A New Way of Dealing…

Coronavirus impacts all aspects of the

Historic Ivinson Mansion

FALL NEWSLETTER
2020

The Women’s Monument Garden at the Historic Ivinson Mansion heralds some of Wyoming women’s first actions in gender equality for the nation and the world: FIRST WOMAN TO VOTE IN A GENERAL ELECTION, FIRST WOMEN ON A JURY, FIRST WOMAN BAILIFF, FIRST WOMAN ELECTED TO WYOMING LEGISLATURE. The statue of a Grecian woman holding a shock of wheat represents suffragist Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s quote, “We are sowing the winter wheat that others will reap and enjoy…” and the incredible Suffrage Act given by the Wyoming Territorial Legislature on December 10, 1869!

In spite of the restraints on all of us with the coronavirus pandemic, Laramie Garden Club members Carol Hoff, Barb Rouse, Sharon Leder, Annie Nelson, 82-year old wonder Dorothy Moore, Denise Greller, Jenny Meyers, Eliza and Amy Fluet and LPM Groundskeeper, Ethan Mac Dougall and Handyman, Stan Gibson have kept this garden and the stunning Museum grounds in beautiful shape this year.
Wyoming Territory held an election on September 6, 1870, and those who participated made world history. It was the first time ever in which women voted in a general election. The first woman who voted was Louisa Gardner Swain, a seventy-year-old widow who was born in Virginia. Her participation is well known and has been recognized by the U.S. House of Representatives which declared 6 September as Louisa Swain Day.

But what about the rest of the voters that day? Who were they and how did they vote and what were the results? Unfortunately, the official Albany County records have been lost, but local newspaper articles tell some interesting stories. Cheyenne briefly tried to claim that the wife of U.S. Marshal Church Howe was the first female voter. After being challenged by the Laramie paper, Cheyenne conceded that Mrs. Swain had actually voted 30 minutes earlier.

The legislative assembly which gave women the right to vote in 1869 was made up entirely of Democrats. Of the 93 Laramie women who voted on that September day, 64 cast their ballots for Republicans. No exit polling was necessary; there were no secret ballots required until 1890 so everyone knew who voted for whom.

Census figures from June 1870 revealed that Laramie was overwhelmingly male. There were 828 citizens residing in Laramie; 604 were males and 204 were females. Of the females, 121 were eligible to vote, meaning that 75 percent actually went to the polls, a very respectable turnout.

The heavy Republican vote by the ladies of Laramie was reflected in territory-wide elections. Many Republicans were elected to county offices and the territorial legislature. One new delegate to congress was a Republican, displacing his Democratic forerunner.

This apparently did not please the Democratic Party as one of their leaders, E. E. Castle of Uinta County, led an effort in the legislative assembly of 1871 to repeal the suffrage law. He was joined by other Democrats and some Republicans, and together they almost succeeded in taking the right to vote away from Wyoming women.

The assembly passed the repeal but Republican Governor Campbell vetoed the attempt and women’s right to vote was sustained. The assembly then mounted an effort to over-ride the veto but fell one vote short. Laramie representatives Melville C. Brown and Ona Hailey were instrumental in keeping suffrage from being curtailed the right to vote from Wyoming women. They sided with the governor.

Reports also indicated that voters were given either a Republican or a Democratic Party ballot. Voters voted straight tickets. One woman in Cheyenne wrote that she was unhappy with the name at the top of her ballot, so she tore off the top of the ballot in order to avoid voting for him.

Despite the large majority of women voting for Republicans, Albany County officials elected in September 1870 were almost evenly split between Democrats and Republicans. The Democrats held all three county commissioner positions, the probate judge, coroner, two of four justices of the peace, and the two constables.

The Republicans on the other hand received the majority of votes for Wyoming’s delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives (non-voting), county clerk, sheriff, assessor, surveyor, superintendent of schools, and two of four justices. Of those elected from both parties, three Republicans are the most widely remembered in local history: Sheriff Nathaniel K. Browell, Surveyor Stephen W. Downey and Superintendent Melville C. Brown.

Both the Laramie and Cheyenne papers reported that the presence of women voters at the polls greatly improved the behavior of the men who went to vote. They indicated that drunkenness and rowdiness were completely absent and that women were treated with the utmost courtesy. Voting requirements were very liberal. There were no voter registration rolls. Lawmakers feared the population was so transient that registration would curtail the right to vote. Anyone over the age of 21 who was a U.S. citizen or declared that they intended to become a citizen could vote. This resulted in a very high turnout with an almost unbelieveable 97 percent among Laramie men.

Voting went smoothly in Albany County except for the town of Rock Creek. Thirty-seven of the fifty-one votes cast were thrown out due to “irregularities” which were not detailed in the newspapers.

The large turnout on September 6 and the relative lack of problems revealed that Laramie citizens’ participation was sincere and showed their commitment to the democratic process. Especially in 1869, it was by women’s vote which was widely praised by local newspapers. Their engagement was so successful that Representative Weldon Tuck of Wyoming’s political scene and was enshrined in Article VI of the 1889 Wyoming Constitution.

Look for virtual holiday tales as we get closer to Thanksgiving and Christmas. Mrs. Ivinson may even appear on the website telling her lady friends stories about her mansion! Check our website frequently—www.laramiemuseum.org. Our curatorial wizards are regularly posting vignettes of history alongside their virtual tours of the Mansion on the website and Laramie Plains Museum’s Facebook & YouTube platforms. Some “stars” you can see with just a click on their photos: Sylvia Hansen, Jerry Hansen talking about Laramie’s railroad history; Susan Shumway as Eliza Stewart, early Laramie teacher & first woman called to jury duty (in the world!) as J.H.Hayford, editor of Laramie’s early newspaper, The Laramie Sentinel. We will focus on exterior décor and lighting this Christmas season so that passersby can still see holiday sparkle on parts of our beautiful Museum. Not only can our志愿者 be guides so that the public can freely roam into each of the historic rooms of the museum. It is unfortunate, but a must for safety and wellness.

Two things that we will still do:

1) The Gift Shop and offices are open Tuesday - Saturday 11:00 to 3:00. Masks, social distancing, and sanitizing procedures are in place. We have a great array of new Wyoming history books as well as neat greeting cards, gifts, the 2021 Wyoming Historical Society calendar, and lots of cool Halloween things!

2) We will focus on exterior décor and lighting this Christmas season so that passersby can still see holiday sparkle on parts of our beautiful Museum. We’re planning to feature increased outdoor lighting and holiday “scenes” so that cars will want to detour this way during the holiday season.

LEFT is the impressive statue of Louisa Gardner Swain, designed and created by local artist, John Baker, in the plaza at downtown Laramie, within a stone’s throw of where Louisa cast her notable vote in 1870. The Women’s History House was a dream of Weldon Tuck so that Louisa and Laramie’s other notable first women could be appreciated for the new standards set for Wyoming women in response to the Suffrage Act put forth by the Wyoming Territorial Legislature, December 10, 1869.

*A Bit of Trivia:* The background colors of this newsletter are purple, yellow and white, the colors chosen by the suffragists as they marched and fought for voting rights.

OTHER RESPONSES TO NOTE!

The Gift Shop and offices are open Tuesday - Saturday 11:00 to 3:00. Masks, social distancing, and sanitizing procedures are in place. We have a great array of new Wyoming history books as well as neat greeting cards, gifts, the 2021 Wyoming Historical Society calendar, and lots of cool Halloween things!

Check our website frequently—www.laramiemuseum.org. Our curatorial wizards are regularly posting vignettes of history alongside their virtual tours of the Mansion on the website and Laramie Plains Museum’s Facebook & YouTube platforms. Some “stars” you can see with just a click on their photos: Sylvia Hansen, Jerry Hansen talking about Laramie’s railroad history; Susan Shumway as Eliza Stewart, early Laramie teacher & first woman called to jury duty (in the world!) as J.H.Hayford, editor of Laramie’s early newspaper, The Laramie Sentinel.

Kim Viner telling Edward Ivinson’s story.

Susan Shumway as Eliza Stewart, early Laramie teacher & first woman called to jury duty (in the world!) as J.H.Hayford, editor of Laramie’s early newspaper, The Laramie Sentinel.

Gary Crawford presenting Sheriff N. K. Boswell.

Jerry Hansen talking about Laramie’s railroad history.

Sylvia Hansen, with her docent discourse on some of her favorite rooms in the Museum.
What’s So Great About Donor Advised Funds?
Julie M. Edwards, Partner, Nicholas & Tangeman,

You have heard about them. Maybe your neighbor has touted the great advantages of using Donor Advised Funds (DAFs) for his charitable giving. Why is he so excited about DAFs anyway? Well, DAFs provide numerous benefits to both donors as well as the nonprofits who benefit from the charitable contributions.

What is a Donor Advised Fund? Quite simply, a DAF is an account with a nonprofit sponsoring organization, such as a community foundation, which invests assets that have been placed into the account by a donor. Many national financial services firms have DAF accounts too, such as Fidelity, Goldman Sachs, Schwab and Vanguard, since DAFs have become quite popular in recent years. Gifts made to the DAF by the donor are irrevocable. The donor may contribute various types of assets, including cash, real estate, stocks and bonds, artwork, etc. The sponsoring organization is ultimately responsible for making distributions to charities, but will typically rely on recommendations and requests from the donor.

Charitable donors give for many reasons: to make a difference in their community, to benefit a particular charitable cause, or to leave a legacy. However, let’s be honest: many donors make charitable contributions largely because they receive favorable tax treatment for their donations.

**THERE ARE TAX ADVANTAGES.**

**Income Tax.** Donors receive an immediate income tax deduction in the year a contribution is made to a Donor Advised Fund, even if the funds are not distributed to charities in that taxable year. As with any charitable donation, the IRS does place a limitation on the amount an individual may deduct in a given year, depending on the type of gift made and the charitable recipient. DAFs are treated like public charities for the purpose of determining deductibility—which is highly favorable treatment. The donor may deduct the full value of cash donated to a DAF in a given year, up to sixty percent (60%) of his adjusted gross income for the year of the donation (additional, unused deduction may be carried forward five years).

**Capital Gains Tax.** In addition, a donor who donates appreciated property to a DAF will not incur capital gains tax on the gift (as opposed to selling the asset and donating proceeds). However, the donor’s deduction for appreciated property is limited to thirty percent (30%) of the donor’s adjusted gross income (with five-year carry forward). This allows a donor to contribute appreciated stocks, real estate and retirement accounts/IRAs to a DAF, which otherwise would be subject to tax on the sale of such assets (or upon distribution of the retirement assets). Therefore, the donor not only avoids the capital gain tax, but he receives a charitable deduction on his income tax return. When considering the donor’s tax advantages as well as the funds passing to the charity, that is a win-win-win!

**Estate Tax.** The assets donated to a DAF will also not be subject to estate or gift taxes upon the donor’s death when gifted during the donor’s lifetime. If the donor chooses to donate to a DAF upon his death, his estate will receive an estate or income tax deduction for amounts passing to the DAF as well.

**NON-TAX ADVANTAGES OF GIVING TO DAFS.** Donor Advised Funds allow a donor to make a charitable donation immediately, receive a deduction and decide where the money will go at a later point in time. The donor may make recommendations to the DAF administrators to distribute gifts to particular charitable 501(c)(3) recipients, which are generally respected; however, the donor does not have full control over making distributions. For donors who may not itemize their deductions on their income tax return each year, this process can be allow the donor to deduct their charitable contributions by making several years’ worth of contributions at one time; yet, the charitable recipients can continue to receive the gifts over a period of years. Receiving predictable, steady contributions is often important to nonprofit organizations trying to determine annual cash flow and budgeting for their operations.

Donor Advised Funds can be a valuable charitable giving tool for many people. Ask your local community foundation, financial advisor, accountant or attorney for more information on how to get involved with DAFs today!

**Editor’s Note:** We have no affiliation with Julie Edwards from Nicholas & Tangeman, but they are our museum neighbors, situated in another beautiful historic house, and Julie was immediately willing to help us find out more about this special way of giving to places like our beautiful Ivinson Mansion/Laramie Plains Museum.
As we speak about extraordinary women this year, it is our honor to note that Alice Freeman’s musical talents have graced our museum events for 20 years! Here is just a smattering of that grace…

- 2005 on the Alice Hardie Girls’ School stage
- 2006 in the Mansion Library at the Holiday Open House
- 2007 with Carbon Fiber Harp in Mansion 2nd floor foyer
- 2013 with Doug Freeman, a very special accomplice.
- And with Carol Lea McFadden in 2002
- 2017 in the Mansion Music Room
- 2018: Harrow Me in Laramie in the Mansion Music Room

Want to learn more? Our gift shop has some excellent history books including these excellent gifts: Wyoming’s 2021 Historical Society Calendar and very reasonably priced coffee table books on Wyoming’s vistas by Dennis Davis and Ray Hunkins. We have Judy Knight’s Wyoming suffrage and Jane Ivinson Girls’ School hot pads and table runners and we also are now carrying great signature Wyoming fabric items (ornaments, face masks, pot holders and handy make up and arm bags created by our own talented Janie Van Oss in support of organizations needing assistance.

Come check us out Tuesday—Saturday 11:00 to 3:00
A Cautious "Evening" 2020

ABOVE: LPMA Board Directors and their spouses offered gracious welcomes to our guests as our Evening greeters. Behind the masks: Director Karen Lange and her husband, Bruce and daughter, Sarah; Director Steve and Lissa Maki, and Director John Nutter with wife, Suzanne Lewis.

RIGHT: Museum Executive Director, Mary Mountain, and former LPM curator, Joney Wilmot, took off their masks long enough to reveal smiles about the socially distanced Evening. In spite of the necessary changes with reduced invitations and attendees, only outside gathering and no full service with a meal, live auction and impressive tent, we believe we made close to our average $20,000 in net proceeds, for this 2020 modified affair! We know that was because we reduced our usual spending to make it a lavish signature affair, but also because our supportive members and friends stepped up to help with buy-in to our Card Shark Raffle, donation box and auction items that night, and the caring monetary gifts we received from those weren’t quite ready for a social do. The Board will most likely allow these proceeds to be used with covering operational costs in this year of much depleted income, rather than special projects or endowment investment. Thank you, friends, for your continued care for this special place. We are making it through this cautious year and will thrive once again because of YOU!

Top: A great panoramic photo was captured by Dr. Eric Nye, a frequent guest and donor to this lovely LPM garden event.

Left: Talk about your Women of the West! We’ve got authentic ones right here: Carolyn Durand, with 50-plus years working her Jenkins Creek Ranch, still packing iron (a Colt 22 Peacemaker) and rounding up wandering cattle when she needs to, and Kathy Keenan, a Wyoming girl from a family farm near Huntley, she taught in Albany County for 35 years, sometimes traveling 120 miles one way to get to her students in the rural schools. Both ladies are longtime supporters of this special museum.

Above: Resilient Joan Porter was a special presence in support of the Museum’s Evening in spite of the worrisome day she’d had. Joanie is always a trooper!

Left: Board Director Cheri Bellamy and husband, Bill, were Card Shark winners of the $1000 bounty! Joyce Powell, Debi Ockers and Mary Mountain were the Evening Committee Chairs during this very interesting year.

Our theme this year was SKIRTS AND SADDLES—Recognizing the women and men who helped make suffrage happen in Wyoming!

Right: Though our junior docent program was unable to happen during this COVID-impacted summer, some of our favorite students of past years came to assist with this year’s Evening. Parker Jackson and Katherine McIrvin helped prepare, serve and clean up the plates of appetizers we offered attendees.
work for Tom Alsop, Albany County
Gillespie and Richardson, Sam went to
In holiday or rodeo or just for fun.
It was common for the snow melt to flood the river.
One year, Tom’s 3-year-old son, John fell in the raging water.
Sam immediately “came a-running and jumped off the bridge fully clothed to rescue little John.” The family never for-
got Sam’s deed and regarded him highly.
In 1881, Sam married Kitty who was identified only as “a full-blooded Squaw.” Rumors convinced Sam of his wife’s infidelity. In 1882, he ended up shooting his wife and then ended his own life.
Documents seen by Gladys Beery (author of many local titles includ-
ing “Siners & Saints: Tales of Old City Laramie”) regarding the inci-
dent show that the rumors were unfounded.
Another black cow-
boy who was famous during his lifetime in Laramie is Thornton Biggs or Thom’t, as he was often called.
Thornton was born into slave-
ey in Maryland in 1855. According to Burns, he was known for training racehors-
es. After the Civil War, in 1885, Thornton married Molly Workman and had a son named Fred. It is unclear why or what happened with his family, but Thornton made his way west and there is no indica-
tion that there was any contact between the them after this point.
According to Holly Hunt, Albany County rancher, he came west with Owen Hough as a cook with the trail herd. Ora Haley, another well-known Albany County rancher, purchased part of the cattle from Owen and Thornton stayed with the herd. Thornton worked for Ora Ha-
ley and was regarded highly by the cowboys. In “The Negro Cowboys,” by Durham and Jones, Ora credited part of their success to the knowledge and hard work of Thornton. He trained “a whole generation of future range managers, wagon bosses, and all-around cow-
punchers the finer points of the range cattle business,” though he was never
promoted to any of these positions him-
self. Thornton was said to possess an “animal sense,” which allowed him to pair a lost calf with its mother among thou-
sands of other cattle. Legend said he had a knack in healing the sick and injured. Thornton is mentioned in relation to a scandal around 1900 in a downtown Laramie establishment where the barman was shot. The story was made sensational by the newspapers and Thornton’s name was in almost every edition regarding the scandal even though he was not implicated in the murder. Despite this Thornton was frequently cit-
ed in the newspapers also for his participation in local rodeos and events. He often raced horses.
It was in 1920 that Thornton went to work with Holly Hunt. According to Holly, “he stayed with him as long as he was physically able. He was an outstanding cowman as well as being a very loyal and devoted to the Hunt family.” It is unclear how long Thornton stayed with Holly, but the 1940 US Census shows that Thornton lived the last of his days at the Colorado State Hospital until 1940 dying at age 90.
Both Sam and Thornton are examples of Diversity on the High Plains. It is fortunate that information exists on these two characters, due in part to their fame during their lifetimes. With further research, hopefully an even more detailed picture will emerge.