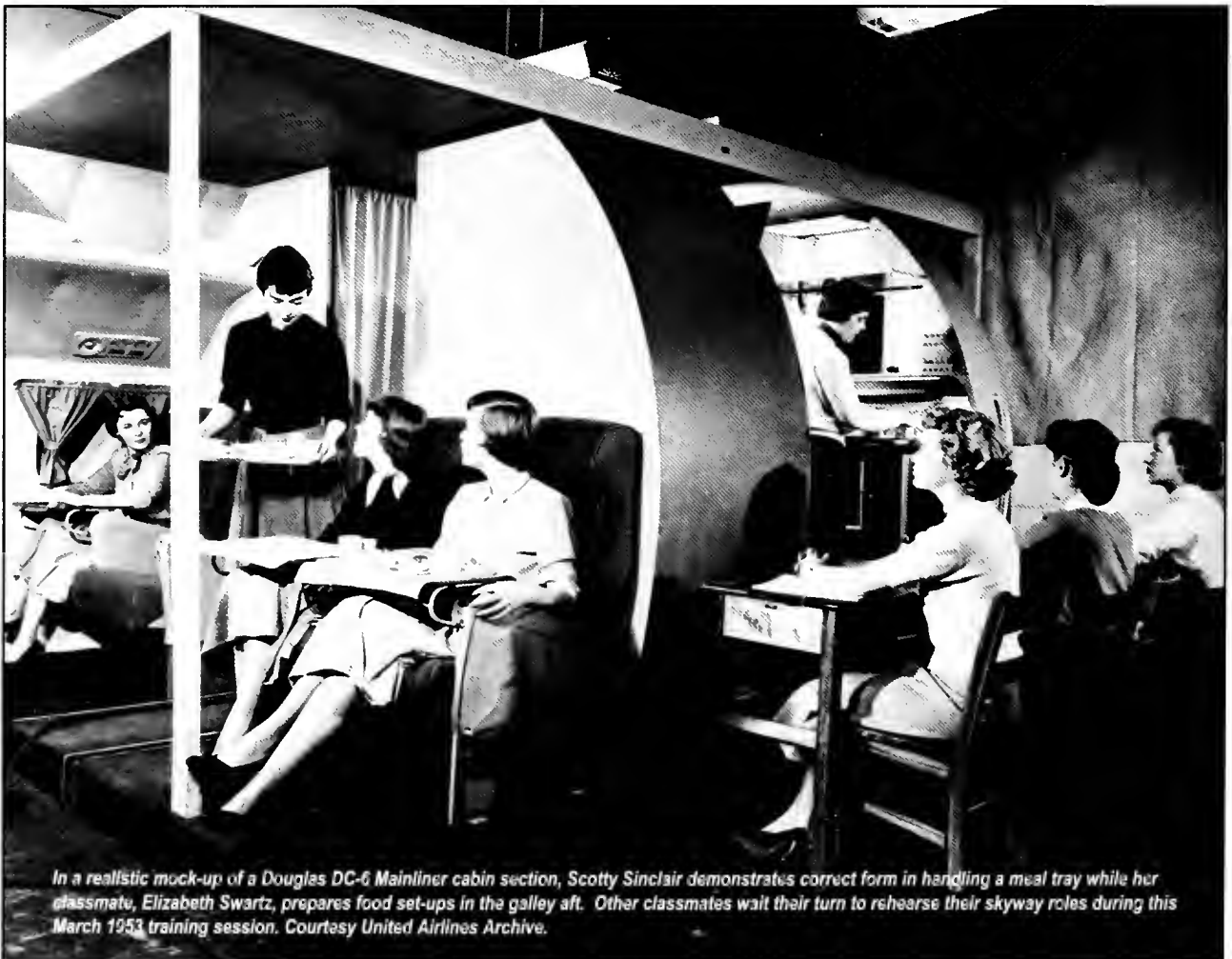
<sup>41</sup> Mahler, *Legacy of the Friendly Skies*, p. 116.

<sup>42</sup> Forbes interview.

<sup>43</sup> Mahler, *Legacy of the Friendly Skies*, p. 121.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.



In a realistic mock-up of a Douglas DC-6 Mainliner cabin section, Scotty Sinclair demonstrates correct form in handling a meal tray while her classmate, Elizabeth Swartz, prepares food set-ups in the galley aft. Other classmates wait their turn to rehearse their skyway roles during this March 1953 training session. Courtesy United Airlines Archive.

really too small but boys and girls will dance anywhere, even on the front porch if they have to.”<sup>46</sup> While the Little Bear was popular, another frequented place was the Wigwam Lounge in the Plains Hotel. Starting in 1952, stewardesses often visited the lounge on weekends, sometimes a whole class at a time. This fact was not lost on the young men of the town who frequently showed up shortly after the stewardesses arrived.<sup>47</sup> Kundig recalled “everyone always recognized us as being from the school because we were always dressed up and wearing spike-heeled shoes.”<sup>48</sup> Another woman who went through training in Cheyenne recalled that one of the highlights of training at the small town was the abundance of dates available because of the National Guard. She fell in love with the western charm of the town and recalled that many of her dates included dancing in the Frontier Room, also at the Plains Hotel.<sup>49</sup>

Near the conclusion of their training, the stewardesses enjoyed a brief flight on an airliner. Forbes remembered that her flight consisted of a brief passage over Cheyenne and down to Denver. This was done to orient the candidates with the interior and flight conditions aboard an actual airliner. Later this flight was important to the advanced emergency training of the candidates. In these instances the flight was referred to as a “Crash Course” and lasted about ninety minutes. During these flights, the plane, usually a DC-6, banked at 45 degrees and dropped six thousand feet a minute. It was here that the trainees got the experience of using their oxygen masks.<sup>50</sup>

Having completed the school in ten days, Forbes began her nearly three-year career as a United Airlines stewardess. During that time the training served her well, although the training did not cover all contingencies. The stewardess was responsible for the comfort of the passengers, including when the plane went through turbulence or when a passenger became ill. Forbes remembered helping passengers use the “burp cups” provided for just such occasions. She was on one of the last flights of the venerable DC-3 on the route from Denver to Chicago, euphemistically called “The Burp Cup Special.” True to its name, the journey made several passengers sick, one of whom, in the process of getting sick, lost his false teeth in the burp cup. There was nothing for Forbes to do but fish them out.<sup>51</sup>

Other stewardesses also had experiences that took a great deal of quick thinking and extreme patience. Susan J. Dittman, another former stewardess and friend of Forbes, recalled in a letter:

I forgot to tell you my most memorable odd flight—

we had a trip from Chi [Chicago] to Bos [Boston] with a stop in Hartford, Conn. We had about 30 psgrs [passengers] out of that station and one of those psgrs was named Mrs O'Connor—she was about 75—sitting in the first row of a DC6 with no one next to her—the door was closed and she began to become somewhat violent and wanted out of there and was very confused—so we got her strapped down and I had to hold the seat belt end so that she wouldn't get up—she was almost uncontrollable—I thought she would react quietly to a catholic priest (O'Connor being a good catholic name) but she hit at the priest and broke his glasses. Then I thought a glass of water would have a calming effect and she threw it at me—little did I know the water made my mascara run and I looked as if I had a blackeye—this went on for the 45 mins [minutes] it took to get to Boston—the pilots radioed ahead for her family and after everyone deplaned her family came on board. Then she became very rational and turned to me and said as sweet as possible “Thank you dear.” The ground crew thought I had been beaten up—I hadn't, just the mascara running down my face! Another passenger sent a letter about us to U.M.—saying how good we were to her, etc. I can still see her, especially saying “Thank you dear”<sup>52</sup>

Doubtless many other graduates of the training program at Cheyenne could recount other stories. It was those stewardesses with exceptional experience and dedication United asked to return to Cheyenne to teach the next generation. The airline asked Forbes to become an instructor and she returned to Cheyenne in May 1952. Dittman also returned to share her expertise with the new candidates. However, in November 1952, Forbes married and had to step down as an instructor and a stewardess at United.<sup>53</sup> Dittman likewise met her husband while in Cheyenne and also gave up her airline career.<sup>54</sup> While requirements came and went with the changing demands of the airline, marriage was still the end of a

<sup>46</sup> Hayes interview.

<sup>47</sup> *Wyoming Eagle*, November 2, 1961.

<sup>48</sup> Mahler, *Legacy of the Friendly Skies*, p. 121.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.* Mahler does not elaborate about how the proximity of the National Guard produced more dates. It could well be that there was ample time for men of the guard to mingle with the stewardesses during the week, as the training school and the guard facilities were in close proximity to each other at the airfield.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 140.

<sup>51</sup> Forbes interview.

<sup>52</sup> Letter to Jane Forbes from Susan J. Dittman, April 17, 2003. The letter is printed as written. Letter in author's collection.

<sup>53</sup> Forbes interview.

<sup>54</sup> Personal interview by telephone with Susan Dittman, Houston, Texas, April 27, 2003.

stewardess' career until it was ruled in 1970 to be in violation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The result was to allow former stewardesses to return to work if they so chose even after being married for several years or to receive back pay.<sup>55</sup> Neither Forbes nor Dittman attempted to return.

With the arrival of the jet age in 1958, things began to change for the stewardesses as well as for the Cheyenne training school. The school integrated new technology into the training program. William Hinkley, the emergency procedures instructor, could be frequently seen coaxing and nudging trainees down the new inflatable slides suspended nearly ten feet off the ground.<sup>56</sup> Along with new emergency procedures, training was modified to deal with the new technology of the DC-8 and the subsequent reduction of flight time with larger numbers of passengers. Along with slide training, the stewardesses had to contend with automatic drop-down oxygen masks, more efficient galleys, trays attached to seat backs, the service of liquor on board the aircraft, in-flight movies, and the growing use of computerization.<sup>57</sup> Of those taking the training, more than 47 percent were twenty years old and only required to have a high school diploma, a height not to exceed five feet nine inches tall, and a weight not greater than 140 pounds.<sup>58</sup> Each candidate upon completion of training could be expected to serve the company for about two years with salaries of \$290 a month.<sup>59</sup>

To meet the demands of commercial jet travel, United Airlines constructed a new training school at Chicago during the early 1960s. This facility, known as Jet Age University, took over the stewardess-training program that had been in Cheyenne for fourteen years. Instead of open dormitories and jury-built classrooms, the new facility offered dedicated classrooms, dormitory suites, a cafeteria, a year-round swimming pool, tennis courts, a full-plane mock-up, and beauty salons.<sup>60</sup>

During the school's years of service in Cheyenne, sixty-seven hundred stewardesses completed their training.<sup>61</sup> The school closed in 1961. Hayes continued working for United in Denver, only to return to Cheyenne in 1973 when he retired. In the course of his tenure here in Cheyenne with the training school, he grew to love the location. Hayes and his wife raised two children on the south side of the city and on weekends drove them through the nearby mountains. He loved to hunt and truly appreciated the Wyoming lifestyle.<sup>62</sup> Forbes remained in Cheyenne after her marriage and never left. Others who worked for United, either as mechanics or as graduates of the training school, remained in Cheyenne

while many others moved elsewhere.

With the closing of the school, Cheyenne lost its last direct connection to an airline that had been a strong economic partner since the late 1920s. The *Wyoming Eagle* lamented in a brief article that aside from the loss of the economic benefits of the stewardess school, the city also lost a romantic connection to a time when ladies of the sky visited the Wigwam Lounge.<sup>63</sup> The town and its airfield became quieter in 1961 with the loss of the school, and several people yearned for the time when Cheyenne gave the ambassadors of the "Friendly Skies" their wings.

<sup>55</sup> Mahler, *Legacy of the Friendly Skies*, p. 159-60.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 124 & 134.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 141.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.

<sup>62</sup> Hayes interview.

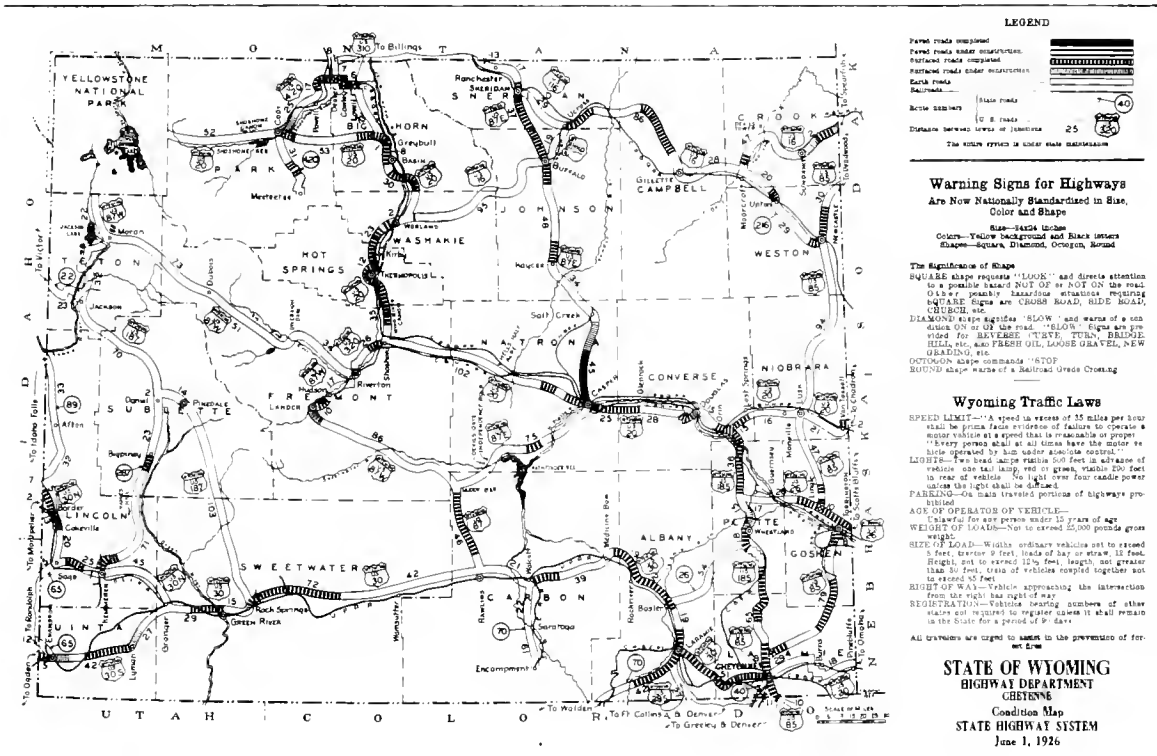
<sup>63</sup> *Wyoming Eagle*, November 2, 1961.

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# Putting Wyoming on the Map: The Story of the Official Wyoming Highway Map

by John R. Waggener



The 1926 Official Wyoming Highway Condition Map is a simple, single-sided black and white sheet map that highlighted the road conditions of the time. American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming Map reprinted with permission from the Wyoming Highway Commission.

When the newly-created Wyoming Highway Commission met for the first time on April 2, 1917, among the first items discussed was that of creating a highway map. The commission, chaired by Cheyenne resident Robert D. Carey, instructed the newly appointed State Highway Engineer Z.E. Sevison, to:

Prepare a map of the State of Wyoming, showing the main roads, giving especial attention to the roads over which mail is carried. The State Highway Engineer should have a number of copies of such made for each member of the Commission and as may [sic] more as he thinks is advisable.<sup>1</sup>

The highway department contracted with the well-known Clason Map Company of Denver, Colorado, to print the map. It ultimately was copyrighted in 1918 and titled "State of Wyoming System of State Highways Designated by State Highway Commission." This road map was large by those day's roadmap standards, measuring 18 inches x 25 inches – its scale being one-inch equals 20 miles. Z.E. Sevison reported in his annual ad-

One must travel back to 1911, a time when the automobile was quickly gaining popularity across the nation, to begin to trace the origin of Wyoming's official road map.

dress to the commission:

This map being on a rather large scale, it has not been possible to have this printed in sufficient numbers for general distribution, and I believe that this map should be ordered printed on a smaller scale so that it may be furnished to those who ask for it.<sup>2</sup>

It is not known whether this map was ever printed for, and distributed to, the public.

<sup>1</sup> Wyoming Highway Commission Meeting Minutes, April 2, 1917, p. 4

<sup>2</sup> 1917 Annual Report of the State Highway Commission, 1917, p. 2.

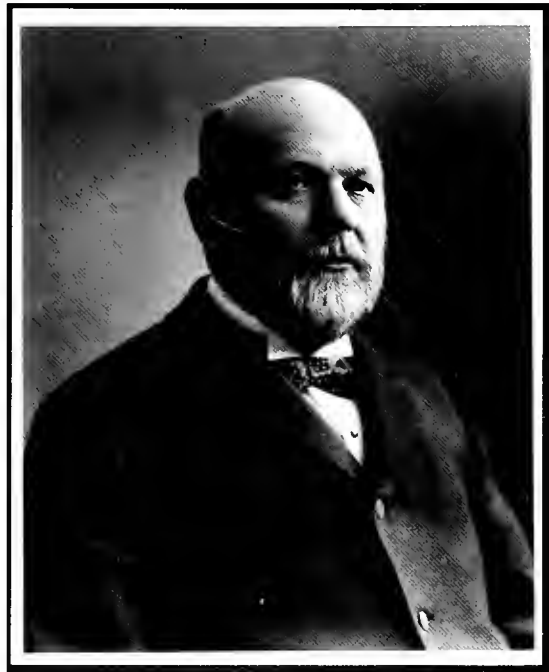
Though this was the first map produced by the highway department, the State of Wyoming had been producing road maps prior to the creation of its highway department. One must travel back to 1911, a time when the automobile was quickly gaining popularity across the nation, to begin to trace the origin of Wyoming's official road map. In his message to the Eleventh State Legislature, Governor Joseph M. Carey spoke of the importance of good roads across the state:

No question is being more discussed throughout the United States than that of good roads. Good roads are a source of great satisfaction to the taxpayer. They are something tangible and he daily sees the result of the money expended upon them. Good roads are productive of great savings in the wear and tear not only on vehicles, but upon beasts of burden, and nothing does more to promote industrial development, settle the country and build up towns and cities.<sup>3</sup>

In his address on that January day in the State Capitol, Carey told the legislators, "No one can now contradict the fact that the automobile is to become an everyday feature on our public highways, both for pleasure and for business."<sup>4</sup> Indeed, the governor's foresight was correct. By 1914, motor vehicle production exceeded wagon and carriage production.<sup>5</sup> Soon, existing trails began to be improved and new roads constructed across the state.

The tasks of constructing, improving, and maintaining the roads were first delegated to the State Engineer's Office. With the aid of county surveyors, the engineer's office immediately began producing a road map of the state. A 12 x 16 inch foldout map was included in the engineer's 1911-1912 biennial report.<sup>6</sup> The map was copyrighted by the state on November 19, 1912. This map was probably intended for internal use only, as the map is extremely crude with so little detail it would hardly be useful to a motorist. The usefulness of this map came to the engineers and policy makers. Having this spatial information would greatly enhance their road planning and construction process that was soon to begin. For the next four years, the engineer's office oversaw the road improvement program, and in each of the engineer's reports an updated state road map was included.

In 1916, these crude state engineer maps were replaced by an all-new map. This latest edition was produced as a joint effort between the engineer's office and the Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Company. This single-color (black on white) map is quite detailed in that hachures (artistic representations) are used



Governor Joseph M. Carey, the Political Father of the Wyoming highway system. Courtesy Wyoming State Archives.

to illustrate mountain ranges, and numerous water bodies and other physiographic features are shown. Several type fonts are used giving the map an artistic touch, and road names such as the Lincoln and Yellowstone highways are noted. The cartographer even took the liberty to include pioneer routes such as the Oregon and Overland trails.

This 1916 map could have been the state's first map to be used by eager motorists, and though the state can only be given partial credit for this map, Assistant State Engineer Shawver did write in the biennial report that:

In cooperation with the Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Company this office compiled the accompanying State road map, from information obtained from County surveys and other sources. The Telephone Company has produced a map on a much larger scale, which it proposes to place in hotels, garages, and other conspicuous places. All the roads in the State are divided into blocks and indexed. The conditions of the roads in each block are received by telephone and bulletins of such roads are posted daily on each map.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Message of Joseph M. Carey, Governor of Wyoming, to the Eleventh State Legislature*, 1911, p.13.

<sup>4</sup> *Message of Joseph M. Carey, Governor of Wyoming, to the Eleventh State Legislature*, 1911, p.13.

<sup>5</sup> Drake Hokanson, *The Lincoln Highway: Main Street Across America* (Iowa City, Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 1988), p.19.

<sup>6</sup> *Eleventh Biennial Report of the Wyoming State Engineer*, 1912, p.51.

<sup>7</sup> *Thirteenth Biennial Report of the Wyoming State Engineer*, 1916, p.40.

The accompanying map Shawver referred to was that of a folded map included in the 1915-16 engineer's report. This map is 10.5 x 13.5 inches in size. Whether or not the telephone company actually produced and displayed the larger wall maps for use by the public is unknown. Nonetheless, it was a clever marketing scheme on the part of the telephone company to utilize a road map to encourage the use of telephones while providing a valuable service to motorists. This fine June 1916 map was the last highway map the engineer's office would produce. Five months later the citizens of the Equality State went to the polls and granted permission to the state to create a highway department.<sup>8</sup> By the following spring a department solely designed to oversee highway development and maintenance was established, and the state engineer exited the road-making business and in doing so closed the first chapter of the evolution of the Official Wyoming Highway Map.

In 1917, Governor John B. Kendrick did what Joseph M. Carey had done six years earlier. He stood before the legislature and presented a case for more highway development across the state. Kendrick urged the lawmakers to move forward in creating a highway department that the voters of the state wished to have. In his speech delivered on January 9, 1917, Kendrick summed up the history of the good roads movement by saying:

In a new and sparsely settled state of widely separated communities, no problem is more important than that involving the construction and maintenance of highways. Congress, a few months ago, passed a measure providing federal aid in the building of highways in the different states. At the last election, the voters of Wyoming adopted an amendment to the constitution making it possible for our state to participate in the Federal aid, and the responsibility now devolves upon the Legislature of providing the necessary machinery for working out the best plan for participation. A highway commission should be provided, with an active secretary who would be the principal executive, who would give his entire time to the work, and who would, among other qualifications, be a competent civil engineer.<sup>9</sup>

His suggestions were persuasive and immediately put into motion. On February 17, 1917, Kendrick approved an act creating a state highway commission.<sup>10</sup> Less than three months from the time he asked the legislature to create a highway department, the Wyoming Highway Commission held its first official meeting at the State Capitol. On April 2, 1917, the meeting was called to order by acting Governor Frank L. Houx.<sup>11</sup>

As was the case with the engineer's office, it was not a primary goal of the Wyoming Highway Department to produce road maps or engage itself in public relations. The thrusts of the highway department in the early years were to acquire right of ways, survey the proposed highway system, construct bridges, and build roads.<sup>12</sup> The few maps created during the first six years of the department's existence were probably intended for the use by department employees and other state and federal officials. The maps known to exist from this era only appear within state reports, the one exception being the 1918 Wyoming Highway Commission map mentioned at the beginning of this article. However, the trend of producing maps only for internal government use would come to an abrupt stop in 1924.

When the Wyoming Highway Department was formed in 1917, it was just in time to prepare for the automobile revolution. The federal government called the 1920s "the great highway boom."<sup>13</sup> During the early part of the 1920s, the transportation industry evolved at an unprecedented rate. Vehicle sales across the nation went from 1.6 million in 1921 to 4 million only two years later.<sup>14</sup> In Wyoming alone, motor-vehicle registrations more than doubled in only five years, jumping from 21,372 vehicles in 1919 to 43,639 in 1924.<sup>15</sup>

Though welcomed by many Wyomingites, the increased traffic had significant downsides. Many of the early travelers to the state avoided the expenses of hotels and cafes by choosing to pull off the road and setting up a "car camp" for the night. "No space seemed too remote or too difficult, as long as there was room to pull off, pitch a tent, and build a fire."<sup>16</sup> Often, these motorists left their campfires to burn, trespassed on ranchers'

<sup>8</sup> *Report of the Special Committee for the Investigation of the State Highway Department and State Highway Commission*, December 31, 1930, p. 64.

<sup>9</sup> I.S. Bartlett, *History of Wyoming* (Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., Vol. 1, 1918), p. 259.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Wyoming Highway Commission Meeting Minutes*, April 2, 1917, p. 1. Houx replaced Kendrick who was elected to the U.S. Senate halfway through his term as governor.

<sup>12</sup> *Report of the Special Committee for the Investigation of the State Highway Department and State Highway Commission*, December 31, 1930, p. 64.

<sup>13</sup> U.S. Department of Transportation, *Americas Highways 1776-1976: A History of the Federal-Aid Program* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Transportation, 1976), p. 109.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>15</sup> *Report of the Special Committee for the Investigation of the State Highway Department and State Highway Commission*, December 31, 1930, p. 58.

<sup>16</sup> Warren James Belasco, *Americans on the Road: From Autocamp to Motel 1910-1945* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1979), p. 7.

property, and failed to pack out their garbage. Many steps were taken to eliminate this problem. Most notably, towns around Wyoming established designated auto camps. Literature also began to be published by recognized auto clubs reminding campers to keep a clean camp. The American Automobile Association (AAA) issued a "Courtesy of the Camp" code that educated the tourist-camper of proper camping behavior. Wyoming also joined the effort, and by 1924, it had two major reasons to publish highway maps for the general public. There now existed a system of roads across Wyoming, and there were sufficient numbers of motorists using (and abusing) those roads.

In 1924, the Wyoming Highway Department began issuing free "condition maps" to motorists.<sup>17</sup> These maps were distributed around the state and the region to hotels, filling stations, chambers of commerce, and auto clubs.<sup>18</sup> These condition maps, simple sheet maps of 11 x 17 in size, only featured main towns and roads and highlighted few physiographic features.

Though simple, the condition maps fulfilled two goals. First, these maps indicated the conditions of the roads. Knowing the road conditions was very important during this era. It has been noted motorists spent so much time concerning themselves with road conditions they failed to see anything else.<sup>19</sup> When viewing the map, travelers could take note of a given road surface to see if it was improved with oil, a crushed rock road base, or whether the road was unimproved beyond basic grading. Traveling on an unimproved road after a Wyoming thundershower would spell doom for motorists. Though the maps were generally effective, the best "maps" during this era were still word of mouth between travelers. It was considered a cardinal rule for passers-by to trade information.<sup>20</sup>

The second purpose of the map was to disseminate information regarding highway safety, highway rules, and friendly reminders to motorists about clean car camping. Wyoming was very proud of its natural resources, and the highway department was willing to do what it could to help conserve those resources. The map included simple rules of etiquette such as reminders to motorists to extinguish campfires before leaving. Francis "Frank" Hayford Allyn, the first graduate of the University of Wyoming's College of Engineering, created the condition maps.<sup>21</sup>

Through the 1920s, car camping began to fade. One visionary predicted that by the early 1930s every middle class American family would be able to go coast-to-coast with nothing more than a small suitcase.<sup>22</sup> The

transition from car camps led to cabin camps then motor courts and finally to the large roadside inns of today.<sup>23</sup> The need to put notes on condition maps reminding motorists to keep clean camps began to fade right along with the car campers. Before long the department would have to produce a new map to meet the needs of the new traveler. The eight-year history of the condition maps ended when the last condition map was produced on May 1, 1931, the same day the Empire State Building was dedicated.

On January 8, 1932, "Governor A.M. Clark met with the Commission for the purpose of considering bids for the publication of (a) new State Highway Map."<sup>24</sup> The Wyoming Highway Department realized an all-new map was needed to fulfill the demands of the modern motorists.

In the *Eighth Biennial Report of the Wyoming Highway Commission* the new map received a well-deserved write-up:

In order to provide the public with a dependable and accurate State map, the Department compiled and issued such a map early in 1931. This map contained more than the usual amount of information, it being the intention to publish a map which was accurate in every detail and which would serve many purposes other than that of the ordinary tourist pocket map. The cost of issuing such a map was considerably more than for the ordinary map, but it is believed that this cost was fully justified by the diversified uses that have developed for the map, indicating that its continued revision and publication each year is a desirable feature of the work of this Department. The map as published not

<sup>17</sup> Letter from Wyoming Highway Department to Smith-Brooks Printing, Co., Aug. 9, 1923, Wyoming Department of Transportation, reel 435, hereafter WYDOT.

<sup>18</sup> Letter from Wyoming Highway Department to Automobile Assurance Association, Sept. 24, 1924, WYDOT reel 435.

<sup>19</sup> *Americans on the Road*, p. 37.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Sutherland, Robert L., *History of the U.W. College of Engineering 1893-1993* (Laramie, Wyoming: University of Wyoming College of Engineering, 1993), p. 21. Allyn was born May 6, 1875, at St. Mary's Station along the Union Pacific Railroad in Carbon County. He became a draftsman for the Wyoming Highway Department in 1920. Allyn always signed his name and the corresponding year in the lower right hand corner of the maps. For more information about Allyn see "Mr. and Mrs. Frank H. Allyn," by Laura Ekstrom, unpublished manuscript in the Frank H. Allyn biographical file, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming, Laramie.

<sup>22</sup> *Americans on the Road*, p. 134.

<sup>23</sup> For more information about lodging accommodations, see Heyward Schrock, "A Room for the Night: Evolution of Roadside Lodging in Wyoming," *Annals of Wyoming* 75 (Autumn 2003): 31-39.

<sup>24</sup> *Wyoming Highway Commission Meeting Minutes*, January 8, 1932, p. 70.

only is one of the services provided by the Highway Department, but in order to advertise the resources of the State through wide distribution, the Department of Commerce and Industry cooperated in paying the cost of the map and prepared much of the material on the reverse side, which relates to the resources of the various counties and towns.<sup>25</sup>

Though the map was copyrighted in 1931, it was not published until mid-1932, as bids were not opened for the printing of the new highway map until February 9, 1932.<sup>26</sup> Mills Printing of Sheridan, Wyoming, received the printing contract. For some unknown reason, Mills farmed out the job to Smith-Brooks Printing Company of Denver, Colorado.<sup>27</sup> During the years of the early and mid 1930s, out-of-state printers produced Wyoming maps. S.E. Boyer of Prairie Publishing Company in Casper realized this and wrote a letter to the highway department urging the department to keep the map production in state. He reminded highway officials that "the Wyoming State Highway Map, since the beginning of the use of the colored map [1932], has been printed in the State of Colorado."<sup>28</sup> Boyer's wish to print the map eventually came true in 1941.

The early 1930s were an unlikely time for Wyoming to invest in a relatively expensive cartographic project. After all, the country was deep in the doldrums of the Great Depression. An examination of the Wyoming Department of Commerce and Industry's mission might be one of the keys to this map's origin. In 1931, the Wyoming Legislature, via Section 103-87 of the Wyoming Statutes, made it known to the Department of Commerce and Industry that:

It shall be the duty of the executive manager under direction of the board, to cooperate with other departments of the State government; to publish and to cooperate in the publishing and dissemination of literature, bulletins, maps, leaflets, and other material of educational and commercial value.<sup>29</sup>

It took the department little time to react to the order. Within months it:

Cooperated with [the] State Highway Department in the preparation and production of the new official state highway map, dividing the cost of lithographing with the Highway Department and handled the mailing and distribution of the maps generally as a publicity measure in connection with our colonization program.<sup>30</sup>

Commerce and Industry's colonization program was designed to contact prospective settlers and to contact people who were interested, or might be interested in, agriculture or other business opportunities in the state.<sup>31</sup>

With the added money from another department, the highway department planned a larger map than produced earlier. The 1932 edition grew considerably in size compared to the condition maps, thus giving the department much more room to add more information. The single-sided 11x17 condition maps have an area of 187 sq. in. The 1932 edition has 1180 sq. in. of usable space. The highway department sought the help of the Department of Commerce and Industry to assist with the layout of the new and enlarged map. The highway department paid for and designed the map side, and the Department of Commerce and Industry paid for and prepared the map back.<sup>32</sup>

The map back is packed with information and photographs. Listed is information sought by the traveler such as tourist attractions – 229 of them to be exact. However, much attention was devoted to business opportunities, which are not normally featured on maps. Each of the twenty-three counties received a full paragraph of coverage and a photograph representing some opportunity or attraction in that county. The reader curious about Wyoming's mineral resources would learn the Wyoming State Geological Department is very cooperative with prospectors. Want to be a coal miner? Come to Sweetwater County! Want to be a sugar beet farmer? Come to Goshen County! To sweeten the proposition, the prospective farmer is reminded that Wyoming's sugar beet is sweeter than those grown in other states.

The 1932 edition also marked the beginning of the tradition of noting the governor. A.M. Clark's name appears on the cover of the map giving him the honor of being the first governor to be mentioned on Wyoming's road map. Governors would appear on maps in some form or another off and on throughout

<sup>25</sup> *Eighth Biennial Report of the Wyoming Highway Commission*, p. 22.

<sup>26</sup> *Wyoming Highway Commission Meeting Minutes*, February 9, 1932, p. 74.

<sup>27</sup> Letter from Wyoming Highway Department to Smith-Brooks Printing Co., Jan. 9, 1933, WYDOT reel 450.

<sup>28</sup> Letter from Prairie Publishing Co. to Wyoming Highway Department, Nov. 19, 1934, WYDOT reel 450.

<sup>29</sup> *Special Biennial Report of the Wyoming Department of Commerce and Industry 1931-1933*, forward.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.



1990, the number of captions had been reduced from eighty-two to forty-five. The main reasons for their removal lie in the fact the Wyoming Department of Transportation received complaints from citizens alluding to the fact that the map was "too cluttered" and because the locations of many historic sites and events were not verifiable. Rounds added that a letter from noted historical geographer, John Logan Allen, in the 1980s challenging the burial site of Sacajawea,<sup>36</sup> "brought things to a head, and we enlisted a blue-ribbon committee to take a look at all those things." The blue-ribbon committee, consisting of folks from numerous state agencies including the Travel Commission, Archives, Museums and Historical Department, and the State Library, concluded that many of the sites should be removed, so the highway department responded by removing many of them from the map.<sup>37</sup>

Through the 1930s and early 1940s, the Official Wyoming Highway Map evolved only slightly from year to year. The most notable changes occurred in 1937 when an all-color cover was introduced as well as a greeting to tourists from the governor, and in 1940 when color photographs replaced the black and white images on the mapback. During this same era, a substantially greater number of maps was printed and distributed compared to previous years. The department distributed one hundred thousand maps during 1937 and 1938.<sup>38</sup> Wide distribution of the map also occurred as a result of a national advertising campaign. The state promoted tourism via ads that were printed in national magazines and newspapers. During 1938, 1,117 respondents requested highway maps.<sup>39</sup>

The country experienced an increase in tourism in 1939, and this may have led Wyoming to do a much-needed second printing of the map. In the east, New York prepared for the opening of the World's Fair, and out west, San Francisco was preparing for the Golden Gate International Exposition. Both fairs ran from the spring of 1939 to the fall of 1940. Travelers going from fair to fair certainly would have impacted Wyoming's great east-west transportation corridor - US 30. Also, the 1939 Legislature appropriated funds for an exhibit in San Francisco when:

Twenty thousand dollars was appropriated by the twenty-fifth legislature for an exhibit at the Golden Gate International Exposition at Treasure Island, San Francisco, California, for 1939. The World's Fair Commission, appointed by Governor Leslie A. Miller, presented the request to the legislature, and after consideration of the matter by Gover-

nor Smith and the legislature, the sum of \$20,000 was appropriated.<sup>40</sup>

Thousands of pieces of literature were distributed to the 749,107 visitors who entered Wyoming's booth during the summer and fall of 1939.<sup>41</sup> Both 1939 editions were printed as "World's Fair Editions." However, attention would soon turn from the world's fair to a world war.

World War II brought an end to many of the activities of the Wyoming Highway Department. The Office of Defense Mobilization imposed restrictions on such things vital to road construction as asphalt, tar, steel, and heavy equipment. Manpower shortages also began to affect the workforce. The highway department acknowledged, "The number of employees now in the State Highway Department has already been reduced by approximately one-half as result of the war and present national emergency."<sup>42</sup> What work was done was applied to the war effort. The priorities of the department were to create access to oil fields, coal basins, and airports.<sup>43</sup>

The war impacted the auto industry as well. The government rationed gasoline and rubber and set the national speed limit at 35 mph to conserve fuel and reduce maintenance on vehicles. Car production also came to a halt. In 1941, 3,779,682 automobiles were produced, while 1943 saw only 139 cars roll off America's assembly lines.<sup>44</sup>

The war slowed the pace of travel to a snail's crawl. With no new roads being constructed and with fewer motorists using the existing roads, there was little demand to produce new maps. In fact, World War II suspended road map development altogether.<sup>45</sup> The big

<sup>36</sup> Listing Sacajawea on the map was controversial from the very beginning. After the 1932 edition was distributed, a South Dakota historian asked the Wyoming Highway Department to remove the caption because it was inaccurate. Walter, interview.

<sup>37</sup> Keith Rounds interview.

<sup>38</sup> *Special Biennial Report of the Wyoming Department of Commerce and Industry 1937-1939*, p. 19.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>40</sup> *State Department of Commerce and Industry Report of Activities 1939-1940*, p. 17.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>42</sup> *Thirteenth Biennial Report of the Wyoming Highway Commission*, p. 21.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>44</sup> *Americas Highways 1776-1976*, p. 147.

<sup>45</sup> American Congress on Surveying and Mapping, *The American Cartographer* (Falls Church, Virginia: American Congress on Surveying and Mapping, July 1987), p. 249.

road map producers such as Rand McNally and H.M. Gousha switched efforts to military map production for the Defense Department.<sup>46</sup>

Wyoming adjusted to the times by implementing several alternative methods. The 1942 map, for example, was essentially a reprint of the 1941 map, and this same map was used in 1943.<sup>47</sup> However, the department got a bit more creative the following year. The department attempted to place stickers on maps remaining from 1942, covering up the date with the current date. There was a problem though. The stickers did not adhere to the glossy paper. The department remained persistent to find inexpensive ways to provide maps to the public for the year 1944. The department again utilized the 1942 edition and furnished a map with an ink-stamped message on the back cover indicating, "This map issued in 1942 is essentially correct as of today..." The map itself stands as the only piece of evidence of this 1944 venture.

The highway department next published a map in 1946. The map was a black and white rendition of the 1942 map. Because colored ink was being conserved it was necessary to print a simple black and white map.<sup>48</sup> Cost was also a concern, and the commissioners decided to keep the printing from exceeding five hundred dollars.<sup>49</sup> Keeping the cost to a minimum coupled with the fact there was a paper shortage,<sup>50</sup> allowed the department to print no more than ten thousand copies of the map.<sup>51</sup>

The 1946 edition of the Official Wyoming Highway Map displayed one unique feature. It was the only folding map produced by the department not featuring a photographic or art image on the cover. Instead, the cover showed Wyoming's iconic symbol – the bucking bronco. A possible reason for the small silhouetted logo being featured on this map may be the fact the man given credit for the idea to design the logo, Lester C. Hunt, was governor at that time. In the 1930s, when Hunt was secretary of state (a position, which at that time was in charge of motor vehicle license plates), he decided to create a logo of a bucking bronco to appear on the 1936 plate. He commissioned artist Allen True to paint the logo.<sup>52</sup> Hunt governed the state from 1943 to 1949. The first map to list him as governor was the 1946 edition. The logo may have been placed there as a tribute to him. The map's back does include a tribute to the men of the Wyoming Highway Department returning from the war. It was added in place of the traditional governor's statement, which had been featured on the map since 1937.

The post-war era brought gigantic changes to the Official Wyoming Highway Map when, on December 18, 1945, the Wyoming Highway Department struck an agreement with the Rand McNally Company of Chicago to begin creating an all-new map. From 1947 to 1952, Rand McNally improved the map each of those years taking it from the map base<sup>53</sup> created for the 1932 edition to an all-new base in 1949, and finally to the 1952 colorized version Wyomingites have come to know.

Wyoming had been using the same base since 1932, and with all of the additions to the map during the period of rapid road construction, the map base was showing signs of wear. Highway Superintendent J.R. Bromley said, "Our old plates are not satisfactory anymore as they have become worn to such an extent that the maps are not accurate."<sup>54</sup> There was a definite need for Wyoming to start over. Wyoming did just that and utilized the help of the most widely known mapmaker in the nation.

On February 20, 1946, one hundred and fifty thousand maps for the 1947 season were commissioned to be printed at a cost of \$6,075.<sup>55</sup> However, before this map was approved the commission discussed the possibility of including Buffalo Bill Cody on the map. Buffalo Bill's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday commemoration was being planned, and Highway Commissioner Cowgill of Cody believed it would be appropriate to feature Buffalo Bill on the map. When the 1947 edition rolled off the press

<sup>46</sup> American Congress on Surveying and Mapping *Surveying and Mapping* (Washington D.C: American Congress on Surveying and Mapping, April-June 1956), p. 632.

<sup>47</sup> Letter from Wyoming Highway Department to Federal Public Roads Administration, Jan. 27, 1943, WYDOT reel 521.

<sup>48</sup> Letter from Wyoming Highway Department, January 28, 1946, WYDOT reel 531.

<sup>49</sup> *Wyoming Highway Commission Meeting Minutes*, April 10, 1945, p. 107.

<sup>50</sup> Letter from Wyoming Highway Department, January 28, 1946, WYDOT reel 531.

<sup>51</sup> *Wyoming Highway Commission Meeting Minutes*, May 21, 1945, p. 7.

<sup>52</sup> Phil Roberts, David L. Roberts, and Steven L. Roberts, *Wyoming Almanac*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., (Laramie, Wyoming: Skyline Press/Wyoming Almanac, 2001), p. 76.

<sup>53</sup> A map base is the cartographer's draft of the map being made. This base, used to make the printer plates, is comprised of many layers of sheets of data that contain all of the information that will appear on the map such as the topography layer, the highways layer, the text layer, etc.

<sup>54</sup> Letter from Wyoming Highway Department to the Wyoming Episcopal Church, Diocese of Wyoming, March 6, 1946, WYDOT reel 531.

<sup>55</sup> *Wyoming Highway Commission Meeting Minutes*, February 20, 1946, p. 60.



from Rand McNally's plant in Chicago there was no sight of Cody, though a photograph of the dam he began constructing in 1905 does appear on the back cover.

The 1947 map is very similar to the editions of 1940-1946, but the overall quality is much improved over earlier editions. A new type of offset lithography, which produced a much higher quality map at an affordable cost, was used.<sup>56</sup> The print is sharper, easier to read, and more precise. With a quick glance at the 1947 map, one will also note the number of roads that were improved beyond basic grading compared to the prewar years. The map back was simplified somewhat. It featured a regional road map of the U.S. and a mileage chart. The remainder of the back consists of color photographs of all of the classic Wyoming themes – cowboys and Indians, mountains, Yellowstone, and Devils Tower. This map began the trend of Wyoming allowing pictures to do the talking. Little text would appear on the map's back until the 1980s.

Rand McNally used a new paper stock for the 1949 edition, which more precisely absorbed the printing ink creating a sharper, clearer, more exact map. As was the case in 1947, the governor did not appear on the map, nor did the names of commissioners or other departmental staff. This era of maps was almost entirely dedicated to tourism, as colorful photographs exhibiting Wyoming's cultural and physical landscapes were featured. The commission wanted its photographs to appear as nice as the photographs adorning the renowned Union Pacific Railroad calendars. Ralph Bowen of Rand McNally responded with many comments and suggestions. First, he noted that professional photographers with 8x10 view cameras were taking the photographs for the Union Pacific. He also noted UPRR was using a superior quality paper, but this paper would not be suitable for a map, as "the paper would have no strength, and under folding conditions and considering the other severe use given maps, it would not last any time at all." Rand McNally urged the Highway Department to submit 4x5 negatives, which would offer the best quality reproduction.<sup>57</sup>

There was even talk that some of the highway department staff liked the color photo quality on the Colorado map. Bowen of Rand McNally said:

I am really surprised that anyone in Wyoming could find anything in the Colorado map folder to arouse even a trace of jealousy. Aside from the map work itself, which is extremely illegible and poorly designed, the color work in the

pictures, in my opinion, is very much beneath the quality in the Wyoming folder.<sup>58</sup>

Bowen and his staff at Rand McNally certainly could not help but realize Wyoming was serious about making a better map. Wyoming wanted a map as good as Union Pacific's calendar, and certainly, it was not going to be outdone by its archrival to the south. Rand McNally went back to the drawing board and made more changes to the map. The changes were more than satisfactory to catch the attention of travelers. It was reported in the July 11, 1950, edition of *The Portland Oregonian*, that Wyoming's map is the "king of them all." A motorist took a trip around the nation and collected road maps. Most of the maps were of the usual variety, but Wyoming's map was a cartographer's masterpiece. *The Oregonian* reported:

The supreme accomplishment of this piece of propaganda is the main map, a meticulously drawn and superbly colored portrayal of physical and historical Wyoming. Here the map addict - and there is at least one in every family - may absorb details of the highways, mountain ranges, watersheds, railways, air lanes, divides, and pioneer trails.

The accolades continued when *The Oregonian* offered:

This map is no plebian aggregation of signposts fit for forgetting in the glove compartment. It is an invitation to road romance, a reminder of return to Wyoming. To our own Oregon highway development commission we commend this map, its charm and its lesson. Oregon's map, of which 200,000 were ordered this year, is sound, it is legible, and useful. But it keeps secret too well the infinite variety, the vigor and the romance of Oregon.<sup>59</sup>

Wyoming, with its "king" of the highway maps, had caught the attention of California, Idaho, and Oregon, and through the years received many more compliments. The 1949 Wyoming map was so popular the department exhausted its supply by August.<sup>60</sup> For the 1950

<sup>56</sup> Arthur H. Robinson, Randall D. Sale, Joel L. Morrison, and Phillip C. Muehrcke, *Elements of Cartography*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1984), p. 458.

<sup>57</sup> Letter from Rand McNally Co. to Wyoming Highway Department, May 15, 1949, WYDOT reel 371.

<sup>58</sup> Letter from Rand McNally Co. to Wyoming Highway Department, April 25, 1949, WYDOT reel 371.

<sup>59</sup> *Portland Oregonian*, July 11, 1950. Copy on WYDOT reel 2119.

<sup>60</sup> *Wyoming Highway Commission Meeting Minutes*, August 27, 1949, p. 43.

map, it was decided to increase production by fifty thousand, making two hundred and fifty thousand maps available to the public.<sup>61</sup>

By 1950 and 1951, the Official Wyoming Highway Map focused on tourism even more so than the editions of 1947-1949. These maps no longer carried travel information alerting motorists of speed limits, proper vehicle passing techniques, rights of way, and mountain driving, although surrounding states still focused on traffic laws and other travel information.

While Rand McNally was busy working on Wyoming's map, the federal government was busy planning an interstate highway system. The Clay Committee, formed by President Dwight Eisenhower to oversee this undertaking, decided that "the need is not for more highways so much as better ones."<sup>62</sup> The Wyoming Highway Department shared that philosophy and wanted to create a better road map. In 1952, a map rolled off the printing press in Chicago that was such a masterpiece it was still used fifty years later. Since its unveiling in 1952, more than thirty-five million copies of this all-color map Wyomingites have come to know have been printed.

Wyoming can claim to be the first state in the union to feature an all-color shaded relief map.<sup>63</sup> What started out as a simple version of this map in 1947 had been improved. Other states feature shaded relief on their maps, but none have a realistic natural color scheme like that portrayed on the Wyoming map. Wyoming's diverse landscape of grasslands, sagebrush steppes, and ice-capped alpine regions were captured in fitting colors of tan, light green, dark green, and white.

The highway department's drafting unit, which had been involved with map production prior to the late 1940s, relinquished that task at the time the 1952 map was released when "on October 19, 1951, the State Highway Commission appointed a Secondary Roads Engineer in compliance with this 1950 Federal Aid Act."<sup>64</sup> Appointed to that position was G.T. "Shorty" Bath. Sometime around 1953, the department decided he should be "responsible for the compilation and publication of the official Wyoming Highway Map."<sup>65</sup> Also, in about 1953, a public information director was hired.<sup>66</sup> Even though there was an established public relations department, Bath maintained control of the map as one of his duties. In 1964, however, the map was appropriately turned over to the Public Information Office.<sup>67</sup> Rounds became the public information officer that year.<sup>68</sup> Soon after he assumed his duties, he took charge of the map. Rounds oversaw the production of about

thirty editions of the map before his retirement on February 1, 2001.

Numerous map-related undertakings occurred during Round's time with the department. One was that of taking ownership of the map plates. When Rand McNally received the contract to create an all-new map for 1949, it was required not only to print the map but also to make the new printing plates. These plates remained in the ownership of Rand McNally. Wyoming only owned the copyright to the map.<sup>69</sup> As a result, each year the bidding included printing and plate making. Rand McNally, already having the plates, had the obvious advantage, as its bids from year to year did not have to include the expensive plate making fees. Rand McNally was the low bidder on every map it bid from 1947 to the time the plates were sold to the highway department in 1972, with the exception of the 1960 edition. Wheelwright Publishing of Salt Lake City, Utah, won the contract for that edition. It is believed Wheelwright had an excess of inferior paper and was therefore able to submit a low bid.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, the quality of the printing and of the paper of the 1960 edition is arguably inferior to the Rand McNally jobs. Oddly enough, this map won a printing award.<sup>71</sup>

Some years only Rand McNally submitted a bid.<sup>72</sup> Other printing companies complained the process was unfair. Among the companies addressing this issue was Jeppesen and Company, an aviation map printing company. On July 19, 1962, Harold Prommel, manager of map sales for Jeppesen, approached the commission and explained his company wanted to bid on the Wyoming highway map, but because the bid specifications

<sup>61</sup> *Wyoming Highway Commission Meeting Minutes*, August 4, 1950, p. 60.

<sup>62</sup> Christy Borth, *Mankind on the Move: The Story of Highway*. (Washington D.C: Automotive Safety Foundation, 1969), p. 229.

<sup>63</sup> *Wyoming Highway Commission Meeting Minutes*. October 18, 1951, p. 60.

<sup>64</sup> *Eighteenth Biennial Report of the Wyoming Highway Commission*, p. 47.

<sup>65</sup> *Nineteenth Biennial Report of the Wyoming Highway Commission*, p. 63.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>67</sup> Wyoming Highway Department, *The Highwayman*, June 1964, .p. 5.

<sup>68</sup> Rounds interview.

<sup>69</sup> Keith Rounds, April 26, 1972, Wyoming Highway Department Internal Document to W.G. Lucas, WYDOT Public Affairs Office vertical files.

<sup>70</sup> Rounds interview.

<sup>71</sup> *Wyoming Highway Commission Meeting Minutes*, October 20, 1960, p.31.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, September 27, 1962, p. 17.

called for both printing and cartography, there was no way it could be competitive.<sup>73</sup>

Jeppesen certainly had the capability to create visually stimulating and accurate maps. For years it had been producing aeronautical charts for the Wyoming Aeronautics Commission. The highway commission considered these aeronautical charts to be among the very finest produced.<sup>74</sup>

The Jeppesen company has its roots in Cheyenne. Elrey Borge Jeppesen, a pilot for Varney Airlines (later to become United Airlines), lived in Cheyenne and flew the route between Cheyenne and Salt Lake City. After losing several pilot friends to accidents attributed to navigational problems, he created charts to aid in navigation.<sup>75</sup> Jeppesen began handing them out, and they became so popular he turned his idea into a profitable business, setting up shop at Denver's Stapleton International Airport.

Jeppesen did bid on the all-new 1949 Wyoming Highway Map, but it may have been too small a company to compete with Rand McNally. In 1952, another big map company, H.M. Gousha, acquired an interest in Jeppesen.<sup>76</sup> It was too late though. Once Rand McNally had the contract, it had, in essence, created a monopoly. Had Jeppesen won the contract for the 1949 map, it is quite possible that a company so linked to Wyoming's mapping history would have been the one credited with creating and maintaining the Official Wyoming Highway Map.

Pleas from companies like Jeppesen led the Wyoming Highway Commission to purchase the plates from Rand McNally. This occurred on August 24, 1972, for a cost of \$11,500.00.<sup>77</sup> Now that the Wyoming Highway Department had the map plates, this allowed for other companies to pursue the printing jobs.

A second map-related undertaking during Rounds' early years with the department appeared in 1965, when the governor reappeared on the map after being absent since Hunt's name appeared on the cover of the 1946 edition. For the first time ever, the governor's appearance on a map is mentioned in the commission record. The highway commission moved:

The department should request a statement from Governor Clifford P. Hansen together with a color photograph of himself, both of which are to be placed on the 1965 Highway Map, which year is the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary for statehood for Wyoming.<sup>78</sup>

Rounds secured the statement, and the 1965 map

was the first to feature the governor's portrait and statement on the back cover. This arrangement became the standard, but it did not become an annual tradition for several more years. Four years later, the governor's statement and portrait again was mentioned in the commissioners' record. Commissioner Gus Fleischli moved to place the governor's photo and message back on the map.<sup>79</sup> As requested, the 1969 map features Governor Stan Hathaway on the back cover with his statement, and since this time, the governor's portrait and written statement have appeared on every map.

The appearance of a governor on a map is one of the most important identifiers that a map is official. It is this "officialness" that gives the map its credibility, and, as a result, gives the motorist a sense of assurance. In his Wyoming geography book, Wyoming geographer Robert Brown identifies three symbols that embody the spirit of Wyoming – open space, the bucking bronco and cowboy, and the governor.<sup>80</sup> Brown stated the Governor of Wyoming offers a recognizable degree of rugged individualism; an ability to talk plainly; and a complement of other personal characteristics including honesty, tolerance, mild ambition, and love of family.<sup>81</sup> No doubt, Wyoming's license plate helped promote the cowboy image, and so has Wyoming's map. All the governors seem to embody the cowboy spirit by sporting their cowboy hats for their portraits. In 1987, newly elected Governor Mike Sullivan seemed also to capture the "love of family" quality Brown identified in his book, when he appeared on the map with the first lady, their children, and even the family pet.

A milestone was reached in 1990 with the printing of the Wyoming Centennial edition. In anticipation of a busy tourism season during Wyoming's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, the department produced an astonishing one million copies of the map. The Highway Department appropriately dedicated the issue to the state's history. The cover includes a photograph of Wyoming's statehood parade, which was held in Cheyenne on July 23, 1890, to celebrate the occasion. The mapback includes an historical

<sup>73</sup> *Wyoming Highway Commission Meeting Minutes*, July 19, 1962, p. 96.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> *Wyoming Almanac*, p. 28.

<sup>76</sup> *The American Cartographer*, p. 249.

<sup>77</sup> *Wyoming Highway Commission Meeting Minutes*, August 24, 1972, p. 21.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, October 29, 1964, p. 21.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, July 18, 1968, p. 7.

<sup>80</sup> Robert H. Brown, *Wyoming: A Geography* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, Inc. 1980), p. 148.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 149.

narrative of the state's history written by Rick Ewig, who at that time was an historian for the Wyoming State Archives, Museums and Historical Department.

The most recent major update to the map occurred with the 2003 edition. For the past fifty years, the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT)<sup>82</sup> had been using the same map plates that were created by Rand McNally in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Just as with the 1932 map plates, the 1952 map layers were wearing out. Knowing something needed to be done to solve this dilemma, WYDOT decided to enter the computer age. Garth Oldham, Graphics Designer for the WYDOT Public Affairs Office, digitized the map sheets created by Rand McNally.<sup>83</sup> With all the information from those sheets digitized, corrections and updates could be made by simply using the computer. Updates that once took hours to complete could be done in minutes. Certainly the most obvious change to the viewer was that of the overall lightening of the color of the 2003 edition, which was changed to make the text easier to read. Before digitization, the color of the map was fixed and could not be altered. Eastwood Printing and Publishing Inc. of Denver, Colorado, printed the 2003 map. The department printed 1.25 million copies of the map for a cost of \$110,625.00.<sup>84</sup> The only Wyoming company to bid on this all-new map was Unicover Corporation of Cheyenne.

The State of Wyoming produced its first highway map in 1912. Since then, nearly 40 million Official Wyoming Highway Maps have been produced and distributed around Wyoming, the nation, and even the world. This in and of itself makes the Official Wyoming Highway Map one of the most widely distributed documents produced by the State of Wyoming. The sheer volume of maps produced and widely distributed by the state makes the Official Wyoming Highway Map a potentially powerful publication. For some people, the map they receive in the mail upon request influences their first image of Wyoming. So, what image and information does the map convey about Wyoming?

Considered to be one of the nicest road maps produced, the Official Wyoming Highway Map stands as a reflection of the quality road system found in the

state. A map of this quality certainly stands out as a persuasive document to encourage travel across the state. During the 1930s, the highway department struggled to identify an audience, allowing some space to attracting permanent settlers and devoting the remaining space to welcoming tourists. Since then, the maps have shown a pattern of including tourist-attracting photographs of Wyoming's physical landscapes and the opportunities that can be had on those landscapes. For the most part, the opportunities that visitors can have in Wyoming have had to be imagined, as few pictures show people engaged in any sort of recreation. Essentially, the Official Wyoming Highway Map sets the stage for the tourist to discover his or her own opportunity. The technology to convey these opportunities has improved over the years, but the message remains the same. In his 1982 greeting, former Governor Ed Herschler said, "Regardless of season, you'll find plenty of outdoor recreation in Wyoming. Our nearly 98,000 square miles of variety offer something for everyone, all at an individual pace. Enjoy Wyoming!"

<sup>82</sup> In 1992, the Wyoming Highway Department reorganized and became the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT). Subsequently, the Wyoming Highway Commission became the Wyoming Transportation Commission.

<sup>83</sup> Garth Oldham, interview with the author, Cheyenne, Wyoming, Sept. 22, 2003, written notes.

<sup>84</sup> Wyoming Department of Transportation. *Tabulation Sheet of Bids Received*, Jan. 3, 2003, WYDOT Purchasing Department.

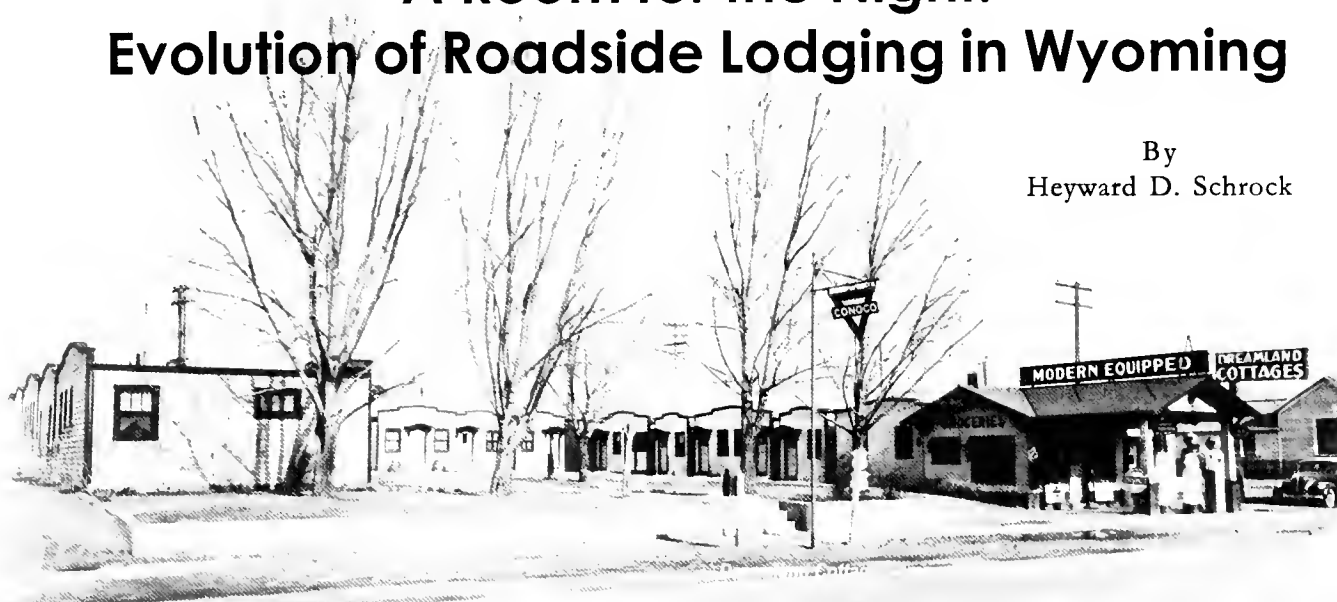
*Real horsepower was utilized in early road construction efforts near the town of Douglas, Wyoming. Courtesy Wyoming State Archives, J. E. Stimson Collection.*



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# A Room for the Night: Evolution of Roadside Lodging in Wyoming

By  
Heyward D. Schrock



**A**mericans have an infatuation with the automobile. Part of the obsession is the attraction of driving somewhere. Initially, however, early twentieth century car touring was limited to driving close to home due to lack of passable roads. As more all-weather roads were built, Americans began to venture farther away from home. Longer road trips inevitably

generated new businesses, services, and products to meet the needs of the auto tourists.

When Americans took to the road for a prolonged journey they performed what would become a daily routine of searching for a room to spend the night.

One business created by the automobile was roadside lodging. When Americans took to the road for a prolonged journey they performed what would become

a daily routine of searching for a room to spend the night. As the number of automobiles and tourists increased, lodging for the vehicle bound traveler evolved to meet the needs of an ever-changing, mobile society.

In 1903, the Ford Motor Company was founded and Henry Ford changed the way cars were built. In 1913, Ford produced thirteen thousand automobiles a day. By 1925, the moving assembly line was so well streamlined that new Model T's were rolling off the assembly line

every ten seconds. Mass production made the cost (\$290), low enough that just-about anybody could afford one. In 1920, more than nine million motorcars and trucks were registered in the United States. That same year in Wyoming, 24,973 passenger vehicles were licensed. With the affordable automobile, Americans had an alternative to rail travel and began to pervade the roads traveling long distances with a freedom previously unknown. Where as travelers had been controlled by railroad timetables and rail networks, the automobile allowed the individual to pick and choose the time and route of travel. This self-determination of movement brought a revolution in transportation for Americans during the first two decades of the twentieth century.<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of the twentieth century early auto tourists had few choices for a room after traveling miles in an open automobile. An occasional wayside inn, a hold-over from stage coaching days, might offer the tired motorist a bed. An economical alternative was to camp alongside the road. The principle choice was the downtown hotel that served a transient population of salesman, businessmen, and travelers. Downtown hotels had dominated the lodging industry for more than half a century because of their ready access to the railroad station and downtown businesses. Along with banks,

<sup>1</sup> James W. Davidson et al. *Nation of Nations: A Narrative History of the American Republic* (New York: Mc-Graw-Hill Publishing Company, 1990), p. 907; Wyoming Department of Revenue, Motor Vehicle Division, Wyoming State Archives; Carlos Arnaldo Schwantes, *Going Places: Transportation Redefines the Twentieth-Century West* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), pp. 52, 125.

restaurants, and retail stores, hotels were the center of economic and social power for American cities.<sup>2</sup> This was true for Wyoming as well.

By the 1930s, large cities and small towns in Wyoming all supported a hotel. Business groups and local chambers of commerce collaborated in building and promoting hotels and, in turn, their communities. Many eager businessmen felt that no town or city could prosper without modern accommodations for visitors, especially automobile travelers. Local newspapers, instruments of civic promotion, readily assisted in this endeavor. On the grand opening of the Gladstone Hotel in Casper, *The Casper Daily Tribune* on November 3, 1924, commented at length on the importance of hotels in Casper: essentially, it noted, "Casper hotel accommodations are now second to none in the Rocky Mountain region. This will make for greater prosperity in this city and will bring money here which might otherwise be spent elsewhere."<sup>3</sup>

More importantly, Wyoming hotels like the Ferris in Rawlins, the Henning in Casper, the Emery in Thermopolis, the Plains in Cheyenne, the Irma in Cody, and the LaBonte in Douglas became local landmarks of economic and community energy. Many were multistory structures with formal spaces and palatial lobbies, extensive corridors with stores selling luxury items, barbershops, and newsstands, formal dining rooms, and less formal coffee shops, grand ballrooms, and distinctive lounges. Built on expensive land in urban centers, hotels were forced to charge high prices for rooms. However, they could not be exclusive or cater to one social class. Wyoming hotels allowed many of the aspiring middle class to experience a taste of the finer things in life. More than just a place to stay, they acted as a social center for community and public gatherings and as local ambassadors to visitors. In August 1937, the American Legion state convention was held in Rawlins and the Ferris Hotel welcomed the legionnaires, promising to "make them feel at home" and that "convention members will welcome the opportunity to make this hotel their meeting place."<sup>4</sup>

Even though the auto tourist trade was only a trickle along Wyoming's roads during the early decades of the century, hotel owners felt that automobile travelers were an important revenue market and actively sought their business. To draw attention to their establishments, hotel owners advertised their lodging facilities, particularly noting a wide range of seemingly important and modern amenities for automobile travelers. In 1913, the Hotel Virginian in Medicine Bow boasted that it was "the Biggest Hotel in the Littlest Town in the World" and was

"electrically lighted, [with] Hot and Cold Water, First Class Cuisine, Telephones." Being located on the Lincoln Highway was doubly significant for travelers and Medicine Bow, and the ad further stated that "the Virginian is on the Overland Automobile Route and its proprietor is a good roads booster and builder. So time your journey that you may be his guest." Despite the small town setting the advertisement added, "one finds the very acme of the metropolitan hostelry in a town that presents a picture of the fast fading frontier."<sup>5</sup>

In 1916, the Kimball Hotel in Glenrock announced that it was "Headquarters for Automobile Parties and Commercial Travelers. Meals served family style. Good clean rooms and bathroom. Garage and Automobile Repairs and Supplies in same block." For the tourist who wanted to see the real American West and scenic Wyoming, Cheyenne was strategically located for automobile traffic headed north to Devils Tower or to the Grand Tetons and Yellowstone. West from Cheyenne the auto tourist could reach the University of Wyoming in Laramie then on to the Red Desert and Fort Bridger. The Plains Hotel in Cheyenne, with its ideal location along the Park-to-Park Highway (Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado to Yellowstone National Park) and the Lincoln Highway, proudly advertised in 1924: "Special Attention to Automobile Parties. Cheyenne is the Natural Gateway to Wyoming. Good Roads and Beautiful Scenery."<sup>6</sup>

Not to be outdone, Casper's Gladstone Hotel targeted the auto tourist by advertising the advantages of Casper: "'The Hub' of Wyoming. Casper is the most centrally located city in Wyoming: Therefore, it is the center of all industrial, social and recreational activity in the State, all principal highways – even to Wyoming's furthestmost points – radiate from Casper." Along with room rates the brochure included a mileage chart from Casper to principal cities and points of interest in Wyoming.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>2</sup> John Brinckerhoff Jackson, *American Space: The Centennial Years: 1865-1870* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1972), p. 195.

<sup>3</sup> Taft Alfred Larson, *History of Wyoming* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1965), p. 345; "Gladstone Hotel Will Be Opened Tonight," *The Casper Daily Tribune*, November 3, 1924.

<sup>4</sup> Larson, *History of Wyoming*, p. 406; "Department Souvenir Convention Magazine American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary," *Republican—Bulletin*, August 17, 1937.

<sup>5</sup> "Wyoming Publicity Edition," *Overland & Yellowstone Automobile Trails* (August 1913): 31.

<sup>6</sup> Gus Holms, ed., *Yellowstone Highway in Wyoming and Colorado* (Chicago: Wallace Press, 1916), p. 63; D.W. Greenburg et al., eds., *Wonderful Scenic Wyoming* (Casper: Commercial Printing Company, 1926), p. 2, Vertical File, Wyoming State Archives; Austin F. Bement, ed., *A Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway* (1924; reprint, Tucson: The Patrice Press, 1993), p. 412.

<sup>7</sup> *The New Gladstone Hotel* (nd), Casper Chamber of Commerce Collection, Wyoming State Archives.

A hotel's location presented a chance for tourists to experience local culture. Driving from San Francisco to New York in 1914, Effie Price Gladding wrote while staying at the Virginian in Medicine Bow, "We had an excellent substantial lunch at the hotel and then went over to see the shearing [of sheep] a few minutes walk from the hotel."<sup>8</sup>

But downtown hotels had disadvantages for the automobile traveler. Many were inconvenient. Located in crowded downtown areas and lacking adequate parking and oriented for train and pedestrian trade, older downtown hotels did not make any special provisions for automobiles. Even though some hotels built after 1920 featured automobile entrances and parking garages nearby, they were still located in or at the edge of business districts. Consequently, they were difficult to reach, particularly when auto travelers, tired from the day's drive, were least able to deal with unfamiliar communities. Upon arriving at the hotel, the tired, dust-covered motorists would have to walk through a busy lobby filled with

I feel yet the flush of shame that suffused my cheeks under that thick layer of dust as the bellhop held open the door and eight grimy intruders marched in, single file. Had we been clean, we should still have been objects of hostile suspicion, owing to our bizarre camping togs. But the bellhop, what ever his mental reaction, let us in, and we slunk off to our respective washrooms.<sup>9</sup>

The automobile traveler desired another choice to traditional hotel lodging.

One alternative was to camp along the roads. This ability to stop anywhere, anytime, was for many an adventure and for some an opportunity to commune with nature. Equipped with camping gear the intrepid motorists just pulled off the road, pitched a tent, made a fire, and had a free room for the night. Frequently squatting on private property, usually without permission, auto tourists saved money they would have spent on rooms, meals, garage fees, and tips. Motor companies sought to capitalize on this new market. The Mentz-Carson Motor



*Haphazard camping is evident in the J.E. Stimson photograph of the Cheyenne auto camp, 1920. Courtesy Wyoming State Archives*

train travelers which was for many auto tourists, an unpleasant experience. Some motorists felt that they were given inferior service because they were traveling by automobile:

<sup>8</sup> Effie Price Gladding, *Across the Continent by the Lincoln Highway* (New York: Brentano's, 1915), pp. 177-178.

<sup>9</sup> Melville E. Ferguson, *Motor Camping on Western Trails* (New York: Century, 1925), pp. 271-272.

Company of Cheyenne offered an "Auto-Camp-Comfort Outfit" that "combined with Collapsible Folding Tent all in one: a bed, a chair, a table, a settee. Live close to Nature in Luxury, Ease and Comfort."<sup>10</sup>

This era of free accommodations or "squatter" period gained popularity just before the start of World War I and continued until the 1920s. Destruction of private property and litter forced many landowners to post "no trespassing" signs and fence off former camping spots. T.A. Shaw, a rancher in the Wheatland area, posted a hundred dollar reward for the arrest and conviction of tourists responsible for starting a fire that destroyed three buildings on his property in 1927. Because of this unpleasant personal experience Shaw ended camping on his place.<sup>11</sup>

During the 1920s, automobile traffic grew from a trickle to a flood onto western highways. Due to the growth of auto tourists a new development emerged in the form of municipal camping grounds. Located along principal road ways in city parks or near downtown business districts, these encampments offered the motorists parking, camp sites, and sanitary facilities, all at little or no cost. In 1920, Cheyenne was proud to announce, "Camping Ground Ready for Use." The Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, and Wyoming Good Roads Association were credited for building the site. Visitors to the grounds would find, "The camping ground at Sloan's lake is being cleared off and made into a comfortable place for the tourist. An information bureau will be of great help to the hundreds of tourists."<sup>12</sup>

As the auto camps grew in popularity they also became objects of significant community pride to Wyoming cities. Competition grew between cities as each attempted to construct the most popular motor campground. Municipalities augmented their facilities with bathrooms, picnic tables, electricity, and even recreation areas. A *Wyoming State Tribune* writer traveled the state in August 1920 and reported on county municipal camping grounds with a large caption, "Excellent Municipal Camp Grounds Found over State." The Thermopolis campground received special merit from the staff correspondent: "Perhaps the greatest attraction to the tourist outside the hot baths and the big plunge, is the municipal camping ground. Not only is every ordinary convenience provided, but there is a cottage where you can cook your meals on electric stoves, do your eating, and do your writing." The tourist park also provided an "auto washing stand" and a bandstand for "concerts, either daily or often as feasible."<sup>13</sup>

In 1920, Sheridan's tourist camp was considered a desirable camping site with "three hundred and twenty-five automobiles registered there in July." And a mark of pride for the town, "Sheridan is justly proud of its tourist camp in the heart of that beautiful city. An attractive district has been set aside on the banks of the Goose Creek and a substantial building has been erected by the Sheridan Commercial Club."<sup>14</sup>

Local commercial interests considered the camps an economic benefit. By spending a night in a community, tourists would likely spend money in stores and eat in local restaurants. Thermopolis "grocers, butchers, garages, hardware and dry goods dealers," in 1920, benefited from their auto camp as "approximately \$30,000 was expended in the city for various supplies by the tourist." In July 1921, the residents of Wheatland were informed that "thirty-five cars camped in the local park Wednesday evening in addition to a number which camped west of town. Practically all of these came up town and bought groceries and automobile supplies."<sup>15</sup>

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce counted more than one thousand municipal auto camps in the United States in 1922. But the popularity of municipal campgrounds with auto tourist and city leaders was amazingly brief. By 1925, most towns started to charge entrance fees and additional costs for telephone use, firewood, shower, and sanitary facilities. The purpose was to pay for upkeep and to keep out undesired, out-of-work transients. Time limits on the length of stay were also imposed to curb the unwanted "tin-can gypsies." By requiring tourists to pay for a night's lodging and services the community campgrounds would oddly enough create their own demise. Private commercial campgrounds would replace city auto camps once the opportunity to make money from camping fees became apparent.<sup>16</sup>

The private camps were substantial business ventures that offered more than just a place to pitch a tent.

<sup>10</sup> "Camping or Touring You Should be Equipped with the Auto-Camp Comfort Outfit," *Wyoming State Tribune*, June 10, 1920.

<sup>11</sup> "Blaze on T.A. Shaw Ranch Northwest of Town Sunday Noon," *Wheatland Times*, September 22, 1927.

<sup>12</sup> "Camping Ground Ready for Use," *Wyoming State Tribune*, May 28, 1920.

<sup>13</sup> B.L. Babcock, "Excellent Municipal Camp Grounds Found Over State," *Wyoming State Tribune*, August 19, 1920; "Adams Talks at Casper on Tourist Park," *Thermopolis Record*, December 3, 1920.

<sup>14</sup> "Sheridan Proud of Its Tourist Camp," *Wyoming State Tribune*, August 6, 1920.

<sup>15</sup> "Adams Talks at Casper on Tourist Park," *Thermopolis Independent Record*, December 3, 1920; "Chamber of Commerce Activities For Past Year," *Thermopolis Independent Record*, December 24, 1920; "Hosts of Tourists Use Camp Grounds," *Wheatland Times*, July 7, 1921.

<sup>16</sup> Chester H. Liebs, *Main Street to Miracle Mile* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1985), p. 172.



Campers could buy groceries and cook their meals in a communal kitchen, wash clothes in a laundry, use a telephone, and fill their automobile with gasoline. Competition grew within the new business and owners were always looking for methods to get the auto tourists to stop at their camp. Once it was learned that motorists would pay for more substantial and private accommodations operators began to offer cabins.

Cabins began a new type of overnight lodging that would define the future of the hospitality industry. At first, owners offered just a plain wooden room, often without furniture, but they very quickly saw the advantage of furnishing cabins with tables, chairs, and beds. Electricity and stoves made the overnight experience far removed from the bucolic camping of outdoors. Guests liked the convenience and privacy of cabins over tents. No longer would camping gear have to be hauled around or a tent pitched at the end of a long day of driving. Cabins were more resistant to inclement weather, so they could be used year around and provide owners with a yearly income. Sanitary facilities were provided usually in a building within walking distance from their cabins. Later, motel operators would build bathrooms within the cabins. By the late 1920s, many operators stopped providing tent sites and offered cabins only.

The popularity of cabin camps was quickly realized by Rawlins investors of the Sunset Camps Inc., in 1927. "Since opening a few weeks ago the cabins in the camp have filled every night with tourists. It is thought that a camp in Medicine Bow similar to the one in Rawlins will be as popular and have as much business as the local camp." Construction of cabin camps rapidly spread throughout Wyoming once financial opportunities were evident to other business groups. Cheyenne oilman, politician, and future governor, Leslie A. Miller, and four other Wyoming shareholders formed the Big Horn Camps, Inc. "Construction of rustic cabin camps in 14 Wyoming towns and scenic localities is the object of the Big Horn Camps Inc., which has been organized by Sheridan and other Wyoming men."<sup>17</sup>

Camp owners emphasized a planned lodging layout, which replaced the haphazard camping sites that were typical of camp grounds. The standard layout of the motel was arranged with rows of simple free standing cabins in a U or L-shaped configuration around a central open space with intervening parking space for cars and landscaped with lawn furniture. The cabins looked like tidy villages of miniature cottages. The cabins were placed close enough to the road as to be visible to passing motorists but set far enough back to appear private.

Even during the Depression, middle-class Americans continued to take automobile vacations. In 1934, the American Automobile Association reported that touring figures had returned to pre-1929 levels. By 1935, total vehicle mileage and gasoline sales increased after a slight decline. Americans even purchased more new cars in 1935 than in 1930. For the travel industry overall, people had more money to spend on room and board in 1935 than any year since 1929. The Wyoming hospitality industry mirrored the national trend with an abundance of rooms for the highway bound traveler. A 1930s Wyoming tourist promotional pamphlet stated, "Accommodations for vacationists are plentiful." Along with two hundred hotels, "three hundred and fifty tourist camps offer 4,716 cabins." In 1938, the Wyoming Motor Court Association Inc., promoted "375 Motor Courts for the Motoring Public. Rates are reasonable \$2.00 for [a] rustic cabin to \$12.00 for the best."<sup>18</sup>

Travel expenditures continued to rise from the low point of 1932-33 and reached new heights with the sudden economic increase of 1940-41. The Casper Chamber of Commerce reported in 1941 that "\$10,000 is spent daily by tourists in the city during the three vacation months of June, July and August." Casper also hosted during a two-year period two national and sixty state conventions that brought in an estimated \$250,000 annually.<sup>19</sup>



Casper's Red and White Auto Court illustrates the configuration of cabin and attached auto garage, c. 1940. Courtesy Wyoming State Archives

<sup>17</sup> Articles of Incorporation, Records Of Secretary State, Wyoming State Archives; "Sunset Camps, Inc. Building Four New Cabins on Grounds," *Rawlins Republican*, April 28, 1927; "Log Cabin Camping Grounds Are to Be Built in 14 Towns," *Rawlins Republican*, November 3, 1927.

<sup>18</sup> Warren James Belasco, *Americans of the Road: From Autocamp to Motel, 1910-1945* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1979), p. 155; *Wonderful Wyoming*, (np, nd), Vertical File, Wyoming State Archives; *Howdy Tourist* (Casper: Prairie Publishing Company, 1938), Vertical File, Wyoming State Archives;

<sup>19</sup> *Central Wyoming Resources Survey* (np, 1941), Vertical File, Wyoming State Archives.

During the 1930s, motel owners presented a fresh refined image of overnight lodging. They changed the words “camp” to “court” and “cabin” to “cottage.” Motor courts and cottage courts took on the look of middle-class suburban homes. Cottages were furnished, like suburban houses, with closets, rugs, dressing tables, chairs, mirrors, curtains, radios, and bathrooms with showers and bathtubs. Many were heated with steam and insulated for year-around use. Attached garages became very popular after 1930 with many cottages linked wall to wall to form a continuous façade. The Dreamland Cottage Camp of Rawlins in 1937 advertised, “Cool, Clean, Up-to-date COTTAGES.” The ad went on to emphasis in large letters, “RADIO EQUIPPED.”<sup>20</sup>

From the very beginning camps had offered communal kitchens and some tourist cabins had kitchenettes with food sold by small grocery stores on the premises. Numerous motor courts began to include coffee shops or restaurants after motel owners discovered that restaurants added profits to their enterprise. Gasoline and oil products were available as part of the complete traveling experience. Fisher’s of Rawlins in 1937 promoted, “Tourist Rooms, Standard Oil, Quaker State Oils, and Pennzoil.” In 1953, the Evergreen Camp in Glendo was still advertising “Modern Cabins” along with selling “Sinclair Products.”<sup>21</sup>

By 1939, the business of providing a room for the night proved to be Depression-proof. Americans were driving 25 million cars on the roads and new motor courts nationwide were being built at the rate of 800 per year. The Rainbow Tourist Camp of Cheyenne offered cabins that were “modern and clean. Cool in summer and warm in Winter—insulated Twenty-six modern units. One, two, and three-room apartments with garage, private showers or tub bath, good water, gas heat, phones, fenced playground.” The owners, Mr. and Mrs. Robert M. Thomas, invited the motor tourist to “make this your home while in Cheyenne.”<sup>22</sup>

The start of World War II abruptly reduced tourism in America. Automobile production was diverted to war machines and gasoline became rationed. Americans returned to riding trains and public transportation. Hotels experienced a renaissance with train-bound travelers looking for lodging. On the other hand, many motor courts did not survive the war years. But once the war ended the motel industry rapidly reemerged to dominate the lodging business in America. Motel growth from 1946 to 1956 expanded to sixty thousand nationwide. Wyoming’s hospitality industry reflected the national expansion with a total of 570 motels in 1958, up from

375 in 1938.<sup>23</sup>

The postwar years were the beginning of a construction boom in the roadside lodging industry that would last up to the late 1960s. These years would see substantial economic growth for America. With jobs and money Americans put the Depression years behind by buying houses and cars. The increase of automobile ownership and the federal interstate highway program of 1956 put Americans on the roads in record numbers. Motor courts again took business away from hotels and would eventually force many of the older downtown hotels to close. Along with continued prosperity the motor courts experienced changes in appearance and name.

After the war the hospitality industry began to use the more progressive word “motel.” Even though the term had first been used in 1926 and occasionally during the 1930s, it now became the standard word to describe the thriving lodging business of the late 1940s. A contraction of “motor” and “hotel,” the word “motel” became the common name marketing a wide variety of highway accommodations. The majority of Wyoming motor court owners, though, still continued to use the word “court” until the late 1950s. In 1953, 149 out of a total of 421 motels used the term “motel,” with “court” being in the majority. But by 1958, the designation “court” had all but disappeared from lodging directories and “Wyoming motel accommodations, ranging from nice to lush, are both comfortable and convenient.” The Wyoming Travel Commission echoed this assessment, confidently commenting that, “You just can’t go wrong in a Wonderful Wyoming motel.”<sup>24</sup>

The motel’s appearance went from the individual cabin to a string of rooms integrated into a single building. These structures were long, single-story, and rather architecturally plain. The new interconnected motels lacked individual architectural style and began to look

<sup>20</sup> “Department Convention Souvenir Magazine American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary,” *Republican—Bulletin*, August 17, 1937.

<sup>21</sup> “Department Souvenir Convention Magazine American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary,” *Republican—Bulletin*, August 17, 1937; 1953 *Platte County Auto Licenses*, 1953, Platte County Treasurer, Vertical File, Wyoming State Archives.

<sup>22</sup> John Margolleis, *Home Away From Home: Motels in America* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1995), p. 39; *Tourist’s Information Pamphlet from Cheyenne, Wyoming* (Cheyenne: Rainbow Tourist Camp, 1939), Vertical File, Wyoming State Archives.

<sup>23</sup> *Directory of Wonderful Wyoming: Motels, Hotels, Dude Ranches, Camp Sites* (Cheyenne: Wyoming Travel Commission, 1958), Vertical File, Wyoming State Archives.

<sup>24</sup> *Wyoming Directory of Motels* (Casper: Prairie Publishing Company, 1953), Vertical File, Wyoming State Archives; *Directory of Wonderful Wyoming: Motels, Hotels, Dude Ranches, Camp Sites* (1958), Vertical File, Wyoming State Archives.

alike. To distinguish different businesses, elaborate and illuminative neon signs lured customers in with catchy, inviting, and sometimes amusing names. Cheyenne motels exploited the western theme with places like the Cactus Patch Motel, the Stage Coach Motel, and the Cimarron Motel. Located next to roadways, the neon sign provided a vertical dimension to the long, low, straight line building configuration. Many of these eye-catching signs projected the quality of the motel and listed the variety of services provided.<sup>25</sup>

By the mid-1950s, many motels began to display soaring roofs, rakish canopies, and vaulted entrance porticos reflecting the exaggerated modern architecture. Motel guest rooms became gradually more standardized with furniture from commercial suppliers specializing in hotel and motel furnishings. The new exterior design combined with a uniform interior became a profitable arrangement for motel owners. Owners also spent considerable money on room furnishings in an attempt to make guests comfortable and get repeated stays. Air conditioning, telephones, and radios became standard features. Motels increasingly built the popular swimming pool, which was located in the center courtyard. The Frontier Motel of Cheyenne boasted in 1957, "Wyoming's Largest & most Luxurious SWIMMING POOL." The ad went on to state, "beside the Frontier pool [is] Cheyenne's largest and most beautiful restaurant."<sup>26</sup>

Along with standardization of motel structures during this time the industry as a whole started to become standardized. The days of small, individual, local ownership gave way to the national franchised motel. Motel chains dated back to the 1920s but only in regional areas. From its very modest beginnings, Holiday Inn became the king of the motel industry. Kemmons Wilson, a Memphis, Tennessee, home-builder, transformed the hospitality industry from the mom and pop business to a world franchised chain. In 1952, he opened the first Holiday Inn in Memphis, and by 1964, through direct ownership and franchises, Wilson had one thousand inns in operation from coast-to-coast. Casper and Cheyenne both had acquired a Holiday Inn by the mid-1960s.<sup>27</sup>

During the 1960s other motel chains opened across Wyoming. Ramada Inn, Imperial 400, Downtowner Motor Inn, and Little America competed with Holiday Inn for the motorist's lodging dollar. Using the various arrangements for ownership, franchises quickly gathered the financial resources together with design, engineering, construction, marketing knowledge, and professional staff that many mom-and-pop operations could not contend with.<sup>28</sup>

Cheyenne joined the ranks of communities receiving a chain motel with the grand opening of the Ramada Inn on October 15, 1960. "The Ramada Inn, Wyoming's newest, largest, and most luxurious resort-type motor hotel is the first franchise motor hotel built by the Ramada and Flamingo motor hotel chain [in Wyoming]." O.N. Buckles, president of the local Cheyenne Ramada franchise group, Motels Incorporated, and long-time Cheyenne businessman, remarked "that Cheyenne has been in need for a long time for adequate roadside hotel facilities. The new Ramada Inn should provide some of the needs in this field."<sup>29</sup>

The new motor inns brought not only national brand-name recognition to the hospitality industry but corporate regimentation to motel architecture. Motels within the chain would all look alike. The standard plan utilized a low-cost building technique known as center-core construction. One or more stories of rooms were built back to back with a utility core running down the center housing all the electrical, heating, and plumbing. The bathrooms of every four units were grouped together at intersecting corners allowing for easier plumbing. Construction costs were not only lower but the buildings were cheaper to heat and cool. Also, motor inns could accommodate more rooms on the site than the one story motor court.

Using the same colors, interior furnishings, exterior structural design, and signage, brand identity would communicate to the motorist a predictable lodging experience. The new Ramada Inn in Cheyenne noted that "while the general décor of the inn in Cheyenne is the same as the 30 others in the Ramada and the Flamingo chain, special emphasis has been placed on the location and the needs of the clientel [sic]."<sup>30</sup>

Larger and more luxurious than motels, motor inns were usually two-or-three story buildings organized around a courtyard. Ground floor rooms had outside doors that allowed for easy access from car to room. The interiors had enlarged lobbies with registration desk,

<sup>25</sup> *Cheyenne Telephone Directory* (The Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Company, 1959), pp. 103, 104

<sup>26</sup> *The Cheyenne Spot-Lite* (Crazy Horse Publishing Company, 1957), Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce Collection, Wyoming State Archives.

<sup>27</sup> Margolies, *Home Away from Home*, p. 113; *Cheyenne Scene*, June 1963, p. 17; *Casper's Progress*, July 1967, p. 1.

<sup>28</sup> John A. Jakle, Keith A. Sculle, and Jefferson S. Rogers, *The Motel in America* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996), pp. 160-169.

<sup>29</sup> "New Ramada Inn Grand Opening Set," *Wyoming State Tribune*, October 14, 1960.

<sup>30</sup> "New Ramada Inn Grand Opening Set," *Wyoming State Tribune*, October 14, 1960.

adjacent dining facilities, cocktail lounge, and banquet and meeting rooms. Corridors led from the central lobby to the guest rooms. The air-conditioned rooms were large, containing two beds, night table, dresser, table with chairs, television, and bathroom with separate area for shower and toilet. The new Ramada Inn boasted that "each one of the 70 units includes furnishings that will make the guest more comfortable. Beds are large and lights are so arranged as to give a maximum amount of lighting. The Furniture is designed not only for beauty but for maximum amount of comfort and utility." Cheyenne's Ramada could "accommodate up to 250 people and will have several special suites. There are also six studios which can be used as combination business and sleeping quarters." To further impress customers the Ramada had "among the outstanding features of the inn meeting rooms for 25 to 65 persons, a coffee shop and dining room, complete hotel service, a heated swimming pool and children's playground, putting green, helicopter landing area, year around air conditioning, airport limousine service and the newest television, radio and music facilities in every room."<sup>31</sup>

Some traditional downtown hotels attempted to stay competitive and acquire the automobile tourist business. In 1960, "Cheyenne's skyline was augmented Tuesday as the new Frontier Motor Hotel sign was hoisted into place....The new name has been adopted by the hotel designating the addition of 24 modern motel units." The opening of the motor hotel announced that the new quarter-million dollar add-on had been "built to provide only the best for our guests. The Frontier Motor Hotel offers all the comforts and services of the finest hotels along with the conveniences of the most superb motels." One convenience that the new motel rooms had as opposed to the hotel rooms was size that could accommodate larger beds. The Frontier Motor Inn boasted that their new rooms "included everything in the way of furnishings that will make the guest more comfortable."<sup>32</sup>

The hospitality industry in Cheyenne during the 1960s was quite strong and experienced a return of the downtown hotel. The *Wyoming State Tribune* on August 22, 1963, announced that "Cheyenne [was] to Get [a] New Million-Dollar Hotel" in a major headline. "A new five-story luxury motor hotel that will include a heated swimming pool and a basement garage will be built at a downtown location." Local Cheyenne businessman and president of a newly formed corporation, Frank J. McCue, received a franchise agreement with the Memphis, Tennessee, based Downtowner Corporation

to build "the new hotel, the first built in the downtown area in more than two decades, will have 88 units, a coffee shop, dining room, cocktail lounge and special meeting rooms." The appearance of the new inn was in keeping with the standardization of chain motels, "As in other Downtowner Motor Inns, the Cheyenne hotel will feature a building with a brightly colored exterior with exposed balconies and glass room fronts." The importance of the new venture brought Governor Clifford Hansen and Mayor Bill Nation to do the ceremonial "turning the first spades of earth with two gilt-covered shovels."<sup>33</sup>

By the early 1960s, the 'budget' chain motels began to emerge that offered a lower price for a room than the larger chains. Motel 6 and Days Inn of America were among the first to offer economy to Americans with a family and traveling on a limited budget. Throughout the 1970s, the franchised motel business inundated the market. In 1970, 25 percent of the rooms were owned by chains; eight years later 70 percent of the rooms were chain-affiliated.<sup>34</sup>

During the late 1960s and 1970s, traditional motel design with L-shaped, row, and open court buildings gave way to the construction of a multistory box structure, which utilized more available space for rooms. These new structures became hotel-like and were located near highways. By the 1980s, the typical motel became a "highway hotel" that followed new commercial development located near highways and interstates. These facilities offered by the chain franchises have come to be barely distinguishable from one another.

Today, chain-owned highway hotels now dominate Wyoming's roadside hospitality industry. Super 8 Motels, Comfort Inns, Hampton Inns, Days Inns all look alike and are built in clusters around interstate interchanges. These new highway hotels are nondescript, multistory boxes with one or two doors leading to the lobby and hallways. Gone is the direct access from car to room that once auto tourists favored. The large corporation has brought a significant degree of uniformity to motels across the United States. The architecture of the motel along with the arrangement and size of rooms has been standardized to meet corporate requirements.<sup>35</sup>

The growth and volume of automobile travel in the United States has created a demand for convenient

<sup>31</sup> "New Ramada Inn Grand Opening Set," *Wyoming State Tribune*, October 14, 1960.

<sup>32</sup> "Cheyenne Skyline," *Wyoming State Tribune*, June 5, 1960; "The Exciting New Motor Hotel," *Wyoming State Tribune*, June 25, 1960.

<sup>33</sup> "New Million-Dollar Hotel," *Wyoming State Tribune*, August 22, 1963.

<sup>34</sup> Margolies, *Home Away from Home*, p. 114.

<sup>35</sup> Jakle, *Motel in America*, pp. 171-215.

lodging facilities located near highways which in turn has driven the development of the franchise highway hotel. The evolution of the lodging industry has come full circle in a hundred years. The early countryside cabin camp gave way to the more extensive cottage court, which in turn developed into the motor court, motel, motor inn, and finally to the corporate highway hotel. At first the motel was seen as competition with the downtown hotel for automobile tourists. But the motel of today has become hotel-like and the word "motel" has become obsolete. Today, with large corporate and franchise chains dominating the hospitality industry, motels are called inns, hotels, lodges, and even suites.

Motels remain an essential trade for travelers looking for a convenient room for the night along the American roadside. They have also become symbols of the transformation of Wyoming's cultural landscape through

business cycles, highway relocation, and consumer preferences.

There are still small family owned and operated motels hidden across Wyoming. In Newcastle, the Pines Motel has managed to remain in business throughout the years and their Web site promises "peace and beauty in the pines. Family owned and operated Motel." The owners list "11 rooms, Cozy, well appointed rooms in quiet residential area. Excellent housekeeping, 1 story, exterior corridors."<sup>36</sup> Bypassed by interstate highways and the fast pace of life, these rare motels offer a glimpse of Wyoming's vanished, early roadside lodging industry.

<sup>36</sup> Much, Judy. *Pines Motel* (1999): 4 pp.: <http://www.trib.com/~mcarthr/>.

*Sunset Camps, Inc., at Medicine Bow, with cabins built in a u-shape configuration and separate communal bathroom building located in the center, 1927. Courtesy Wyoming State Archives.*



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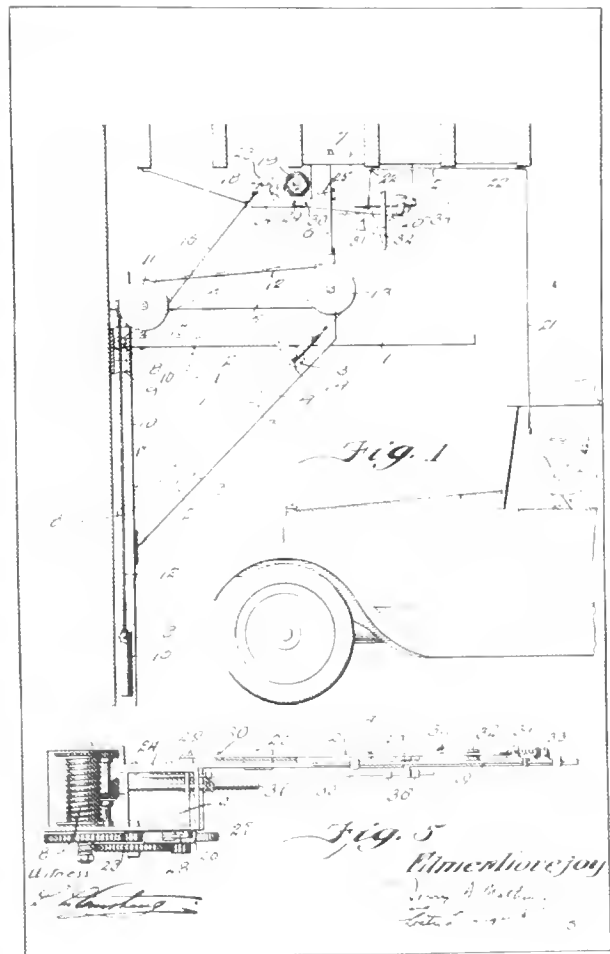
# Wyoming Picture

Born in Illinois in 1872, Elmer Lovejoy came west in 1883 to live on a family ranch near Laramie, Wyoming, after he was diagnosed with tuberculosis. Surviving the deadly disease, Lovejoy went on to become an active citizen of Laramie as well as a prolific inventor. On March 26, 1918, he was awarded a U.S. patent for his power-operated garage door opener. He is also credited with inventing (but not patenting) the steering knuckle in 1905, the pneumatic balloon tire, which he developed in 1896, and even a vacuum lawn trimmer.

Lovejoy had an ideal place to tinker with mechanics. He had his very own and well-equipped shop, Lovejoy Novelty Works, which he started in 1893 above the Laramie Post Office. During the initial years of his venture he mostly serviced bicycles. He then opened a new shop at 412 S. 2nd Street in downtown Laramie and expanded his business to "fix any old thing" according to his advertisement in the December 26, 1905, edition of the Laramie Republican newspaper.

Perhaps Lovejoy's most noted achievement came on October 27, 1895, when he drove an automobile out of his shop and onto the streets of Laramie. He is credited with being the first person to have an automobile west of the Mississippi River. He drove his one-cylinder car to the Union Pacific Railroad Depot, and, according to a story he shared in the October 28, 1943, Laramie Republican-Boomerang, at that moment a westbound passenger train had just arrived. All the passengers came out to view the "contraption," and "the train was delayed twenty minutes in its departure, so great was the interest displayed by the passengers." Two years later he struck a deal with the Locomobile Company, and he traded his concept for one of their Locomobile steam-operated autos.

Lovejoy passed away on January 25, 1960, just one week before his 88th birthday.



Construction diagram of the power-operated garage door opener invented in Laramie, Wyoming, by Elmer Lovejoy and patented by him on March 26, 1918. Elmer F. Lovejoy Papers, Acc. 176, Box 1, Folder 10, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.

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