WEDDINGS, WEDDINGS, WEDDINGS!
The Historic Ivinson Mansion property and its enhanced facilities make it the perfect place for such special events. We had 27 weddings from May through September and we're not done yet!

The Historic Ivinson Mansion
Laramie Plains Museum
Newsletter
FALL 2018
2018 held a great summer season of events, visitors, student volunteers, 150th history, ongoing preservation, exhibits, and rescuing rooms and artifacts from construction aftermath. Here are a few numbers that mattered and this issue has some fine pictures of the happenings. Enjoy!

48 Junior Docents lead tours, volunteering 3,599 hours of service

27 Weddings and/or Wedding receptions were held at LPM facilities—May to September

260 meals were served at this year's Evening at the Ivinsons and we realized what a full house in the new facility is all about!

2,795 people took guided tours of the Mansion Museum between May and August

1,203 of those tours of the Ivinson Mansion were discounted or complimentary tours to encourage new visitors and help faithful supporters renew their interest

Tours and coverage to keep the Wyoming House for Historic Women open brought $5000 to the Laramie Plains Museum coffers. Free visits of the important house were encouraged with coupons given to LPM visitors. The WHHW was open June through August because of 15 caring LPM docents.

24 Arts & Craft Vendors were on the grounds and in the Alice Hardie Stevens Center for the Jubilee Days Art Fest. Many will return for our annual Holiday Open House, December 8 & 9

491 walk-thru tours were taken during the Art Fest

393 guests came to our 3 Victorian-styled Tea on Tuesdays

148 talented volunteers remain involved so that the Ivinson property is a vital presence in Laramie, Wyoming. Some of those very-significant volunteers work our gardens each spring, summer and fall. On this page you see Betsy and Brody who posed in the glorious women's monument flower bed for their August wedding. The stunning events, weddings, receptions & promotions of Laramie history held here would not be possible without the focused work of Laramie Garden Club!

Some Final Thoughts as Mid-Term Elections Approach

Political writers today bemoan the acrimony of our political discussions. In Laramie’s history, this is nothing new. Edward Ivinson, who ran for Wyoming governor as a Republican in 1892, was routinely attacked by newspapers across the state. These Democratic controlled papers often referred to Ivinson as “Old Gilded Guts,” noting his wealth and causing, they hoped, working men and women to vote against him.

Even worse, the Buffalo Free Lance newspaper openly made fun of Ivinson’s public speaking ability when it stated, “Ivinson, well he seems to be afflicted with an impediment in his standing up capacity. He might make a good reading clerk in a deaf and dumb barn if he could be tied up far enough away from the stalls to keep the animals from kicking him.” Ivinson did not respond in kind, and he was defeated by Democrat John Osborne, largely due to top Republican politicians’ role in the Johnson County War which alienated many Wyoming voters.

Ivinson was not the first Laramie political figure to suffer these kinds of attacks. When Stephen Wheeler Downey first ran for public office in the early 1870’s, he was routinely attacked by both Republican and Democratic controlled newspapers. Many Republicans opposed him because he was aligned with one of two quarrelling factions in the party. They said he was part of a “ring” of corruption aligned with Wyoming’s first governor John Campbell. The Democrats baselessly attacked him repeatedly claiming he misused public funds, campaigned illegally (though there were no campaign laws at the time) and disparaged his abilities as an attorney.

As an example, a Cheyenne newspaper printed an article titled “Downey as an Attorney” which covered one full column. It attacked Downey’s abilities as a lawyer and stated his “crooked dealings” in that occupation would also be seen in the territorial legislature if he was elected. Like Ivinson, Downey did not respond in kind. Unlike Ivinson, he won a resounding victory despite the false attacks and would go on to serve in many elected capacities in Wyoming Territory and later the state of Wyoming.

It is sad these attacks, by members of both parties against their opponents, occurred. In researching the life of Stephen Downey, I encountered an editorial that he addressed to the Laramie Sentinel newspaper on January 21, 1871. Had political leaders of each party later heeded his early call for civility, those early elections would not have been so nasty. Downey wrote, “I often think, however, it would be far better for some of us if we would stop, and in order to judge the motives and actions of others, to even put ourselves in their place and from a standpoint thus attained, to judge them. Did we do this we might, perhaps, have more charity, see more to ap-

POLITICAL ATTACKS AS OLD AS LARAMIE

KIM VINER, LPM Historian, Docent, Author

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Our favorite senior theater group, The Unexpected Company, answered our call for a robust, historic melodrama—something those earlier pioneers might have seen at Bull’s Big Tent or Keystone Hall when they first arrived to Laramie City. The cordial senior group did not let us down, bringing Bad Bart, Sunbonnet Sue, the hero, John, colorful townspeople, even Jane and Edward Ivinson to the big tent performance. Kudos to TUC president, Germaine St. John, and savvy director and musical maven, Susan Shumway, and all the Company for making history come to life on the stage at the Evening event!

2018 Evening Celebrated Laramie’s Beginnings

Left, Ivinson Mansion neighbor, supporter, and impressive cowman, Barry Hildreth, sat alongside visiting sheriff, Aldie Johnson, who was in from Pasadena, California at the busy Evening’s meal held in the newly expanded Alice Hardie Stevens Mountain Event Center.

Above: Something caught the eye of cowgirl, Joney Wilmot, and pioneer mother, Susan McGraw, in the garden tent that night. Do you suppose it was Danny Walker, left, ambling along with his Lorenz Model 1862 Rifled Musket slung over his shoulder? Maybe they were intrigued knowing that was the third most common rifle during the Civil War. Or maybe they liked his slouch hat and pants.

Joyce Powell, one of the lead designers and volunteers for the Alice Harrie Stevens expansion, was wistful in her historic garb as she posed beside the dedication poster in the “new” facility.

Above: cowpoke singer/musician and auctioneer, Dan Brain, “Danno!” was an energizing part of the festivities once again. Right, Bob Mountain, in his long Western dress coat and hat, plus spurs! fit right into the 1868 theme.

Right, LPM Curator, Konnie Cronk, wore a jaunty hat as part of her early-Laramie newsboy look for the Evening affair.

Above, Barbara Barnes seems a bit skeptical during her conversation with the lavish historic beauty, Donna Thompson, during the Evening’s early cocktail hour. (Note the old fashioned root beer in the photo’s foreground.)

Right, a vintage Laramie statesman, Dave Van Oss, consulted with the Keystone hall musicians, Susan Shumway and Valerie Clymer-Smith, in preparation for The Unexpected Company singers trilling their 1800’s tunes before dinner and their melodrama during the traditional beef, potatoes and cobbler meal.
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Dennis & Judy Knight Family & Friends
Germaine St. John & Friends
Friends of Ivinson Home for Ladies
Newell Wine & Spirits—Bob & Judy Adams
Dan Nelson Family & Friends
Western States Bank/Cook & Associates

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Shonna Ahrenholtz  
Aspen Chiropractic  
Barbara Barnes & Kim Viner  
Cheri & Bill Bellamy  
Sandy Blair  
Dan Brain/Danno!  
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Susan Shunway & Sam Shunway  
Smith Beverage  
Spyridon Pottery  
The Still Package Liquor  
Germaine St. John  
The Unexpected Company  
Donna Thompson  
Deb Thomsen  
UniWyo FCU  
Dave & Julie Van Oss  
Danny & Shirla Walker  
Dave and Chris Walrath  
Wendy Ware  
Jim & Siyda Wear  
Wind & Roses Harp Music  
Erica Zeigler

Table Sponsors

In front, FIB Cowboy Banker, Gary Negich, gets a kick out of The Unexpected Company’s melodrama as part of this year’s Evening! With characters like, Bad Bart, Sun Bonnet Sue, Good Old John, and the Ivinsons, The Company proved why they deserve to perform on the Event Center’s new Van Os Stage and why they have chosen to be so supportive of the expansion, stage, dressing rooms and basement accommodations for their partners at the Laramie Plains Museum.

It was definitely an affair to remember! Exuberant examples of the history of our community—the history of ourselves and our families—came to life throughout The Evening gala this year. As Laramie turned 150 years old, we celebrated the Hell on Wheels—End of the Tracks pioneering town it was in 1868 when that first train arrived. There were cowhands and lawmen, statesmen and ladies of questionable intent. We saw housemaids, hardy ranchers—women and men, newsboys, Belles of the Ball, and rodeo heroes. The suspenseful melodrama showed Bad Bart trying again and again to hold Sue captive for the deed to her Wyoming ranch, but good-hearted John saved the day and her heart! Our annual Evening at the Ivinsons’ this year was one-of-a-kind as we tied the traditions of past years with the vibrant new updates and expansion to our beautiful reception area. Guests began in the Ivinsons’ garden area for drinks, tasty appetizers and a chance at some pretty nifty auction items. Then there were folks singing from the Keystone Hall curtain and guests moved into the Mansion to pose for a vintage photograph and look at exhibits of the era—a poker game set up in Edward’s smoking room, an historic photography studio on the second floor, and a wedding attire of all decades posed in Mrs. Ivinson’s sewing room. Libations flowed and the skies opened up to release a battering of rain and hail so that our vintage guests were hurried into the Events Center slightly ahead of schedule. Never fear! Hilton Garden Inn was at the ready with their homepun offerings of slabs of beef, mashed taters and gravy, green beans and peach cobbler. It was more than a bit busy and crowded, but we reckon that those early days of Laramie City were probably just as unpredictable and jumbled as things got sorted out to build our town.

The bottom line is that we had more guests than ever, new faces enjoying our history and our updated venue. We gave special deals so that we could have many historic characters join our Evening fun, enriching our experience of this very special place and the history that it preserves and celebrates. We are working to iron out the kinks and the acoustics so that next year’s event will be even better! Promise. The generous hearts that supported us for this year’s event brought $25,000 net to the LPMA coffers and shored up our vision for this expansion and enhancements that will help our Laramie Plains Museum sustain far into the future. Thank you! Y’all come again, won’t ya?

Evening at the Ivinsons’ 2018

The 2018 Evening Honoree was ALL OF THE DONORS, DOERS & VOLUNTEERS WHO HAVE MADE THE MUSEUM SHINE THROUGH THE YEARS

The curatorial staff was very busy this summer (like everyone else!) with events, research and exhibits. As we wrapped up summer and moved into fall, our main objective has been to clear our artifact storage space on the second floor of the Alice Hardie Stevens Center (AHSC) and to clean the artifacts themselves that were impacted by construction dust. You may have seen us outside as we cleaned artwork and books—letting the dust fly away rather than rearranging itself onto other objects upstairs. That was just the beginning! Soon we hope to move on to a thorough dusting of the contents of our 87 boxes of paper documents, and then we will be removing dust from uniforms and coats that hang off the second floor. This aftermath clean up has given us the perfect opportunity to really see what we have!

The walls, floors and ceilings of the curatorial areas on that AHSC second floor have been our focus throughout October so that the rooms are ready for cleaned items to return. Volunteer craftsmen extraordinary, Ron Olsen and Laramie’s photo archivist Jerry Hansen, stepped up to patch, smooth and texture our long-overdue cracks and holes in the drywall in that area. We were fortunate to also have UW students on THE BIG EVENT Saturday to help with damaged wallpaper removal and deep cleaning of our weather- weary Marshall School House. Now we’re ready for wiping walls, priming, and final painting. The Alice Hardie Stevens Expansion team, managed by Joyce, Chris, and Amy, just to name a few, are joining the curatorial team (Amy, Judy, Dennis, Konnie) to get the walls freshened with new paint.

Another huge change as we reorganize into more useable spaces will be to move the “objects we can’t prop” (unacquired but possibly useful objects) into the curatorial areas of the new addition of the AHSC. When we accession items, we promise to keep them “forever,” stored and exhibited as safely as possible. Props, on the other hand, make up a large part of the items that we keep. They are expendable—we can walk on them if they’re rugs, wear them if they’re clothing, and when worn out, we can dispose of them. Gradually we have been removing props that were stored with accessioned items. This is essential and allows us to better utilize space. As we update the layout, this gives us an opportunity to conduct an inventory of the collections stored on the second floor as well as to deep clean. As we look ahead to the completion of the basement of the new addition, we have been researching what items and materials are suitable for storage in this new environment. Right now, props are overflow in the museum building. We will be transferring them to the new AHSC basement in order to keep them together. This will also give us an opportunity to conduct an inventory of the "old" mansion basement.

We have been fortunate as several new volunteers have come aboard in the curatorial area. Amy Allen of Torrington, who began as our spring intern in 2017 (now graduated with a degree in European history with a minor in anthropology with a minor in museum studies), has been brought aboard as our new registrar. Many of you may already know Amy since she has been an administrative assistant in the Carriage House this summer. She is assuming the registrar position as she takes a gap year—she is returning to graduate school.

Karen Lange is a long-time Laramie resident and retired librarian from LCCC. Karen has been helping us since earlier this year with our photo archives. She has been digitizing our Boomerang negatives collection which documents mid-20th century Laramie. Karen has been an indispensable help to our department and we are grateful to have her expertise.

Pam Murdock and Judy Chen, two of our newest volunteer employees, has a long history on UW staff in a number of positions and recently retired as the CEO’s administrative assistant at Ivinson Memorial Hospital. Pam is partnering with LPM’s photo archivist Jerry Hansen for the interpretation of our photographic collection, including the newly digitized Boomerang Collection.

Judith, a former student of William Stone, is currently studying anthropology with a minor in museum studies.

As your curator, I have kept busy organizing and planning the changes in our collections areas as well as designing the layout of the new space as the new addition. As I write this article at LPM, I have a book in my hand—things around here. That’s a good thing! If you have any questions or comments, or you would like to see yourself for what is happening, please feel free to stop by the mansion for a chat or email me at konniecrone@gmail.com. I always love to hear from our visitors, members, and volunteers. It keeps us current with your hopes, dreams and our continued vision for best preservation and exhibits of our wonderful collection!
Wyoming Territory held an election on 6 September 1870 and those who participated made world history. It was the first time ever in which women could vote in a general election. The first woman who voted that morning was Laramie resident Louisa Swain, a seventy-year-old woman 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 of 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 territory’s new delegate to congress was a Republican, displacing his Democratic foreman.

This apparently did not please the Democratic Party as one of their leaders, C. 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. They sided with the Democrats and the relative lack of problems revealed that Laramie citizens’ participation was sincere and showed their commitment to the democratic process. Especially noteworthy was the women’s vote which was widely praised by local newspapers. Their engagement was so successful that it became a permanent fixture of Wyoming’s political scene and was enshrined in Article VI of the 1889 Wyoming Constitution.

Above we see the impressive statue of Louisa Swain, designed and created by local artist, John Baker, in the plaza at the entrance to the Wyoming House for Historic Women in downtown Laramie, within a stone’s throw of where Louisa cast her notable vote in 1870. The Plaza heralds visitors and locals to remember the significant women of Wyoming who set new standards as they responded to the Suffrage Act set forth by Governor Mead visited with Laramie’s historic legends on the opening day.

The Unexpected Company actors were especially great about portraying historic characters throughout the summer—at special events, at the cemetery, on Laramie streets and here at the opening festivities at Wyoming Territorial Prison State Historic Site. On the boardwalk, you can see Nancy Chase, Karen Baird, Chris Knudson, Ron Olsen, Naomi Horton, Darlene Olsen, Wil and Nancy Basler representing Laramie’s stalwart men and women. Of course, folks just like these who carved out an existence and established a fine town on these dusty streets on the high plains of Wyoming are still here.

Here are more historic figures from the Green Hills Cemetery: gravestones, Susan Thomas portrayed Stephen Downey’s mother, Sarah Montgomery, and Kim Viner was Downey, Nims!!

Governor Mead visited with Laramie’s historic legends on the opening day:

Edward Ivison (Ron Olsen) and wife, Jane (Mary Mountain) made appearances during cemetery tours orchestrated by Judy Knight this sesquicentennial summer. Laramie leg-end s were dotted throughout Green Hills, including Christy Grover and her “ladies” telling tales of life in early Laramie City. The tours were such a success, we’re considering doing them more often.

Louisa Swain Plaza. Jessica led 8 of the 15 walking or biking tours. Germaine St. John and Judy Knight were others who told Laramie’s fascinating history beginning in historic downtown Laramie.

Jessica Flock is shown here, reading her bike tour of Laramie monuments at the Louisa Swain Plaza. Jessica led 8 of the 15 walking or biking tours. Germaine St. John and Judy Knight were others who told Laramie’s fascinating history beginning in historic downtown Laramie.