

Historic Ivinson Mansion
Laramie Plains Museum Newsletter

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**With so many things
unable to happen, how
can we still stay
engaged with the
Museum!?!**

- 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 Wyoming suffrage t-shirts for summer wear or gifting. Also WY lasso baskets, history books and more! See photos below.
- 2) Check our website frequently—www.laramiemuseum.org We post updates, information, virtual tours and historic characters each week.
- 3) Come to the beautiful Museum grounds! Wander around, soak up the historic feel, sit on the benches. The grounds men and our wonderful Garden Club volunteers are keeping things beautiful. Even the multitudes of recent storm damaged branches were whisked away quickly because of many helpful hands. Come enjoy Laramie summer air here!
- 4) Come to the Art Fest on the Lawn, Sunday, July 12, 10:00 to 3:00 and plan for our Evening at the Ivinsons' event, also on the lawn—Saturday, August 15, 2020. If you're not on our invitation (to be sent in July) list, call our office and we'll make sure to get you one.
- 5) Listen to KIMX-104.5 KRQU-98.7 KHAT-92.3 1210AM mornings for new bits of Wyoming history trivia "You Don't Know Jacque!" sponsored by LPM.
- 6) Check out Laramie Plains Museum's Facebook and YouTube posts.

Historic Ivinson Mansion

Laramie Plains Museum June 2020 Newsletter



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Permit No. 23

Laramie History in the Time of Coronavirus

Our stunning 1892 historic house museum was the backdrop for some of Laramie High School's 2020 graduates—another aspect of the students' and the Museum's "new normal." With traditional graduation ceremonies unable to take place because of social distancing requirements during this time of COVID-19, the Ivinson Mansion was the legacy backdrop for students: Sheldon Williams, Katie Peterson, Ruby Novogrodsky, Molly Bress, and Bryce Bienz. Novogrodsky and Bress were junior docents in their early teen years. At their moms' requests, we offered the lush museum grounds as a backdrop for this memorable gathering. The students lined up for a mock procession while one mother played "Pomp and Circumstance" on her mini speaker as the graduates walked up to very appropriate social distancing on the Ivinsons' historic front porch. Betsy Bress, our former curator and mother of Molly, spoke about the pride the parents had in these graduates' achievements in spite of the confusion and difficulties that wrapped up their high school years. She spoke of bright futures for them and each student ended up saying a few words. One student played guitar and sang a song he wrote about their years together. A joyful, energizing song was played for the recessional as the graduates socially distanced with photos like this one and yearbook signings. They hadn't been together since the last day of in-person high school in mid-March. The poignancy of the graduates being here on our quarantined historic grounds was respected by all involved and our LPM director said these students will probably end up being our "visionary problem solvers" because of the curves they have learned to deal with at the end of their high school years.



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Laramie Plains Museum in the Time of Coronavirus

By Executive Director, Mary Mountain

We started 2020 with gusto and high hopes for enhanced exhibits as we moved forward with long-wished-for renovations inside our stunning historic house museum. **Kim Viner**, one of our favorite authors and historians, gave a very generous gift at the end of 2019 to LPM for maintenance and restoration projects of the mansion in honor and remembrance of his wife, **Barbara Barnes**. We were not only grateful, we were inspired! We began the new year with vision for repair, replacement and restoration. We had the scarred front foyer oak flooring sanded down and restored to its original 1892 gleam. The peeling wallpapers from early 2000's renovations were sealed by our wallpaper expert, **Joyce Powell**, and original tiles were scrubbed to reveal their welcoming historic checkerboard at the front door. Our *exhibit developers* began envisioning the ways they would tell new and varied stories of Laramie history. We asked **Ken-ny Braisted**, our longtime, careful friend for heavy lifting, to have his team from **Cowboy Moving & Storage** move our large, precious pieces to other floors in the mansion after long years in the same places. The new exhibits started to take on the intricacies of the stories our curatorial team had been dreaming. THEN, it was early March and the warnings about a pandemic virus taking hold around the world and within our nation hit the news! Sheltering in place, for at least a while, seemed to be the only sure way we could be protected and start to take control of this runaway infection. Our docents said they did not feel safe with possibly having visitors from maybe a hot bed of infection with coronavirus taking tours of the Ivinson Mansion. We closed the doors and posted signs, website notices and voicemail messages to halt visitors to the Museum until we could feel safe again. We sought supplies for the Museum and our personal use, like everyone else, as we looked to isolate safely in our homes through the rest of March. Minimal staff continued to come in at alternate times to do the work needed to take care of snow, buildings, Collection-related business, bills, inventories, phone cancellations and postponements of events. March turned into April, May and now we are nearly through June with still feeling dramatic changes to our "normal" routines.

We have had to cancel traditional gatherings and events that raise funding and awareness: **Cheers for Volunteers**, **The Unexpected Company** spring rehearsals and performances, meetings for nonprofits and other organizations, and our May and June (and now July) **Tea on Tuesdays** because of CDC guidelines for food creation and serving, social distancing, and the older, more vulnerable patrons and volunteers for those very special socials. The money losses are significant, yes, but in our minds some of our biggest losses are in the human interactions we have as we share our wonderfully unique history. For the first summer in over 30 years, junior docents, our teen volunteers, are not here in full force. Unsure of exactly how we could proceed, and school not being held on campus, Dan Nelson and I did not make our annual trek to Laramie Junior High to entice upcoming eighth graders to spend some of their summer vacation volunteering as tour guides and LPM helpers. It's just as well, since we are realizing that tours of our historic house museum are too intimate with twists and turns in the narrow passageways for social distancing and we are unable to let guests just wander. Fortunately, we've pursued other options with online tours and historic characters' stories being posted, [See the back page of this newsletter for the other ways you can keep in touch with this special place.] but we're feeling the loss of that energizing youthful and visitor exuberance we usually have in summer!

We have cut costs with salaries—paying only basic, necessary wages to keep things afloat, much as we did in pre-AHSC expansion years, just taking care of basics. Mid-year figures for wages in 2019 were at 53% of our budget; this year, we have trimmed enough to only spend 35% of our figure projected for salaries in 2020. Some of our older employees have chosen to use this COVID-19 time to do LPM work as volunteers, much as many did in years past. It's what we do to keep our beautiful history alive and well even in the lean, difficult times. We have also applied for COVID assistance monies to help us through these restricted days. The PPP payroll stimulus was one help we received and we have applied for the recent statewide offer of assistance with revenue lost. We'll see how that will play out. These struggles, too, will pass as did the tumultuous financial dives of 2007-2008. As other museums were closing their doors and selling off artifacts in those years, Laramie Plains Museum held firm because of all of YOU—our donors and magnificent legion of volunteers! Then and now, you keep us grounded and reassured that we will survive this dastardly time. Your donations and confidence continue to fortify us. **That brings me to another percentage that is very important for you to know: we are at 92% of our membership receipts!** We were fortunate to have held our membership drive with the February newsletter and you, our faithful friends, did step up. Many of you choosing Ivinson Circle memberships so that you could give a little more than our lower membership rates. Thank you.

We are devoting what resources we have to the ever-fluctuating coordinations to hold events and offer rental opportunities to our clientele as restrictions open up. Rentals of the museum facilities and special events contribute to 56% of our total operating income each year. Our projections for the 2020 budget reflected our confidence in numbers because of the great success of the expansion of the Alice Hardie Stevens Center. We ended 2019 surpassing our \$60,000 rental income stream by \$20,000. By this time June, 2019, we had already reached 49% of our rental income, or nearly \$30,000; rentals in 2020 are at 14% of projected figures, a dramatic reflection of the COVID-19 impact. Gift Shop sales by this time in 2019 were 38% of budget projections; in 2020, we are half of that at 13%. Events in 2019 had brought in 31% of our projections or \$12,280 by June; in 2020 we are at .17% or \$175

Fortunately, we have been able to keep our grounds open for visitors to enjoy our gardens and landscapes, still beautifully tended by representatives of **Laramie Garden Club** and our dynamic duo of **Ethan MacDougall**, grounds keeper, and **Stan Gibson**, all-around handyman. We encourage guests to still soak up the historic ambiance—find a bench and check us out online at **laramiemuseum.org** for tales of Laramie history. Other museums are struggling as well and have found online touring and interactive quizzes to be their best offerings at this time. Even the expansive *Smithsonian* with much freer access than us has been closed to publics. Closer to home, *The Museum at the Big Horns*, Sheridan's County Museum has cancelled their events for the rest of the year and we're working with them to develop Teas like ours for 2021. We're all doing the best we can and we are truly grateful that you're sticking with us through this unbelievable year of events. You make us all believe in better days ahead!



"Colonel Root has filled orders for nearly all the great menageries and zoological gardens in the world," including the famed P. T. Barnum.

Another article titled "Hair Raising Adventures While Tiger Hunting in Manchuria," from the *Daily Boomerang*, February 5, 1901, tells a story of W. H.'s tiger hunt in Manchuria [Northeastern China] in 1888, in search of tiger skins for a London dealer. It is a story worthy of any writer of adventure novels. The story is not only interesting in its action-packed narrative but takes place in a region rife with colonialism. It also serves as an historical narrative which includes characters such as Russian surveyors, various hunters from around the United Kingdom and Europe, and native Chinese prisoners from a village with a corrupt mayor. The Russian surveyors just happened to be in the same region planning a route for the Chinese Eastern Railway, a shortcut on the Trans-Siberian Railway.

By November of 1894, the building was converted into an opera house. An advertisement in the *Boomerang* lists W. H. Root as the manager. The opera house hosted lectures, the Uncle Tom's Cabin troupe and various other performances in 1894 alone. From 1894 until W. H.'s death in April of 1903, the management of the opera house is listed as either W. H. Root, Chauncy Root or Helen Root. Helen is listed more frequently as her role in the opera house increased.

From about 1884, when W. H. began his business on 3rd street until his death in 1903, there are various articles about his opinion on subjects. He spoke several times in support of the gold mining industry putting forth his evidence as well as the oil industry. There is even an article on how to deal with wolves on your property. It is evident that W. H.'s advice was sought out on these subjects, so he must have been an overall likeable guy.

Here is what a newspaper reporter from the *Cheyenne Leader* had to say: "Like a balmy summer zephyr, Col. Bill Root was an object to look upon. Indeed to be strictly accurate he

was a revelation of manly beauty and a gorgeous exponent of the highest art in tailor made clothing. He came upon his friends like a ray of sunlight on a murky day and they at once struck work so as to dally with the blithesome Bill until the evening twilight had projected itself far into the western main... Col. Bill Root will do; he will always do and Laramie may be proud to claim him as its own..." So, the article continues for a half column.

"Bill" Nye's reputation as a humorist was well-known during his lifetime, even rivaling Mark Twain. Less known, W. H. also had a reputation for his wicked humor; he wrote for the *North Western Stock Journal* under the pen name "Long Feller." His poor wife was often the center of Bill Nye and W. H.'s jokes. Mary Bellamy even commented on the duo jokesters in "Women Winning in Wyoming": "Mrs. Root can give interesting accounts of many jests perpetrated by these two famous wits and practical jokers, she being the victim in many cases." It seems reasonable that both men at various times were also at the other end of practical jokes. A humorous story told in the *Laramie Weekly Sentinel* on April 22, 1878, describes a "young man who wore eye-glasses like a locomotive head-light, and a suit of clothes made of some stylish figure like the pattern of one of those stripped awnings," and his companion saw the curious W. H. Root [referred to as William Horatio Root] standing at the end of the platform. The travelers thought they had discovered an oddity worth asking about. "Root, attired in his usual careless and easy style, wearing a chip sundown and a huge pair of Mexican spurs... stood there twisting his camel's hair moustache and looking dreamily out over the snow-clad hills" was "totally unmindful of the eager gaze of the two young swells with the checkerboard clothes and the cream-colored whiskers... He asked Judge Blair 'who that vevy fewothuth [sic] looking fellow with the stwange [sic] hat might be, you know?'" Judge Blair replied, in all seriousness: *That is one of the most*

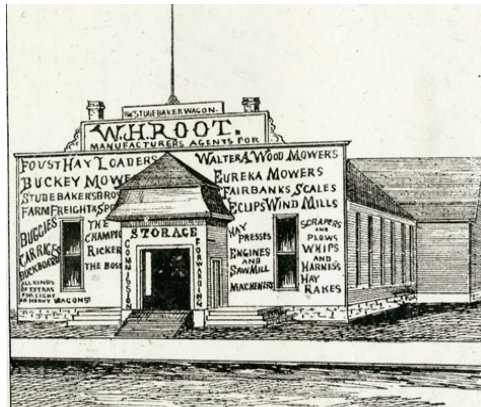
desperate characters, probably, that we have on the plains, or, in fact, west of the Missouri river. He is known about here as Wicked William of Wyoming the Bold, Bad Man from Bitter Creek; or, The Bloody Buster of the Black Hills. He is all right if you don't get him irritated, but if you stir him up, and call him a liar, and slap him across the face two or three times, he will organize the most ghastly and imposing array of cemetery fruit that you ever saw. Of course he don't look like a bad man, but I assure you that it is a common thing for him to kill eighteen men out of a possible twenty. Up to within a few years he has always employed his own Coroner and Undertaker, but now times are more quiet, and he has discharged them. Ostensibly he is the advance agent of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, Junior, but I think he is looking for someone to plant under the spring cactus. He tells me he is looking for a man who parts his hair in the middle. He thinks he will hash up his bloody career with a man who parts his hair in the middle and never drinks anything stronger than chocolate.

According to the tale, the young men disappeared after the story was told and "all this time William Horatio Root stood there talking in his unctuous, oleaginous way about Louis Napoleon Jr, and there wasn't a thought of death or destruction in his heart as big as a mosquito's ear." It can be said that William H. Root was a big personality. Many claimed he knew everyone and was liked in equal measure. His humor earned him recognition, not only in America but also throughout Europe and possibly elsewhere. His advice was sought by many and published in newspapers and journals around the world.



W.H. ROOT

By Konnie Cronk, LPM Curator



It is likely that William Henry Root and his wife Helen “Lizzy” Elizabeth “Sissy” (Burns) Root were known by every Laramie person at the turn of the 20th Century. Colonel Billy Root, as he was often called in the local newspapers (though it is unclear why he was referred to as Colonel since no military record has been found), was an outspoken and highly regarded individual. He also had a reputation for his wit and humor and is credited for encouraging Edgar Wilson “Bill” Nye (1850-1896) in his profession as a humorist and editor of the *Laramie Boomerang* newspaper.

Helen along with her brother-in-law Chauncey Root were well known for operating the Root’s Opera House, which earned national fame during its time. Unfortunately, as far as newspaper reporting goes, it seems Helen did not receive as much local attention until after her husband’s untimely death in 1903. She was mentioned periodically for participating in social events, but it was usually “Billy” Root’s activities and advice that were printed in newspapers. Management of the opera house is usually listed as W. H. or Chauncey until 1903. After W. H.’s death, Helen is often referred to as the manager and other times, Chauncey.

W. H. Root was born some time in 1848 in Lebanon, New Jersey, to Aaron and Sarah Root. He had two siblings (that were mentioned), Chauncey B. Root (born 1851) and Hattie E. Root (born 1863). By 1860, according to the census records, Aaron moved his family to Omaha, Nebraska, where he operat-

ed a hotel. According to W. H.’s obituary, the Roots “kept the best hotel in the frontier town, as it then was,” exaggerated in true newspapering fashion. According to Root’s obituary, his father Aaron was contracted with the Union Pacific Railroad in 1859 (this date is likely incorrect since the Pacific Railroad Act was not passed until 1862) to “grade through the Red Desert,” a term often used for the Wyoming landscape during the 19th Century. At some point William joined his father on the railroad though it’s unlikely that he helped complete the work at age 11 as his obituary says (more evidence that the 1859 date is unlikely).

Aaron moved his family to Chicago sometime in the early 1870’s where they remained until the late 1880’s. It was during this period that W. H. operated as a “bull-whacker” or a freighter, moving goods in a wagon pulled by oxen. An article published in the *Boomerang* February 5, 1901, says that he was also a “stage driver, a superintendent of a district road, a scout, guide, and a hunter.” By the mid 1870’s W. H. and possibly his brother Chauncey, moved to Albany County, Wyoming. His obituary says that he operated Paradise Ranch, located five miles south of Laramie.

The October 15, 1877, edition of the *Laramie Weekly Sentinel* reported that “Billy Root’s fiancée arrived from the East last night, rather unexpectedly, as the announcement of the day of her arrival had failed to reach him. He happened to be at the train, however, with his buggy, in which he took the young lady at one [sic] to the residence of N. F. Spicer, and called in the preacher.” The 1880 census lists Chauncey, W. H., and Lizzie living near the Big Laramie River. W. H. is listed as a “farmer,” Lizzie is “keeping house,” and Chauncey is “cashier in bank.” Chauncey Root was the cashier for Wyoming National Bank of Laramie for approximately 10 years, the same bank Edward Iverson began and was later president.

W. H. Root’s obituary claims that he moved to Laramie (actual town)

in 1877 where he built the building that became Root’s Opera House, but according to a *Laramie Weekly Sentinel* article on May 11, 1889, the building was the original school house in Laramie, organized by Jane Iverson and other early pioneers. By 1879 the building was converted into Blackburn Hall (not clear by whom) for use as a public stage and meeting space. In June of 1884, the building was repurposed by W. H. as an “agricultural implement repository.” Root displayed his stock of “buggies, carriages, wagons, and farming implements of all kinds,” to Laramie and surrounding areas. By 1885, he was licensed to sell Studebaker wagons and advertisements for other brands are found in all newspapers until 1889. By 1890, W. H. used the building as a holding place for wild animals from Wyoming to sell back East or across the Atlantic. Many of these animals were sold to wealthy men with large estates. An article in the *Daily Boomerang* on January 24, 1894, tells of an elk that W. H. captured and took to England by ship “and placed in Sir Peter Walker’s park.” The elk was photographed, and the story of its journey across the Atlantic was told in a London newspaper and allegedly published in “leading papers of the world.” Another article in the *Boomerang* September 15, 1891, W. H. advertises “Wanted, six porcupines, four antelope, 100 prairie dogs.” Many other ads between 1890 and 1894 advertise for wild animals W. H. has captured or is looking to obtain.

Not only did W. H. deal in wild animals of Wyoming but he traveled to Africa and China and other locales for exotic skins and animals for various purpose. A *Boomerang* article published in February 5, 1901, says that



COLONEL WILLIAM HENRY ROOT.

SO....WHERE IS SOME POSITIVE NEWS IN ALL THIS?

Well, Wyoming’s Governor has increased some indoor limits and outdoor use of our stunning landscape is a possibility for larger groups, so our rental opportunities are opening up, and we have some upcoming events that are now options.

We have shown a definite uptick in June with inquiries and scheduling for use of the Iverson Mansion property and Event Center, though many brides and bigger events are choosing 2021 dates for more assured safety. Nevertheless, Crystal Griffis, our Rentals Coordinator, is busy fielding inquiries, showing the facilities and outdoor possibilities and helping get us back on the increased rental income track we dreamed of when we expanded the Alice Hardie Stevens Event Center.

One of the brightest lights in all of our income streams right now is actually coming from the Mason Loft Condo (Stone House) rentals! Doug and Joyce Powell, managers of those two impressive home away units, are definitely seeing an increase in use. The reasons are because small groups of friends and family travelers are able to use the units in safer Wyoming and are looking for just that simpler family-style kind of getaway. We are very pleased with that quiet use of the condos—Mary Kay Mason and our superb volunteer team made magic happen so that there would be one more positive income stream to keep our beautiful historic house museum alive and well, and that is just what is happening in the time of COVID-19. We have consistently received auxiliary income from the condos since the first renovation was completed in 2016 and income from that avenue is wonderfully happening right now during these worrisome times. It is a very good

We WILL be holding our annual **ART FEST ON THE IVINSON LAWN!** Even with Jubilee Days festivities having to be cancelled, we believe that the Art Fest vendors and those shopping their wares can social distance on our magnificent Iverson landscape. **COME! ENJOY THE ARTISTS AND CRAFTERS** on that lovely summer **Sunday, JUNE 12, 2020 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**



Evening at the Iversons' 2020

Saturday, August 15, 2020

In honor of the women and men who made suffrage happen early (1869) for Wyoming as well as the 150th anniversary of Laramie’s Louisa Swain’s vote on equal terms with men, the theme for this year’s signature event is *Skirts ‘n Saddles*. Over the past 15 years, *The Evening* has grown into a much anticipated event as we wrap up our beautiful Laramie summer and look toward football and fall leaves, and University students back on our streets. This year, with COVID-19 impacting all of our plans and movements, we are longing even more for some sense of normalcy and an event that gathers us in special ways to celebrate our history and our survival instincts. Working within the constraints of gatherings and coronavirus safety, our *Evening* will be a modified event, an outside cocktail hour held on our beautiful East Lawn. We will be sending *Evening* invitations to past patrons and anyone else who is interested in July. Call our office 307-742-4448 if you want to come and we need to get you on our list! It’s a great night of care for Wyoming history and this beautiful historic place.

COVID-FREE RAFFLE!

Along with this year’s *Evening* invitation, we’ll include information about our decks of cards raffles. You’ll choose your card (or several) and have chances at \$1500 the night of the *Evening at the Iversons*. No baskets or items, just cash!

If you’ve wondered how we’re doing, even a little worried about how we would traverse our usual events, you can always help us through this time when normal fundraising options are unable to happen. Every little bit helps at a time like this. A tax deductible donation receipt will be given for any and all gifts to help keep this beautiful place moving through this uncertain year. Checks payable to *Laramie Plains Museum*, and all credit cards are accepted. You can even click onto the donation link on our website front page after you watch a tour of the museum or listen to an historic character’s tale.

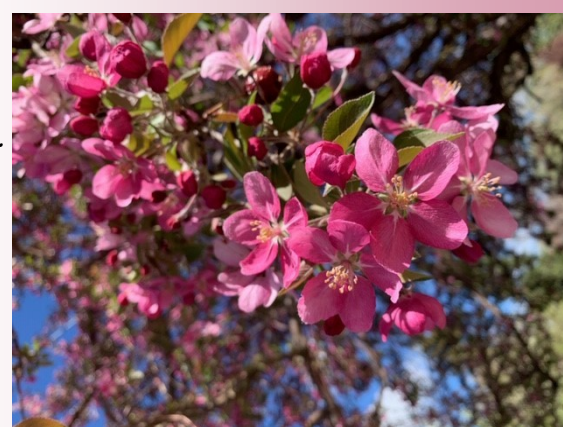
“THE TIMELESS GAZE OF CURATORS”

I'd like to tell you that I'm the creative person who came up with the insightful title to this editorial on what is happening for our Laramie Plains Museum as the coronavirus sends a *new normal* into our museum world, but I must give credit where credit is due. One of this spring's issues of American Alliance of Museums monthly publication had those dramatic words on its cover as it introduced interviews with and about curators across the country. It was a mystical title that invited me to read and be reminded why we love museums and our curators. I thought you would enjoy a little of the insight given and might also arrive at a renewed appreciation of these thoughtful caregivers of history, just as I did—especially as they move forward through the COVID-19 restrictions.

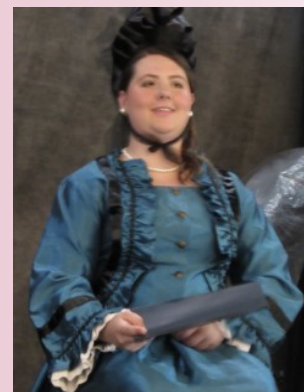
Museums tell our stories of community—showcasing the joys, woes and just daily tribulations of our history. Museums really can't do this as well without curators and we at LPM have had some of the finest women and men working those inspired duties over the years, even as we began as a volunteer-served organization and subsequently have never been able to pay them what they are worth. Curators have long been regarded as the distinguished, knowledgeable organizers and presenters of collections of history, but Micah Parzen, the chief executive officer of the San Diego Museum of Man, says that his museum felt the word “curator” was far too limiting to what the job actually entails at our repositories of history. “Several years ago we eliminated the position of “curator” at our museum, and we began hiring “exhibit developers”...because we wanted the look, feel, and content of our exhibitions to emerge out of a multiplicity of voices from throughout the institution and our community... Our exhibit developers wear a variety of hats. They are researchers, project managers, dialogue facilitators, community liaisons, writers, storytellers, and evaluators—all wrapped into one. They are the shepherds that bring an idea to life as an experience for our visitors.” Our LPM exhibit developers have certainly done all of that and continue to refine their visionary decisions and hands-on work. **Konnie Cronk, our lead curator**, and her **assistant curator and registrar, Amy Allen**, are using this issue to tell of some of the new collection elements we have acquired, exhibits they've newly presented in the museum, and the **new** online tours and historic character interviews they have been posting.

Dr. Porchia Moore, assistant professor of museum studies at the School of Art & Art History at the University of Florida and former curator of the rotating African American gallery “Spoken” at the Columbia Museum of Art, says “I see curatorial work as a kind of story telling and information praxis. I view it as a form of social justice practice and activism. Curatorial work is about being culturally responsive, being able to rapidly respond to issues such as police violence or even just being able to navigate and cultivate conversation. So for me, this work is about sharing of information and helping to highlight and uncover suppressed narratives.” Topics of our western history are not always easy or straightforward to exhibit; alongside the *whoop it up* cowboy legends and lore, there are dark tales and shadows that are difficult to share but a critical part of our past. They are the rough edges that our history writers and our curators must reveal in the best ways they know how. What Dr. Moore might refer to as *culturally responsive and responsible*.

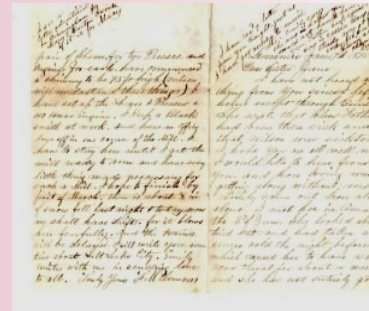
All that said, I am delighted to be able to devote the other half of this June issue to the reporting of the curatorial staff. **Amy Allen** tells us about the behind the scenes work they have been doing for the first half of the year and **Konnie Cronk** gives you a tale of W.H. Root, one of Laramie's pioneering men, most often noted for the Root Opera House on 2nd Street, but who had an even more interesting life. Get caught up on history with our team and then go to our website: laramiemuseum.org to click on the tours and new tales of individual Wyoming characters they're posting. **Judy Knight**, another of our curatorial gurus, has been working with **Germaine St. John**, **Jessica Flock** and others to breathe 2020 life into *virtual* cemetery tours of historic Laramie folk this year and, of course, we love her contributions to *The Boomerang*. Judy and **Kim Viner** make us eager to see their articles so we can all learn new facts of local history. Throughout the summer, you can also hear trivia of Laramie's history by listening to **KIMX-104.5 KRQU-98.7 KHAT-92.3 and 1210AM** for “You Don't Know Jacques!” sponsored by Laramie Plains Museum.



Joyce Powell, one of Laramie's talented local photographers and a special friend of the Museum, sent me the array of early summer Albany County blossoms you're seeing in this issue.



Above: Allen portrayed Dr. Lillian Heath, Wyoming's 1st woman doctor, at a 2019 Tea.



Another great collection came from Barbara Love and Claude Froidevaux. This section of the Love Collection features 26 artifacts, and is mostly made up of mid-century women's fashions, including a sea-foam green prom dress from the 1930s, a 1920s day dress, and a handmade sweater set in forest green worn through the 1940s.

Other collections of note feature objects from local Laramie families with which Konnie has been working during this first half of the year. She is presently accessioning the Amy Lawrence Collection, with items from Amy's Jubilee Queen days and artifacts and information about the Palmers, Amy's grandparents. Nellis E. Hill has an impressive collection from World War II, including a photograph taken of Nellis and his cousin on the beach at Normandy.



through Sarah Thobro, who served as a maid to the Ivinsons for nearly twenty years and was highly regarded by the family.

2020 is seeing some interesting artifacts already, too. From a beautiful Dresden porcelain clock that we cannot wait to put in the mansion from Don Kenney, one of our prominent donors from Washington State, to bank bags from Mr. Ivinson's bank, and milk cans from Rosedale Dairy, we'll have our hands very happily full for the rest of the summer. All the artifacts we have received this last year and in 2020 are exciting and meaningful in their own right, but if we stopped to talk about them all, you'd have a book in your hands, rather than a newsletter. We would like to send out a thank you to all our donors, past and present, who have helped us build our LPM Collection to the showstopper it is today. We hope your isolation was/is as productive as ours has been, and we hope to see you again soon!

CURATORIAL MUSINGS

BY Amy Allen, LPM Registrar/Assistant Curator

While we're loathe to admit there is anything entirely pleasant about quarantine, the curatorial department here at the museum has been quite fruitful in our isolation. Being able to focus solely on the collection, and the paperwork therein, has given us a chance to catch up to the wonderfully generous amount of donations we received in 2019 and to get a head start on the 2020 accessioning. Here are a few of the exciting, unusual, or just plain neat things we've processed in the last few months.

First of all, for those who aren't familiar with our museum lingo, *accessioning* is the process of detailing and categorizing new items to our Laramie Plains Museum Collection. When an artifact comes in, a Gift Agreement is signed and the object(s) is initially thoroughly researched so that a comprehensive description can be drafted, which includes all the small details of the artifact that will help future staff members not only locate the object but also to display and exhibit it. The object is then given a unique number and ordered appropriately into the Collection inventory. The artifacts are numbered physically, which can be as easy as using a pencil on the back of a piece of paper, or as complicated as sewing a tag into the shoulder of a garment. After these steps are complete, the collection is entered into Past Perfect, our Museum software, and declared officially accessioned. In 2019, we received nearly 40 collections of artifacts, all of which needed to be accessioned.

One of the most exciting artifacts we recently received was from John Murphy, longtime benefactor of the Museum. It was a letter from F. M. Clemon to his sister Jane. Clemon was the Superintendent of the Birmingham Iron Foundry, in Birmingham, Connecticut, and was brought in to supervise the installations of the machinery for the Union Pacific Rolling Mills. The letter gives a description of Laramie in the 1870s, as well as details about the design and function of the Rolling Mills. Clemon goes into a lot of detail about the interior of the Mill, how many machines he ordered, the exact measurements between them. His observations of Laramie are also detailed, citing the neat lay out of the streets and the fact that water was brought into town from the river for 20 cents a barrel. Clemon's letter is a true treasure, highlighting the Rolling Mills and giving us a wonderful insight to early Laramie. Murphy has always been on the lookout for items like this for our Collection and we are always excited with his finds.

Another great collection came from Barbara Love and Claude Froidevaux. This section of the Love Collection features 26 artifacts, and is mostly made up of mid-century women's fashions, including a sea-foam green prom dress from the 1930s, a 1920s day dress, and a handmade sweater set in forest green worn through the 1940s. These garments are vitally important to the Museum's Collection because they bolster our physical representation of the eras we wish to exhibit. They allow us to see into the past, to put ourselves into other's shoes, and take one step further into understanding their lives and times. Look for pieces of the Love Collection in many future exhibits to come.

Other collections of note feature objects from local Laramie families with which Konnie has been working during this first half of the year. She is presently accessioning the Amy Lawrence Collection, with items from Amy's Jubilee Queen days and artifacts and information about the Palmers, Amy's grandparents. Nellis E. Hill has an impressive collection from World War II, including a photograph taken of Nellis and his cousin on the beach at Normandy. According to a description on the photo, the D-Day plans were so hush-hush, neither of the men knew the other would be there. And the Thobro-Therkildsen collection gives great insight to both Scandinavian immigration to Laramie and domestic service,

through Sarah Thobro, who served as a maid to the Ivinsons for nearly twenty years and was highly regarded by the family.

2020 is seeing some interesting artifacts already, too. From a beautiful Dresden porcelain clock that we cannot wait to put in the mansion from Don Kenney, one of our prominent donors from Washington State, to bank bags from Mr. Ivinson's bank, and milk cans from Rosedale Dairy, we'll have our hands very happily full for the rest of the summer. All the artifacts we have received this last year and in 2020 are exciting and meaningful in their own right, but if we stopped to talk about them all, you'd have a book in your hands, rather than a newsletter. We would like to send out a thank you to all our donors, past and present, who have helped us build our LPM Collection to the showstopper it is today. We hope your isolation was/is as productive as ours has been, and we hope to see you again soon!

