



More Dreams Coming True
for the Ivinson Mansion
Museum Complex

Laramie Plains Museum
Summer
2018

A VISION HAS COME TO PASS and ITS IMPACT ON THE FUTURE OF THE MUSEUM IS PALPABLE....

Trusting brides-to-be and skeptical mothers had been making plans for over a year. After all, the Laramie Plains Museum rental coordinator and executive director *did* tell them that the Alice Hardie Stevens Reception Center would be expanded and renovated in time for their 2018 May through September weddings. By January they were nervous, checking in, wondering how things were coming. Luke Sweckard's crews kept at it; the LPM volunteers and team leaders kept plugging away, Mary and Crystal kept soothing feelings and inspiring confidence that all would be well. And it was! The volunteers worked into the wee hours as deadlines approached, Luke and his men were here early and for 10-hour days, and it was down to the wire for painting the last retrofitted fire suppression pipe and cleaning the last of the dust off the kitchen dishes and washing the incredible amount of new windows, but **WE MADE IT!** Even after rezoning from residential to downtown commercial had us delayed for re-permitting, **WE MADE IT!**

Though we missed being able to have occupancy by graduation weekend, we did make our first wedding on May 18th and are now heading into our full summer of weddings, receptions, and events. Brides and moms agree: It was worth the wait!

SEVEN THINGS YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW ABOUT THE BEAUTIFULLY EXPANDED ALICE HARDIE STEVENS CENTER

- 1) Fire code allows the new facility to hold 266 guests with tables and chairs and up to 400 people milling around or in theatre seating. 94 guests were possible before.
- 2) Thanks to an extraordinary current donor and the wise investment of the bequest from an earlier donor, no loans were taken for this \$1.5 million project to come to fruition. This expansion is much more than simply a fancy update and more room: the income stream from this expanded use will help to provide for the operation of Laramie's beloved historic house museum far into the future.
- 3) We are still gathering dollars to complete the stage, dressing rooms and basement archival storage spaces. You can still be part of this dream!
- 4) This building was originally built in 1924 as extra dormitory space, gymnasium and theatre for the Girls School that was held at the Iverson property from 1921 to 1957. We saved the original oak stage flooring to repurpose as wainscoting, door fronts for the lower stage and kitchen pass-through, and frames to showcase photographs of the girls at the school throughout the decades. Don't miss viewing the memory wall of those pictures later this summer. It is a nod of respect to the history of this very special building that has long helped to support the Museum.
- 5) The building was named Virginia Cottage when it was first built in recognition of the daughter of the donor who funded that 1924 project. Her story hangs in the bridal room hallway.
- 6) The building was renamed Alice Hardie Stevens Center after the vibrant woman who, as a primary member of Laramie's newly formed Laramie Plains Museum Association, led the efforts to save the about-to-be-sold and destroyed "old Iverson Mansion."
- 7) The addition of all components of fire suppression—retrofitted to the established building and throughout the new addition—was the one major stall with moving forward as timely as we wanted. This necessary protection system added close to \$350,000 in costs not originally planned—not only the sprinkler system and alarms, but the dedicated new, independent lines for electricity and phones, as well as new lines of City sewer and water coming in from 6th street. It is a major umbrella of protection for our beloved museum and the increased number of patrons able to use the venue.



We regularly held Contractor/Volunteers/Architect coordination meetings as we envisioned our goals, often amidst sawdust, wood and insulation, but the wrap-up meeting wrap up in early May had us crammed into the back of the Carriage House office as flooring was being coated and finished in the new venue. Vital members of those meetings were: **Luke Sweckard**, Contractor; **Dan Swift**, Architect; **Mary Mountain**, Museum Director; **Crystal Griffis**, Rentals Coordinator; **Dave Van Oss/Ron Olsen/Joyce Powell**—Volunteer & Design Team Leads; **John Nutter, Barb Rouse, Connie Palmer, Debbie Pinckney**—LPM Board Representatives & Finance. This project *absolutely could not have been done* without our volunteers!



Throughout this issue you can see more views of the amazing transformation, but don't hesitate to stop by to check it out for yourself. We're open every day but Monday each summer!

Historic Iverson Mansion
Laramie Plains Museum Newsletter

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603 E. Iverson Avenue
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Phone: 307-742-4448
E-mail: lpmdirector@laramiemuseum.org
Web site: www.laramiemuseum.org

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Laramie Plains Museum,
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Managing Editor & Graphic Design
Mary Mountain

Contributing Reporters
Judy Knight
Kim Viner

Photographers
Danny Walker
Joyce Powell
Mary Mountain
Crystal Griffis

Assistance to the Editor:
Crystal Griffis
Junior Docents

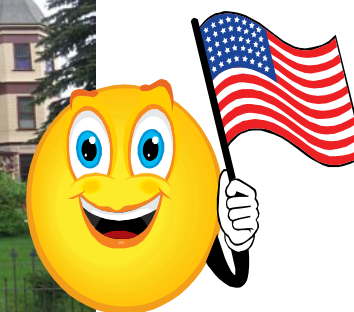


Speaking of Great Volunteers..... We have many volunteers who are behind-the-scenes Quiet Heroes for our beloved Laramie Plains Museum, and in recent years, we have tried to recognize those folks at our *Cheers for Volunteers* celebration each April. One quiet guy who never steps up to let us praise him is **Frank Nelson, our Legal Counsel**. Nelson has been the Laramie Plains Museum's consultant on legal affairs for decades—no money or donation receipts ever changing hands. He simply has thoughtfully considered our questions and implications for the Museum. He gently makes us think, wisely gives us the legal perspective and his best recommendations for our decisions and movement forward. There's no one like Frank—just a great, great—smart!—guy. We're glad he's always been in our corner. Thank you, Frank.



Left, Carolyn Nelson, former LPM Curator, *Tea on Tuesday* Lady, and Gardener Extraordinaire, can't come to the Iverson grounds as often as she used to, but her legacy of loving care is felt daily in every facet of the Museum. From early decisions she made with artifacts, to the irises and hollyhocks still strikingly accenting the property, to the precious tart shells made for each and every Tea, we all still love and appreciate Carolyn's touch. The Iverson property is a better place because she was here!

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ARMY/UNION PACIFIC TUSSEL HOLDS UP TITLE TO IVINSON MANSION PROPERTY

By *Kim Viner, LPM Historian, Docent, and Author*

In 1862 the Pacific Railroad Act gave the Union Pacific Railroad alternating sections of land 10 miles either side of the path of the railroad as it was constructed toward the western United States. As early as 1864 UPRR railroad survey crews were scouting potential rail lines on the Laramie Plains.

In the summer of 1866 the U.S. military ordered the construction of Fort Buford about 3 miles south of where the center of Laramie now stands. The general ware was chosen by General Grenville Dodge who was commander of the Army's Department of the Missouri. Soon the name was changed to Fort Sanders (as there was already a Fort Buford in what is now North Dakota) and the location occupied by the U.S. Army.

After Fort Sanders on the Laramie Plains was established, it was unclear exactly what size the surrounding military reservation was to be. A University of Wyoming master's thesis written by Ray Revere in 1960 noted there were statements by Army officials that the reservation was anywhere from 2 miles square (4 square miles) to 9 miles square (81 square miles). This caused some minor problems with settlers who occupied lands near the actual fort, but they were solved through cooperation with the Army.

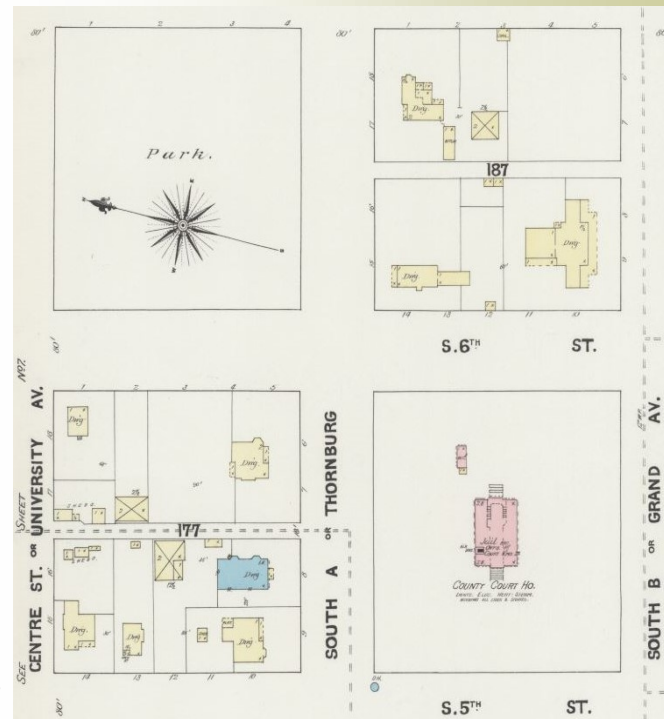
The final UPRR survey of the line across the Laramie Plains was laid out in the summer of 1867 and Grenville Dodge, now a civilian official with the UPRR, platted the site of Laramie City, Dakota Territory, in June on one of the sections given to them under the 1862 Pacific Railroad Act. The Ivinson Mansion block is situated on that square mile of land. That would later prove to be a problem for Edward Ivinson.

The original platting of the city did not portend any friction between the soon to be arriving citizens and the Army because (as noted by Revere) at the time the military reservation size was settled and was officially 6 miles square (36 square miles). Its northern border was just south of the UPRR's section of land on which Laramie City was laid out. Huge problems were created for Ivinson and other people who bought town lots from the UPRR beginning in April 1868 and through 1874, when on June 28, 1869, the military reservation was official increased in size to 9 miles square (why this was done is unclear). The lots purchased by the town's residents now lay on the proclaimed military reservation.

This caused the ownership of the lots to be in doubt. For example, the lot where the Laramie Plains Museum is located was purchased by Edward Ivinson November 23, 1870, and transferred to him by the UPRR. But because the Army claimed ownership the title was not cleared. Laramie residents apparently caused enough commotion over the problem that as early as 1871 a bill was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives to reduce the size of the military reservation. The bill languished in Congress for another three years. After much additional complaining by the residents, the U.S. Government finally rectified the situation on June 9, 1874, when the reservation was reduced in size to approximately 5 by 6 miles, placing Laramie City outside of the reservation.

Titles were cleared up over several years, much to the relief of the lot owners. Ivinson's block was transferred from the Army to the UPRR in January 1875. But it was still another two years before he finally got clear title to the land where he would eventually build the mansion (all of block 178 of the original town of Laramie). In a way, the confusing situation would be beneficial to Ivinson. After Laramie City was officially chartered in January 1874, it began to tax personal and real property within city limits. When Ivinson got this tax bill, he sued the city claiming that his property was still owned by the U.S. Army and could not be taxed. The Wyoming Territory Supreme Court partially found in his favor, ruling that he only had to pay tax on his personal property not his real estate. Similarly, in May 1875, Edward Ivinson, Laramie mayor H. B. Rumsey (who also owned a small share of Ivinson's bank) worked with Stephen Downey and UPRR land agent O. F. Davis in concert to determine the value of the lots in Laramie and consequently the taxes owed. Never one to miss an economic opportunity, Ivinson was able to determine his own tax structure! The mansion lot remained empty until construction was started on the building in May 1892.

BONUS: The first person to spot the spelling error on the map wins a personal tour (max 8 people) of the Ivinson Mansion by Kim Viner. Email him at kdviner@msn.com if you think you know the answer.



This 1890 map shows the area surrounding the mansion, which was labeled "City Park."

Sanborn Map courtesy Library of Congress.



RENOVATED EVENT CENTER IS A NEW TREASURE FOR LARAMIE



When, Grant, one of Luke Sweckard's men asked if he could place a bottle with current social information (i.e. cost of milk, hamburger, stamps and other trends) in one of the new walls—**see right**—Mary Mountain knew that she had to also put a time capsule recording current LPM information. Inside of a silver tin, **above**, she placed the most recent Museum newsletter, detailing the year ahead including the expansion dream, Board of Directors roster, advertising rack card, and a packet of Ivinson hollyhock seeds. Wonder when our future caretakers of history will find these treasures?



We are grateful to these Businesses & Major Donors & Doers who stepped up to bring this dream into reality

Dr. Donald Adams & Donald Christensen

- Dan Swift/Swift Structures & Architecture
- Luke Sweckard/Sweckard Excavation & Construction
- Dave Coffey/Coffey Engineering
- Laramie Woman's Club
- John Guthrie/Guthrie Family Foundation
- Barbara Rouse
- Germaine & Dale St. John
- The Unexpected Company
- R&D Masonry
- Gloria Christensen
- Lenny Atkinson/Eagle Plumbing
- Charles Bloom/City of Laramie
- Russ Matheson, Dennis Johnson & Laramie Fire Department
- Heber & Jennifer Richardson/HoneyWagon
- Shane Pickel/Unique Wood Designs, Inc.
- Mark Wade & Electrical Solutions
- Brandon Chimenti/Ancient Elements Granite
- A&J Plumbing
- Albany County 5th Penny Partners
- The Volunteer Design Team & Donors led by:
- Dave Van Oss, Ron Olsen, Joyce Powell, Mary Mountain
- and the many other donors and doers who made it happen!!**

**Rest assured, more specific and plaque listings of donors to the project will eventually be on wood and brass in the new space.

SEEN AROUND THE PROPERTY



Crystal Griffis, Administrative Assistant and Rentals Coordinator, smiles with **Carol Hoff**, Laramie Garden Club's team leader for the Ivinson property's gardens and trees. New coordinations have had to take place this year as **Seth Lyle** left his longtime caretaker position. Everyone is working together to figure out sprinklers and landscaping needs.



Stan Gibson, has been our life-saving addition to the Museum this year. With the loss of our on-the-property caretaker, Stan has helped with the lawn, sprinkler, fix-it jobs, pick-ups and hauls for Laramie Woman's Club, and just all-around *good guy* stuff. Retired from Laramie Fire Department & Albany County, his willing, caring spirit is a great gift!



Folks, including **expansion architect, Dan Swift**, seated at far left front of the photo, are shown milling at the Open House for the new Event Center held on June 3, 2018. **Below**, Curator **Konnie Cronk** and son, **Phillip**, wave and smile for the camera at the well-attended affair. Laramie folks were abuzz wondering about how renovation to this favorite gathering spot would actually look. They were pleased! Most comforting to everyone was that **Swift** and **Sweckard** had melded the history of the building so that it is a seamless connection "looking like it's always been here!" from the exterior and yet a stunning "Wow!" when you enter the updated, accommodating facility.



Volunteer tree planters, **Dennis Knight, Jerry Schmidt and Bob Mountain**, take a well-deserved break. All three men have served Wyoming landscapes throughout their careers in Forestry, Ecology and Range Administration so we felt very fortunate to have them as the Expansion planting team. Find them actually working later in this issue.

Right, a PROJECT MANAGER t-shirt that was given at our *Cheers for Volunteers* night, to the Team Leads of the AHSC Expansion project: **Dave Van Oss, Joyce Powell and Ron Olsen**. These three miracle workers led the volunteers in projects that saved the Museum thousands & thousands of dollars and brought great skills to the table.



Longtime Museum friends, members, and volunteers, sisters **Blanche and Bertie Sanders**, stopped into the Carriage House Gift Shop. Now into their distinguished years, we don't see them as often as when they were volunteering in the gardens and as a mansion duster. It was great to see you again, ladies!

CARING FOR ARTIFACTS IN THE AFTERMATH OF CONSTRUCTION

When we have so many other things going—with the expansion, weddings and summer tourism activities—the very important work of our curatorial staff and volunteers becomes a behind-the-scenes occurrence, but still focuses on the most important thing we do here—**historic preservation!** Construction disturbances from demolition and outside elements as the old opened to the new, and the awful amounts of dust raised with the removal of old and replacement of new drywall required some smart remedies and several local experts stepped up to help us out.

The **photo, right**, shows critical analysis of the artifacts that were impacted on the 2nd level of the Alice Hardie Stevens Center during construction. Here we have **Janet Woods, UW Library Services, Sarah Gadd, Former LPM Curator and Registrar at UW Art Museum, with Cameron Green and Jandey Shackelford**, both UW student interns at the UW Art Museum, assessing damages and solutions for the construction impact. Sarah came to the LPM on Tuesday, May 22 to conduct a training for LPM curatorial staff and volunteers, demonstrating techniques to use in dusting artwork that has been subjected to fine plaster dust from occurrences like construction. Behind the team can be seen the empty art storage bins, and some of our storage shelves covered with plastic sheeting on the upper level floor above the newly-renovated and expanded Alice Hardie Stevens Center. As the fine brushes and hand held vacuum are used, some dust enters the air so face masks are needed, plus disposable nitrile gloves to protect artwork and frames from oils



Sarah Rhodes and Rachel Alexander used the tedious, important method to brush dust from each and every page.



that may be on hands. Sarah donated smocks that our helpers were able to wear. **Janet Woods**, continued to come to our rescue with reassuring advice and hands on help. **Pictured, left**, are **Judy Knight, LPM Collection Manager, Janet Woods, and Deisy Vaske, Library Specialist**. Janet found teachable moments for her own and our LPM staff as a result of the dust accumulated on the LPM books that remained stored in the second floor of the Alice Hardie Stevens Center during construction. Woods patiently showed the proper techniques to use in cleaning dust-covered books and archival paper material. So far, volunteers from Coe Library have donated 20 hours of time to the LPM to clean books. Because the second floor of the AHSC is not completely cleared of stored material, nor thoroughly dusted itself, the work needed to be done outside so the dust could blow away. The cleaned books were boxed and taken to the curatorial office at 609 University for temporary storage until the AHSC artifact storage areas are dust-free. Shelves for temporary storage were donated by Modern Printing.

LARAMIE GARDEN CLUB



answered our request for assistance with funds for new landscaping needed around the expanded Alice Hardie Stevens Center. Within just days of our submission, members granted \$1000 to help with purchases of a replacement crabapple on the west sidewalk that had to be removed during new utility and cement work, a lilac for the north side of the striking venue, and a chokecherry on the main east lawn that had already seen much better days. Garden Club members have long been angels to the gardens of the Ivinson Mansion—arriving in the early hours of Tuesday mornings, they weed and nip and haul and replant and water and weed

and weed and weed. Every day we appreciate that **former LGC member, Pat Kiovsky** (now living in Johnstown, Colorado) took the lead in working with Laramie Conservation District and Garden Club to transform the fenced, wayward spot behind the Carriage House into a charming tranquility garden with ambling slate walks, lovely succulents, flowers, and a bench encircling the tree in its midst. **Board Director and LGC member, Barb Rouse**, recently took on the major job of completely emptying and recreating a failing flower bed on the southwest corner of the Ivinson Mansion. She and Stan Gibson hauled wheelbarrow after wheelbarrow of dirt in an effort to make over one of the shadier, but showpiece areas around the historic house. We couldn't be more grateful for such hands-on work to make the Ivinson Mansion property an oasis of color and beauty in our fair city. Thank you to **ALL Laramie Garden Club folks** for giving to LPM as you do!



Volunteers, including Board Directors & Staff, DO IT AGAIN!



1. LPM's Board Directors have long been hands on helpers with updates and renovations. Above, we have many of our familiar volunteer faces pitching in on a 2010 Saturday in so we could prime and paint new storm windows for the mansion as well as touch up our well-used Alice Hardie Stevens Center. In the photos with the fairly-new-to-us historic back bar, you can see **Bonnie Miller, Dave Van Oss, Leslie Waggener, John Nutter, Joyce Powell, Pat Kiovisky, Terry and Beverly Roark** getting things done.

2. **Dave Van Oss** and **Joyce Powell** were important to that project eight years ago and have continued to be leaders for our continuing dreams and renovations—with the Brick Curatorial House, the most recent transformation of the Stone House in to upscale, income generating condos, and this stunning Alice Hardie Stevens Expansion Project.

3. **Mary Mountain** and **Pat Kiovisky, Board President**, spent time on that 2010 Saturday doing refurbishing painting and conferring about next jobs that needed to be tackled. We've come a long way, baby!

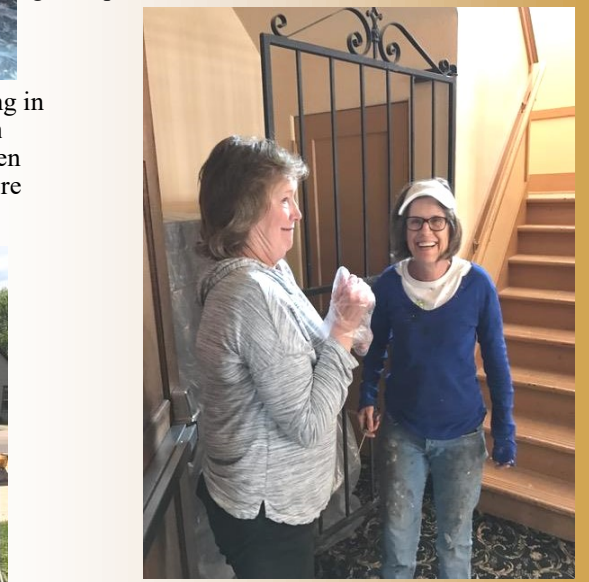


We caught **Joyce Powell** working in the rafters, and **Mary Mountain** cramming in a paint job to freshen up the bridal dressing room before the first wedding!



Above, **John Nutter** and **Crystal Griffis**, take care of packing down the last load in the **Honeywagon** haul-away dumpster!

Below, Board secretary, **Connie Palmer** and **Chris Walrath**, significant representatives of the painting and cleaning crews for the Project freeze as we try to grab a photo.



Left, we see those volunteer tree planters doing their big job: **Jerry Schmidt** directing traffic, **Bob Mountain** packing the dirt and **Dennis Knight** watering. All of these fellows and their wives had given monetarily to the tree fund, as well as Garden Club members, **Steve and Carol Hoff**.

Tea on Tuesday in the Expanded Facility

Sample Tea Menu
This one from the
June 19, 2018
TEA on TUESDAY

Sweets
Blueberry/Lemon Curd Tarts
Chocolate Cherry Scones
Scottish Shortbread
Creamy Caramels
Red Velvet Donut Bites

Savories
Cucumber Tea Sandwiches
Saucy Cranberry Meatballs
Olive Tea Sandwiches
Gougeres (Parmesan) Puffs
Pimento-filled Celery Bites

Savvy Extras
Fruity Sorbet
French Meringue Pecans
Tasty Tea Mints
Tea with Lemons & Cream



TEA PROGRAMS REMIND US OF OUR SPECIAL HISTORY:

May 22nd Tea
Laramie Celebrates 150 Years!

June 19th Tea
Borgheld Williams, Immigrants as our Domestic Story

July 24th Tea
Bridal Gowns & Brides Throughout the Decades

*A small amount of tickets are still available for the July Tea. Call the office if you're interested.

Above: The 1910 historic back bar still remains in the newly revitalized Event Center—a stunning showpiece in the facility that often is just the touch to help "sell" the venue for events. LPM raised funding to acquire the piece in 2008, when the Wyoming Territorial Prison was moving from private foundation management to state governance. Needing to be true to the provenance of the WTP, 1873-1903, this stunning remnant of the Foundation's dream of a Western theme park had to leave. We are very grateful to the donors who help us salvage this unique slice of history. **Ron and Anne Olsen**, outstanding LPM volunteers, refurbished the weather-worn wood and stained glass into the piece you see at the Alice Hardie Stevens Center today. Most recently, volunteer **Marcia Chicoine** gave it gleaming new coats of polish before she moved back to South Dakota.



We well know that our local heroes from the Laramie Fire Department use their trucks, tools and lift to rescue and assist with many needs in our community, but thanks to Stan (retired fireman) Gibson's connections, LPM's Curator, **Konnie Cronk**, was able to capture a photo she has long hoped for of historic downtown Laramie. Photographic documentation of *then and now* are important methods for accurately identifying historic moments and places. We are grateful to **LFD Crew #1** for giving Konnie the ride and view she was hoping for!



Konnie's kiddos, Phillip, 5, and Imowynn, 3, were delighted that mom got to work with the fire-fighting-guys. They had big smiles from the seat of the shiny truck.



Here's one of the important shots **Konnie** was trying to get: looking west on Grand (Jeffrey's Bistro is on the right bottom corner.)

Laramie Firemen Assist with History Documentation

All Aboard for Evening at the Ivinsons

**Saturday, August 18, 2018
(8/18/18)**



**Hell on Wheels
Laramie Celebrates
150 YEARS!**



is the date for this year's special end-of-the-summer celebration in support of our Laramie Plains Museum Complex, including the finish work for the stage and climate controlled basement in the new Alice Hardie Stevens expansion. If you or someone you know would like to attend, but aren't sure you're on our invitation list, please call the museum 742-4448 so we don't miss you. Invitations will be sent out in early July. Tickets are \$100 per person for an evening of great food and drink, music, auctions and friends. This year's event will mirror the kind of festivities that those early pioneers arriving on the first Union Pacific passenger train might have enjoyed. There will be music, appetizers, entertainment and libations in the gardens, as usual, and then we will retire to the newly renovated Event Center for our dinner. Inside we will experience Alice Freeman's lovely harp during dinner, beverages from the historic back bar, auctions, and a special early-Laramie melodrama from *The Unexpected Company*.

We would love to see you here as part of this celebration and are encouraging all attendees to come in historic attire, if possible. Ideas for such garb? How about a railroad worker, a dance hall girl, a businessman or adventurer to the new town, a school teacher come West, a cowboy, pioneering mother or even an outlaw? There are all kinds of good possibilities! We will have Tessa Satake with **Dreaming Hollow Photography** here to document all of the fun with vintage photos.



The Evening gives us the opportunity to celebrate how far we've come as one of the most well-respected historic house museums in the Rocky Mountain region. It reinforces our belief that there will always be care, support and funding for a sustained future for this outstanding Laramie landmark. We hope you'll join us!



CORPORATE & FAMILY-SPONSORED TABLES are available for \$1500 for a table of 8-10 with wine, promotion of your business or family, and a memento of the *Evening* for each person at the table. Sponsored tables are important underwriters of this special event so that more of the profits can boost our work at this beautiful historic house museum. Call our office (742-4448) if you are interested in hosting a corporate or family table.

Art Fest on the Ivinson Lawn



Sunday, July 15, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

The Art Fest will again be offered on our Ivinson property the last Sunday of Jubilee Days. Laramie locals and visitors have come to expect that a special day of genteel strolling of the wares of local artists and crafters winds up the *busyness* of Jubilee celebrations. After the parades, pancakes, Beer Fest and rodeos, come take in the beauty of the Mansion grounds and the expanded Alice Hardie Stevens Center. Have your Jubilee Days guests take a walk-through tour of the museum for just \$2.00 and enjoy sidewalk sales, popcorn and other treats provided by the Museum's teen volunteers and the amazing artists, music and authors who are here!

We'll for sure have food vendors this year.

If you are an artist, crafter, musician or food vendor wanting to be part of this special event, just call us at the Carriage House office—742-4448—

ANB BANK'S enthusiastic crew will be here again this for the Art Fest. Last year, their fun presence and snow cones in the middle of the East Lawn were a giant hit at this event. Don't miss it!

How about remembering the Museum each time you purchase from Amazon? If you're an online shopper, this is an easy way to give to LPM without straining your debit card. When you shop at Amazon and see the AmazonSmile logo pop up, know that the company will give a small reward to us with each purchase.

Your shopping matters. Or if you're not already shopping at Amazon and seeing that note pop up, shop for your favorite things at smile.amazon.com/ch/83-6007519 and Amazon will donate to

Laramie Plains Museum Association. Thanks!

SUMMER HOURS FOR THE MUSEUMS

Don't how many of you realize that from early June through late August, the Laramie Plains Museum at the Ivinson Mansion is open **FULL TIME 6 DAYS A WEEK**. That's Tuesday through Saturday 9:00 to 5:00 and summer Sunday afternoons from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. for guided tours. Bring or send your guests!

The Women's House for Historic Women (Louisa Swain Plaza and Museum) downtown is open Tuesday through Saturday 11:00 to 5:00 and summer Sundays from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. Come on down!