

Wyoming History News[®]

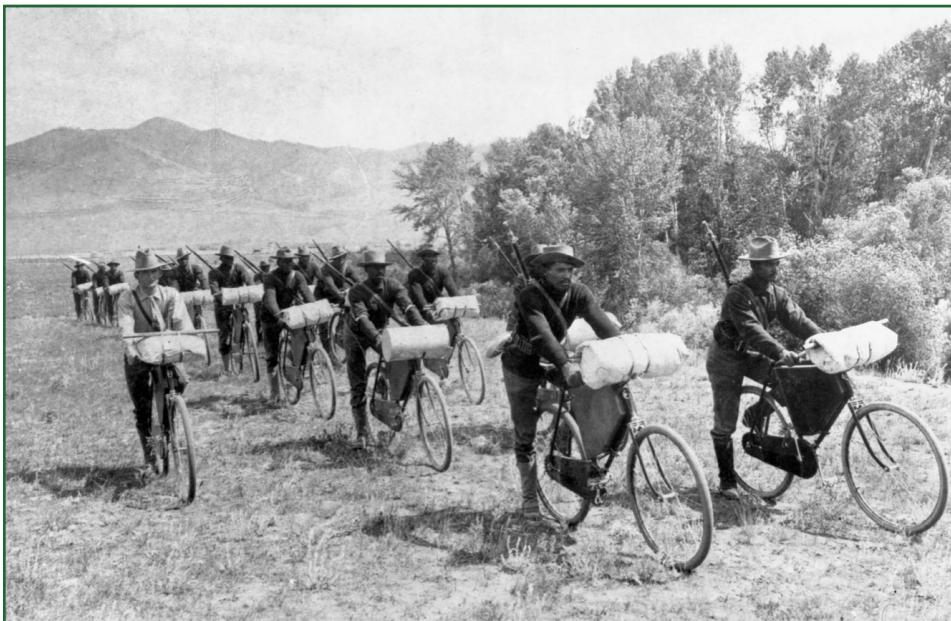
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THE IRON RIDERS TRAVERSE THROUGH WYOMING



The Iron Riders, an infantry of Buffalo Soldiers, rode across five states, including Wyoming in 1897 to prove that bicycles could be a reliable form of transportation for the Army. Despite their success, the bicycles never replaced horses since the automobile was soon introduced.

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BY JACKIE DOROTHY

It took grit and determination to ride a bicycle across the Rocky Mountain region, and the Twenty-fifth U. S. Infantry Bicycle Corps were up to the challenge. Their bike ride through Wyoming summed up the difficulties they encountered on their historic trip in 1897.

These soldiers earned the nickname the Iron Riders because of the heavy one-speed bicycles they pedaled and for their iron-hard constitutions.

The journey began with one young officer's dream. Second Lt. James A. Moss was enthusiastic about using bicycles for wartime efforts and was determined to

prove that it would be a reliable means of transportation. It was the days before the advent of the automobile and Moss had superiors in the Army willing to consider the bicycle as a replacement for horses.

The newly minted officer had been assigned to Fort Missoula in Montana, where he was put in command of the 25th Infantry, a regiment of Black soldiers, commonly referred to as Buffalo Soldiers. Moss had spent the summer on a bicycle in Yellowstone National Park with eight companions, five of which were Buffalo Soldiers. The men rode a total of 1,400 miles over the Rocky Mountains on their special military issued bikes.

"You may think I am a cycling enthusiast," Moss later said to the *St. Louis Post*-

Dispatch in July 1897. "The truth is, I find no pleasure in riding. I take up my wheel as I would the handle of a plow."

Moss admitted his only interest in the bicycle was for its use in military science. The Secretary of War, General Nelson A. Miles, had approved Moss to take twenty of his best soldiers, a reporter and a doctor on a 1,900-mile bike ride from Fort Missoula, Montana, to St. Louis, Missouri. It became known as the "Great Experiment" in the newspapers and was done to determine the effectiveness of moving U. S. Army troops by bicycle.

Newspaper reports detailed how each soldier carried 60 pounds of baggage. They each carried a 10-pound gun and a five-pound cartridge belt. They wore their canteen and a bayonet scabbard while on

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The cyclist soldier has the advantage of the cavalryman in superiority of speed, and noiselessness of travel, without a cloud of dust to betray him, ease of concealment, and without the necessity of forage for his mount.

- Lieutenant William T. May, United States Army, 1892

and crossed mountain ranges; suffered from heat, cold, hunger, the loss of sleep, the ill effects of alkali water."

The Bicycle Corps began their ride on June 17, 1897, as the report of the reveille gun reverberated through the mountains surrounding Fort Missoula according to the 1897 *The Anaconda Standard*. It was the biggest bicycle tour by an army of organized men on record.

"We started out with the idea of proving the bicycle a valuable adjunct in real war," Moss said. "If we had to succumb to weather conditions or topographical difficulties, my theory was all in the air."

On the first leg of the bike trip, the soldiers endured ten days of rain but still maintained an average of seventy miles a day by following the Burlington train tracks. They rode from daybreak until ten in the morning and then slept through the heat of the day. At 5pm, they would once again ride until dark. If the moon was bright, the men would continue to push on.

"When the going was muddy, we rode over the railroad where the ballast was not too rough," Moss said. "Often, we had to walk, guiding our wheels along the rail. Again, we rode for miles with a continuous jolting that would make a granite paving like glass in comparison."

Just before crossing the border into Wyoming, the soldiers camped at the site of The Battle of the Little Bighorn. The moment was not lost on the soldiers.

"What a change has time wrought," Moss later wrote in his report. "On the 25th of June 1876, Custer and his men were massacred on a field of which civilized man knew nothing; on the 25th of June 1897, 22 soldiers of the regular army are on the same ground with bicycles!"

Edward Boos, their embedded reporter, said that before getting supper, the men visited the celebrated battlefield and viewed the site of the massacre with interest. "I went over Custer's very line of march on my bicycle under the direction of Mr. A. N. Grover the custodian of the Custer

WHEELING IN RAINY WEATHER

Twenty-Fifth Infantry Bicycle Corps Making a Forced Ride.

GILLETTE, Wyo., June 29.—Tired and muddy, the Twenty-fifth infantry bicycle corps, Lieutenant Moss commanding, arrived here at 2:30 to-day, en route to St. Louis. Wild Horse creek, near Arvada, was a mass of mud. Hailstones which fell Sunday were drifted seven and one-eighth feet high. The weather was very hot, and no good water could be obtained. The corps is making a forced ride to get out of the bad lands.

The road from here on will be gradually down hill. Over one-third of the trip has been accomplished in the fifteen days out. On thirteen of these rainy weather was experienced.

The *Rocky Mountain News* followed the journey of the Bicycle Corps as they arrived at Gillette, Wyoming, June 29, 1897.

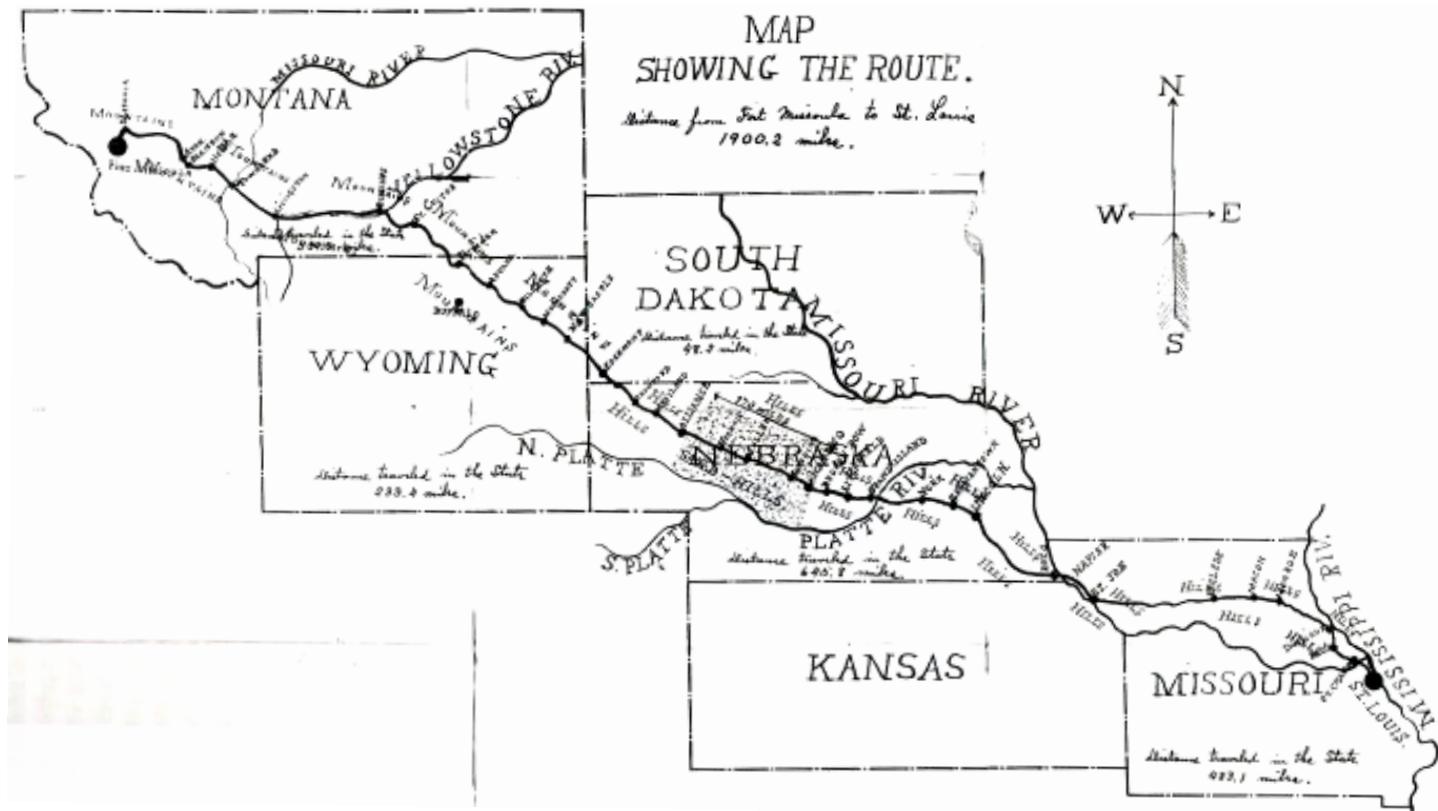
Iron Riders' continued from page 1

their handlebars the soldiers carried a blanket, half a shelter tent, tin cup, two tires and several extra parts. In the luggage box, beneath the seat, were their utensils. The men who carried the coffee pots stuffed their blankets into them.

The epic bicycle journey took 41 days to complete, and the route followed the

Northern Pacific and Burlington railroads through Montana, Wyoming, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Missouri.

"The experiment was made under all possible conditions, except that of being under actual fire," Moss said. "The command made and broke camp in the rain, traveled through mud, water, sand, snow, over rocks and ruts; forded streams



Lt. James Moss mapped out an intended route for his Bicycle Corps consisting of twenty Buffalo Soldiers. Public Domain | Wikimedia Commons

National Cemetery," Boos said. "It is something of note that on the 21st anniversary day of Custer's last battle, troops on bicycles were viewing the grounds from their silent steeds, around which are bones, the remains of cavalry horses, which fell with Custer and his 230 men."

The next day, Moss said that they started up the valley of the Little Big Horn and the traveling was very hard with rough and hilly roads. The soldiers had to ford the river several times. "The men rolled up their trousers and waded, with much exertion in water up to their waist," Boos said. "The Little Horn was crossed five times before noon by fording and the river crossings detained us considerably."

As they passed by the relics of by-gone days, Moss said he felt a pang of regret at the advance of civilization.

"The old stagecoaches have crumbled into ruins; the mountain teamsters and the buffaloes have disappeared; the Indians are passing away," Moss said. "The wild and

woolly west is no more!"

At Mullin's Divide in the Rockies (MT), on June 17, they had to walk their "wheels" through six inches of snow. A week later, in the alkali plains of Wyoming, the thermometer was 111 in the shade.

"Heat and cold were not our worst experiences," Moss said. "In the alkali deserts, the men rode as much as fifty miles without a drop of water, with their lips parched and swollen."

The water would make the men sick and increase their thirst.

"Mile after mile and day after day we pushed through prairie land without a house or a tree to break the monotony," Moss said. "In the Wyoming desert we often went for days on half rations, and sometimes we rode for hours on empty stomachs.

"One morning we put in forty-two miles on coffee and two hard boiled eggs, not knowing when we would strike food or water."

Before going to bed one night in Wyoming, one of the men discovered a few graves and heard that rattlesnakes were near the camp.

"That settled it," Boos said. "No sleeping around there that night so it was decided to push on our way during the night."

It was one in the morning when the corps moved out, crossed the Powder River and struck the wagon road nearby. The traveling was fair for a while until they reached Wild Horse Creek. At this point the road they followed ran along the creek bed but had become muddy from a recent storm. Boos described the gumbo mud, eight to ten inches deep, which made riding their bikes nearly impossible.

"This hard work was continued for five miles and then at daybreak rain commenced to fall," Boos said. "Rains in this region soon wash out the roads and on account of abundance of water ahead of us, we were warned we should take to the railroad track."

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Before embarking on an epic bike ride in 1897, members of the Twenty-fifth Infantry of Bicycle Corps practiced in Yellowstone National Park the summer before. The idea of using bike's in military warfare was the dream of Lt. James Moss.

Public Domain | Wikimedia Commons

'Iron Riders' continued from page 3

They walked their bikes along in semi-darkness, more asleep than awake, until they reached Felix, Wyoming where they stopped to rest, cleaned their bicycles and ate breakfast. Unfortunately, they did not have any good water since leaving Sheridan and the next day's ride became their hardest yet.

"After very little sleep, the corps started for Gillette, 19 miles away," Boos said. "For nine miles we rolled our wheels over the railroad track, subjecting them to their most critical test."

Once the roads were passable, they were able to ride their bikes. The combination of alkali vapors, uphill routes, and clouds of water made their progress slow. They reached Gillette at 2pm and stopped for lunch. Many of the men were so tired that they fell asleep while eating.

"The journey of 200 miles, through Northeastern Wyoming and extreme Western South Dakota, was very dreary," Moss said. "The landscape was a

monotonous series of hills, with now and then an alkali flat, while the water was abominable. Yet the dreariness of the country possessed a weird kind of fascination."

Near Moorcroft, disaster was averted. Boos was leading the line of bikes when suddenly a yawning abyss broke the road he was following in two.

"Only a few inches more and the whole corps would have gone over this cliff and met with some serious accidents," Boos said. "Fortunately, the right road was discovered in the nick of time."

A mile after that, the men found the railroad track and tried to build a fire. No dry wood could be found and the corps were well scattered over the prairie by this time, many of the men having given out.

"Rather than stay where we were, we pushed ahead, not knowing where we were and what adventures were before us," Boos said. "We plodded along until 2am, when the worn men unable to endure further went into camp."

They spread their tents on a wet ground and covered up with a single blanket. They had no fire and rested for two hours until they were 'frozen out.' By then, the daylight revealed that they were only a mile from Moorcroft.

"We looked at our bicycles but hardly recognized them, the mud covered every part of the machine, not a spoke was to be seen, the wheels were simply discs of gumbo," Boos said.

They reached Moorcroft at 6pm, taking two hours to make the final mile and having no real sleep for 45 hours. The men regathered and rested for half a day before pushing on once more.

On the last day of June, they only rode 20 miles on uphill roads but got a good night's sleep at Merino (now Upton, WY). When they rolled into Newcastle on July 1, the entire corps indulged in a two-hour swim at the salt lake.

At 3pm, July 2, the soldiers crossed the state line into Nebraska, their bike trip through Wyoming behind them. Despite the challenges they continued to face on their journey, the Iron Riders successfully reached their final destination in St. Louis on July 24. They were welcomed as heroes by a crowd of 1,000 cyclists who escorted them into Forest Park in Missouri.

"For all their woe-begone appearance, the men are full of life," the 1897 *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* said. "Their faces are drawn, but their eyes are fine, their step is marvelously elastic, the hardship has made them hard as rocks and the excitement of the trip, as well as the attention they have received along the route, has put them in the best of spirits."

Although the bicycle experiment was a success and the Buffalo Soldiers had proved their mettle, the Army did not approve any more bike trips. It was the automobile instead of bicycles that ultimately replaced the horse for military transportation as the modern world advanced.

SAVE THE DATE!

2026 TREKS & MORE!



SPRING TREK

April 25: Lost Cabin

JB Okie Mansion - Battle Butte - Bates Battlefield
Registration Opens March 1 - More details to follow.

SUMMER FUNDRAISING TREK

July 25: Whoop Up Canyon Petroglyphs

****ONCE IN LIFETIME OPPORTUNITY****

Registration Opens March 1 - Moderate-Hard 1 Mile Hike
LIMITED TO 40 PEOPLE / 1 BUS

SUMMER TREK

August 6 - 9: Lincoln County

*JC Penney Home & Original Store - Hamsfork Museum
Fossil Butte - Cokeville & MORE!*

Registration Opens May 1 - More details to follow.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

October 9 - 11: Lander

Registration Opens August 1
More details to follow.

For more information on each event, visit:

wyshs.org/events

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For a full calendar of events,
please visit wyshs.org/events.

For comments
or questions regarding
Wyoming History News,
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TREASURED TALES: THE ART AND IMPACT OF WRITING YOUR MEMOIR

BY CAROLYN LAMPMAN

When the midwinter chill settles in and the days grow short, a natural inclination toward reflection often takes hold. While many view the "winter doldrums" as a season to merely endure, this quiet period offers a profound opportunity: the chance to distill your life's journey into a written legacy.

The prospect of writing a memoir often feels daunting, conjuring images of leather-bound, 800-page volumes written by world leaders or celebrities. However, a memoir is not an exhaustive autobiography. It is, quite simply, a collection of memories. Your life has been a tapestry woven with unique characters, unexpected plot twists, quiet romances, and moments of high-stakes adventure. Beyond the personal, you have been a witness to history; living through scientific breakthroughs, cultural shifts, and global events that future generations will only know through textbooks. You have already done the research; you have lived the stories. Now, it is simply a matter of getting them onto the page.

Overcoming the "Interest Gap"

As an instructor who has led nearly a dozen memoir-writing workshops, I have heard every possible reason for hesitation. The most frequent protest is: "My kids aren't interested in my old stories."

On the surface, this might seem true. In the rush of daily life, family members often feel they already know the "essentials" of your life. However, this is a misconception. When my students share their drafts with their adult children, the reaction is almost always one of stunned realization. Phrases like, "I had no idea you did that!" or "That was you?" become the standard refrain.

More importantly, you aren't just writing for the people you know today. You are writing for the person who hasn't been born yet.

A Legacy Across Time

One of my most cherished possessions is a copy of my great-grandfather's memoir. Charles Lampman passed away more than a decade before I was born, yet his voice remains vibrant in my mind. He wrote only twenty-three pages, detailing his experience crossing the American continent by covered wagon in 1887 and homesteading in the rugged terrain of Wyoming.

Those twenty-three pages changed the trajectory of my life. His stories provided the spark for my first novel; nearly forty years later, I still return to his words for inspiration. Charles could never have predicted that his modest recollections would guide his great-granddaughter half a century after his death. You cannot know whose life your story might change, but you can be

certain that if the story isn't told, the connection is lost forever.

The Power of the Vignette: Quality Over Quantity

The second most common hurdle is the fear of scale: "I could not possibly write that much."

The beauty of a memoir lies in its flexibility. It does not need to be a chronological, day-by-day account of your existence. In fact, some of the most powerful memoirs are composed of vignettes: short, unrelated stories that capture the essence of a particular time or feeling.

My great-grandfather's memoir wasn't a formal biography. It was a series of anecdotes told with the same cadence he likely used when sitting on a porch. Because he wrote with such immediacy, describing events from 1886 as if they had happened yesterday, the distance of time evaporated. As I read, my great-grandparents ceased to be names on a genealogy chart; they became as real and three-dimensional as my own parents.

Modern Tools for the Modern Storyteller

For those who claim, "I hate to write," the 21st century has provided a perfect workaround. You no longer need to be a typist to be an author.

Speech-to-Text: Most modern word processors (and smartphones)

feature robust dictation tools. You can "tell" your story to your device while sitting in your favorite chair, and the software will transcribe your words into text.

Prompt Services: Companies like StoryWorth or MemoirMe specialize in this. They send you a weekly prompt, a question about your childhood, your career, or your philosophy. You reply via email with your story, and at the end of the year, they compile, edit, and print your stories into a professionally bound hardcover book.

The Ease of Self-Publishing

If you prefer a more "hands-on" or independent approach, the barrier to professional-looking books has never been lower.

Print-on-Demand (POD):

Services like Blurb, Lulu, or Amazon KDP allow you to upload a digital file and order as few as one or two high-quality, hardcover copies of your book. You don't need a publisher; you are the publisher.

The DIY Touch: For those who find joy in the tactile, DIY book-binding kits are easily available at most craft stores or online and provide everything you need to hand-sew your own journals or bind your printed pages into a unique, artisanal volume. There is something deeply satisfying about holding a book you wrote and built with your own hands.

Your First Five Chapters: Writing Prompts

To help you move past the "blank page," here are five prompts to kickstart your first five chapters. Each one is designed to be a standalone story.

1. The Sensory Gateway:

Think of a specific smell or sound from your childhood home (e.g., woodsmoke, rain on a tin roof, or a specific meal cooking). Describe that memory in as much detail as possible. Where does it take you?

2. The First Frontier:

Write about the first time you felt truly independent. Was it getting your driver's license? Your first job? Moving away from home? Describe the mixture of fear and excitement.

3. The Witness to Change:

Describe a piece of technology or a local landmark that existed when you were young but has since vanished. Explain what it was like to use it or see it, and how the world feels different without it.

4. The Character Study:

Pick one person who influenced you deeply—a grandparent, a teacher, or a neighbor. Don't just list their traits; tell a story about a specific moment you spent together that reveals who they were.

5. The Great Wyoming Story:

(Or your specific locale): Describe a time when the environment itself was the main character. A legendary blizzard, a historic drought, or a perfect summer evening on the plains. How did you and your community react to it?

Contributing to the "Everyday History" of Wyoming

Your story has value beyond your own family. We often think of history as being about governors, outlaws, or pioneers, but the true history of the "Equality State" is written in the lives of the people who call it home.

The Wyoming Historical Society actively seeks to preserve these personal narratives through the "Everyday Histories" project. They recognize that the daily fabric of life, ranching stories, memories of boom-and-bust towns, or simply the experience of a Wyoming winter, is a crucial part of our collective heritage.

By sharing your memoir or even specific chapters with the WHS, you ensure your voice becomes part of a dynamic archive accessible to current and future generations.

Submissions can be sent to: everyday.stories@historythatswy.org, where staff are ready to help guide you through the process of making your story a permanent part of Wyoming's living record.

The Final Word

If you are waiting for the "perfect time" to start, or for your writing skills to feel "professional enough," remember this: The worst thing you ever write will be infinitely better than the most brilliant story you never write.

Your stories are a treasure, but they only have value if they are shared. This winter, don't let those memories fade into the gray. Pick up a pen, open a laptop, or simply start talking to your phone. Your future great-grandchildren, and the state of Wyoming, are already waiting to hear what you have to say.

Carolyn Lampman, grew up on the Wyoming ranch homesteaded by her great grandparents in 1887. She teaches writing classes including a memoir class and is the author of sixteen books including several memoirs.

Visit carolynlampman.org.

Tim McCoy

Soul of a Cowboy, Mind of a Showman, Heart of a Poet

BY JACK SCHMIDT

Most folks remember Tim McCoy as the steely-eyed lawman of the silver screen, but if you listen close to the wind blowing off Owl Creek, you'll hear the soul of a man who was as much a poet as he was a performer.

Tim didn't just "play" a cowboy; he lived it. He landed in Lander back in 1909 as a nineteen-year-old greenhorn with nothing but a dream and a willingness to sweat. He paid his dues at the Double Diamond and EmBar ranches before carving out his own 10,000-acre legacy west of Thermopolis. Living on the edge of the Wind River

Reservation, Tim did not just observe his Shoshone and Arapaho neighbors, he respected them. He mastered the intricate Plains Indian sign language and was eventually adopted into the Arapaho tribe as "High Eagle."

His life was a whirlwind: he served as a cavalry officer in WWI rising to rank of Colonel. But Hollywood came calling in 1922 when MGM needed 1,000 authentic Native American extras for *The Covered Wagon*. Tim not



only coordinate the Native American extras; he championed them. He ensured every adult was paid \$5 a day, equal to white extras, bringing much-needed relief to the reservation during a bitter era of hardship.

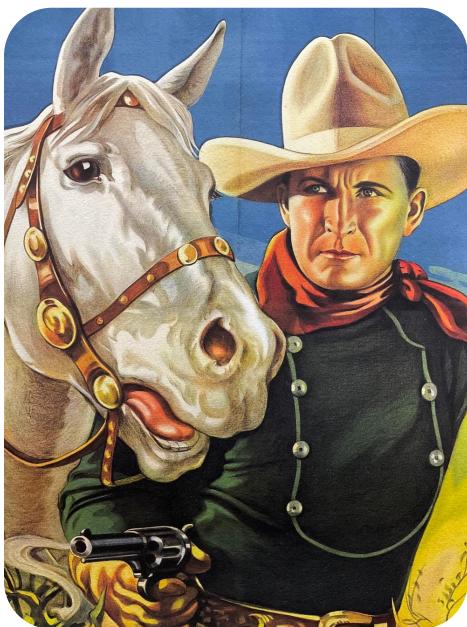
That stint launched a career of over 100 films and a massive Wild West show that, unfortunately, went bust in 1938, costing him a fortune.

At age 50, he returned to active duty for WWII and eventually became the youngest Adjutant General in U.S. history. In 1952, he won an Emmy for *The Tim McCoy Show*.

Yet, through the glitz of Hollywood and the grit of WWII service, Tim remained a man of deep reflection.

While the world saw the "High Eagle" in a ten-gallon hat, his true heart came out in his verse. Tim was an accomplished cowboy poet, capturing the fading echoes of the Old West in a small book of poems that read like a love letter to the Wyoming range. He spent his final decades documenting the history he lived, from his autobiography to a masterclass on sign language with his son.

Tim McCoy was a man of action, certainly, but it was his words penned in the quiet of the plains that truly captured the spirit of the frontier.



WYOMING'S AZURE SKIES

By Tim McCoy

There's a poem some guy's written
about Wyoming's azure skies,
About rattlesnakes and wood ticks,
porcupines and bottle flies.
About the purple snow-capped mountains and
zephyrs in the air,
About wolves and bobcat kittens, coyotes,
skunks, and grizzly bears.

He goes on to tell of punchers,
with their chaps and cartridge belts,
Their silver-mounted saddles
and their higher boots and Stetson felts.
How they'll work from dawn till evening
if you keep their tummies full,
And how they'll rope and tie the critters
and how they love to throw the bull.

Oh, he sure gives a great description
of this healthy, wealthy state,
And he longs to travel back here
—or so he says at any rate—
To once again ride the ranges
after cattle that are fat,
And to see the reckless cowboys
go a-loping across the flat.

But there's one thing that I'm certain,
and it's apparent in this rhyme:
This guy must have hit Wyoming
in the good old summertime.
When the range grass starts a-waving
and the young calves romp about,
And that special springtime feeling
makes a feller want to shout.

'Cause the things he wrote are true enough,
as near as I recall,

But there's a side of old Wyoming
he ain't never seen at all.

He never stood a night guard
when the rain was pelting down,
Or slept out with just one blanket
when there was snow on the ground.

'Cause when the winter shuts down on us
and the blizzards start to rage,
Why, it makes a cowboy start to figure how
he spent his summer wage.

When the springs are all froze solid
and the valleys filled with snow,
That's deep enough to strike the breech-cloth
on a long-legged Arapaho.

When the range cows stand and shiver,
plumb too weak to even graze,
And the hump that's in their middle
would cheat a camel forty ways.

When the whole durn landscape's covered
with a blanket soft and white—
Well, that's the time to hit Wyoming
if you want to hit it right.

That's one side of this here country
that our poet's never seen;
Why, it would freeze the golden romance
out of any poet's dream.

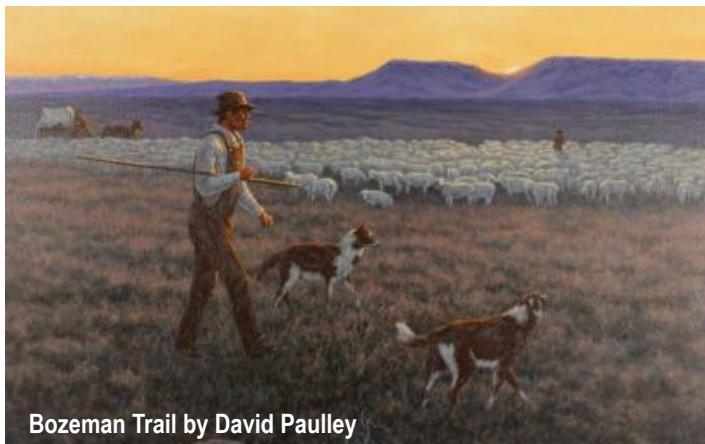
Now, I'm no pessimist or cynic,
my poet friend, I'll have you know—
But who the hell can dream of romance
when it's twenty-eight below?

I got a tip to give you, partner,
if you'll mind it not the least:
Is to spend the whole durn winter
in some swell hotel back East,
And just keep right on a-writing
with your clean, descriptive pen—

But don't hit old Wyoming
'til the summer's here again.

Contact the WHS to receive an emailed sound file of Tim McCoy reading this, and other poems, in his own voice.

ART & ARTIFACTS: 2027 WHS Calendar



Bozeman Trail by David Pauley



Shoshone Parfleche

The Wyoming Historical Society (WHS) is excited to announce the official call for submissions for our highly anticipated 2027 WHS Calendar. This year's theme, "Art and Artifacts," aims to celebrate the rich heritage of our state by showcasing historical objects through a creative, artistic lens.

With over 2,500 calendars sold nationwide annually, this publication offers a premier platform for Wyoming museums and local artists to share their collections and creative visions with thousands of readers. We are seeking 20 professional-grade selections: one for the cover; twelve for the monthly pages; and several for the back cover and inside story, that highlight the diversity and depth of Wyoming's history.

For Museums: Artifacts as Art

We are calling on Wyoming-based museums and historical institutions to submit high-quality photographs of unique, three-dimensional artifacts from their collections.

To ensure a cohesive and high-impact visual style, all artifact photographs must feature the object against a solid black background. This stylistic choice emphasizes the artifact as a standalone work of art.

Museum Submission Requirements:

- **Artifact Information:** Name, accession number (if available), and dimensions.
- **Description:** A brief statement (100 words or less) explaining the item's history and why it fits the "Art and Artifacts" theme.

For Artists: Interpreting Our History

We invite Wyoming-based artists to submit original artwork that visually interprets or is inspired by the state's historical sites, stories, and / or artifacts.

All visual mediums are welcome, including paintings, drawings, mixed media, or high-quality photographs of sculptures, and murals. We are looking for pieces that thoughtfully pair creative vision with the "Art and Artifacts" theme.

Artist Submission Requirements:

- **Artwork Information:** Title of the piece, size, and medium.
- **Artist Statement:** A brief statement (100 words or less) explaining the connection between the piece and the theme, "Arts and Artifacts."

Compensation and Recognition

Selected contributors will receive both monetary awards and significant statewide promotion. The museum or artist chosen for the cover will receive \$250. Each monthly feature will receive \$50.

Beyond the monetary award, selected museums and artists will be featured in a dedicated "Collection Story" or "Artist Story" on the WHS website and social media channels. While these stories will not appear in the printed calendar, all winners will receive full credit alongside their selected publication image.

Technical Specifications

To ensure high-quality printing, all digital files must meet the following criteria:

- **Resolution:** Minimum of 600 dpi.
- **Dimensions:** Suitable for printing at 14 inches wide by 11 inches tall.
- **Deadline:** Physical or digital submissions must be received by 5:00 PM MST on March 15, 2026.

We look forward to your inspired submissions as we work together to make the 2027 WHS Calendar our best one yet.

Support the Wyoming Historical Society to help preserve and share Wyoming's heritage with current and future generations.

\$25+ Digital Donor: Support the mission and receive exclusive digital content.

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WHS BLAST FROM THE PAST

FINDING OUR VOICE: A CENTURY AGO AND TODAY

History has a funny way of repeating itself, or at least, it rhymes. As we gather this January 2026 to celebrate a major milestone for the Wyoming Historical Society (WHS), we find ourselves standing in the same footprints left by our founders a century ago.

On the pages that follow, you will find the official press release detailing the launch of our new flagship journal, *The Wyoming Historian*. You will also find a collection of archival clippings from the 1920s that reveal a striking parallel: the challenges and triumphs we face today in preserving Wyoming's story are the same ones that fueled the first generation of the promoters and caretakers of Wyoming's history.

1922-1925:

BUILDING THE FOUNDATION

The journey to an independent historical record was never guaranteed. As you will see in the first few historical excerpts, early pioneers of the Society like Eunice G. Anderson and Mrs. Cyrus Beard had to fight against a tide of skepticism. In 1922, the prevailing attitude was one of doubt—many wondered if Wyoming even had the resources or the interest to sustain a formal historical organization.

Anderson's 1922 vision, however, was clear: an historical agency without a publication is a "man without a voice." That conviction led to the birth of the 'Quarterly Bulletin' in 1923, which eventually evolved into the *Annals of Wyoming* by 1925. This

evolution was more than just a change in title; it was the realization of a promise to provide a permanent, searchable record for the state.

1926 vs. 2026: A SHARED FERVOR

The timing of our current transition is particularly poetic. In the final historical excerpt on the following page, dated January 31, 1926, Natrona County Historical Society President Thomas Cooper made a passionate plea for community support. He viewed the Society as a "worthy undertaking" that belonged to the people, not just a select class of scholars.

Exactly 100 years later, we find ourselves echoing Cooper's sentiments. As we move away from the *Annals* name to embark on a new era of self-reliance with *The Wyoming Historian*, we are reclaiming that 1920s-era spark of independence. This transition is not a retreat, but a "bold step forward" that ensures the Society remains the owner and operator of Wyoming's premier historical record.

While the masthead has evolved, the core mission remains untouched. We are still dedicated to the "gold standard" of storytelling, ensuring that the true story of the West remains unclouded by the "fog of time".

WHY FORMAT MATTERS: THE RETURN TO QUALITY

One theme you will notice in both the historical clippings and the current press release is the obsession with quality. Our

predecessors understood that for history to survive, it must be tangible.

In the press release that follows, our Executive Director, Alexandra Philp, discusses a deliberate return to professional craftsmanship. In an age where digital media can vanish with a server crash, *The Wyoming Historian* is a physical commitment to the future. By producing archival-quality, "bookshelf-ready" volumes, we are honoring the standards envisioned by Anderson and Beard a century ago.

LOOKING AHEAD

As you read through the details of our premier issue, featuring everything from Yellowstone tourism to frontier commerce, keep in mind that this is just the beginning. Our next issue is already in the works designed as a commemorative volume for the United States Semi-quicentennial (America250).

The names on our covers have changed from the 'Quarterly Bulletin' to the *Annals*, and now to *The Wyoming Historian*. But as you will see in the documents on the following pages, the heart of the Wyoming Historical Society remains exactly where it was in 1926: in the hands of the pioneers, scholars, and citizens who believe our story is worth telling.

Please continue with the following pages to read the historical records, page 13, that inspired this new chapter and the official press release regarding *The Wyoming Historian*, pages 14-15.



BY EUNICE G. ANDERSON
WYOMING STATE HISTORIAN

(Excerpt from her January 22, 1922 article expressing her support in establishing a State Historical Society and publications.)

...Conditions were exceptionally discouraging. The general attitude of the people was that of doubt as to the possibility of making such a venture in Wyoming... But we knew that Wyoming history is filled with deeds of bravery, courage, adventure, and romance; all interwoven in the life histories of the self-sacrificing just and liberty loving women, the founders, and pioneers of this great commonwealth. We know also, that when our citizens are convinced of the value of such an undertaking, they would give it their unreserved support.

Such a [Society] should not exist for the benefit of any class, but for the benefit of ALL. An historical organization which catacombs its library, services, and publications, in even the most spacious quarters, is not unlike a country rich in natural resources which remains undeveloped.

An historical agency with out the ability to issue publications is like a man without a voice.

1922 Year-End Report from the Wyoming History Department:

One thing we hoped to accomplish during the year to finalize the organization of a state historical society, drawing members from all sections of the state.

*Casper Daily Tribune,
Sunday, February 11, 1923*

Mrs. E.C. Raymond is in receipt of a letter from Mrs. Cyrus Beard, state historian recently, in which Mrs. Beard states that application has been made to have a Historical Bulletin copyrighted, and the accompanying letter was self explanatory.

*The News Letter (Newcastle),
January 9, 1924*

LATE NEWS From All Over WYOMING

Mrs. Cyrus Beard, Wyoming state historian, announces in the current issue of the "Quarterly Bulletin" of the historical department that with the opening of Volume 3 of the "Bulletin" in July, the name of the publication will be changed to the "Annals of Wyoming."

*Jackson's Hole Courier
May 21, 1925*

BY THOMAS COOPER, PRESIDENT
NATRONA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

(Excerpt from his January 31, 1926 article in the Industrial Edition of the Casper Tribune-Herald.)

...It is a worthy undertaking, and while we have moved slowly and modestly, those vested with the responsibility of carrying forward our work have given constructive and worthwhile service to the community. [The] membership is made up of the substantial citizens of our community. ... It is fitting here to set aright in the minds of those who may not have fully grasped our purposes... the Historical Society is for the purpose of gathering relics, history written material, and whose members may make deep research into the past for the sake of posterity. In this ANYONE who may be interested in the subject is eligible for membership. ...

We feel that the State Society merits our respect and our support and that nothing should be done to distract from its importance. The State Society also publishes a quarterly journal which should be in the home of every citizen in Wyoming and this is only possible by becoming a member of the State Society. One should do so immediately!

A CENTURY OF STEWARDSHIP

WHS Unveils *The Wyoming Historian*

The Wyoming Historical Society (WHS) is proud to announce the publication of the premier issue of *The Wyoming Historian*, the Society's new, independent flagship journal. This milestone represents more than just a new title; it is a profound continuation of the Society's century-long commitment to producing Wyoming's premier historical record.

The launch of *The Wyoming Historian* marks a bold step forward for the Society, ensuring that the voices of Wyoming's scholars, pioneers, and citizens continue to be heard through a publication owned and operated by the very organization that has championed them for decades.

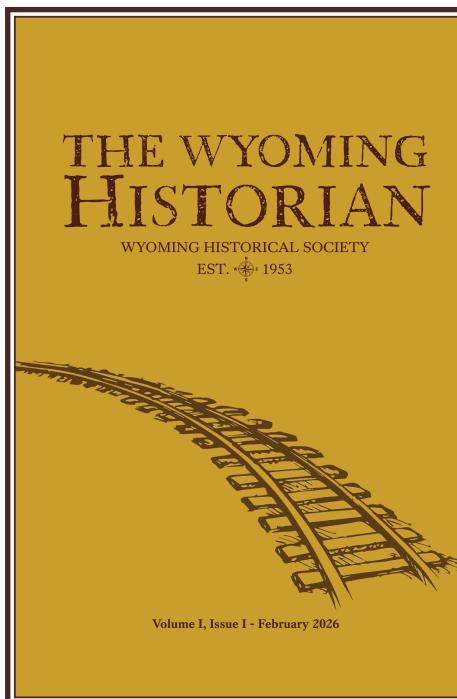
A Legacy That Refuses to Fade

The Society's dedication to a high-quality historical journal is a tradition that predates even the official founding of the current organization. As far back as the early 1920s, the drive to document Wyoming's history was a community-wide passion.

In researching the archives of wyomingnewspaper.org, one finds the echoes of this commitment as far back as July 1923. In the July 15, 1923 edition of the *Casper Daily Tribune*, the first publication of the "Quarterly Bulletin" (the predecessor to what would become the *Annals*

of Wyoming) was met with great fanfare. The article noted that the publication was essential to "preserving the tales of the pioneers" and ensuring that "the true story of the West is not lost to the fog of time."

That same fervor is alive today. Since 1953, the journal has served as the official publication of the Wyoming Historical Society. Today, as the Society transitions to *The Wyoming Historian*, it carries that same 1920s-era spark of independence and fervor for historical accuracy into a new era of self-reliance.



"While the name of the journal has evolved, our mission has never wavered," said

Wyoming Historical Society President Beki Speas. "The Society has been at the helm of Wyoming's historical publishing for over 70 years. When the State chose to move in a different direction with the *Annals* name, we saw it as an opportunity to reaffirm our promise to our supporters. *The Wyoming Historian* is our commitment to a future where Wyoming's history is preserved with the same integrity and independence that characterized our beginnings in the 1920s."

Built to Last: An Archival-Quality Journal

In an era of fleeting digital media, *The Wyoming Historian* is a deliberate return to the enduring power of the printed word. The Society has placed a significant focus on the physical quality of the publication. Each issue is a professionally bound paperback journal, designed with durability and aesthetics in mind.

"Our earliest journals were produced with a high degree of professional craftsmanship, and *The Wyoming Historian* marks a deliberate return to that legacy of quality. We have designed this to be more than just a periodical; it is a professionally bound volume intended to be a permanent, treasured resource on any bookshelf. In this way, we are honoring the standard of

excellence that the Society's founders originally envisioned for our historical record," stated Alexandra Philp, Executive Director of the Wyoming Historical Society.

These volumes are crafted to be "bookshelf-ready," sturdy enough to withstand decades of use by researchers, yet elegant enough to be a centerpiece in a personal library. By prioritizing a high-quality, physical format, the Society ensures that these journals will remain in archives, libraries, and homes across the state for the next century, providing a tangible and easily searchable record for future generations of Wyomingites.

Inside the Inaugural Issue

The debut issue of *The Wyoming Historian* offers a sweeping look across the geography and timeline of the state, featuring deep-dive articles and meticulously researched narratives that have become the hallmark of the Society's work.

The premier issue includes:

- *Taking the Train to Yellowstone* by Loretta Evans: A fascinating look at the early days of tourism and the rails that brought the world to Wyoming's crown jewel.
- *William A. Carter and the Fort Bridger Sutler Store, Part I: Struggles of the Early Years, 1857-1861* by Ephriam D. Dickson III: A detailed examination of one of the state's most influential early figures and the commerce of the frontier.

- "Persimmon Bill" (aka William Chambers) by Randy

Tucker: A compelling biographical sketch of one of the more colorful and notorious characters in Wyoming's history.

- *Wyoming's Beehive Boom: Southwestern Wyoming's Charcoal Burning Kilns and Industry in the Late Nineteenth Century* by Thomas J. Straka and Douglas H. Page, Jr.: An industrial history that explores the massive structures that fueled the region's economic growth.

- *7 December 1905 on the Overland Limited: A Night of Speed and Sorrow in Western Wyoming* by J.M. Brink: A gripping account of a fateful night on the Union Pacific line.

In addition to these features, the journal continues its tradition of insightful Book Reviews, including Lucas Keeler's review of *Rails to Trails Along the Sweetwater* and Nancy Tabb's review of *Sacred Wonderland*. The issue concludes with Society Chronicles and a look at Upcoming Events, keeping supporters connected to the ongoing work of the Society today.

A Commitment to WHS Supporters

The Wyoming Historical Society is a non-profit organization that relies on the passion and generosity of its members across all twenty-three counties and beyond. The transition to *The Wyoming Historian* was made possible by the steadfast support of loyal members.

"Our mission hasn't changed," added Speas. "Our core purpose is to preserve and

share Wyoming's history and promote history education. Whether we are called the 'Quarterly Bulletin' as we were in 1923, or *The Wyoming Historian* in 2026, the quality of our research and the heart of our storytelling remain the gold standard for the West."

How to Access

The Wyoming Historian

The first issue of *The Wyoming Historian* is currently being distributed to supporters of the Society, schools, museums, and libraries across the state.

For those who wish to ensure they have this inaugural volume on their own bookshelves, or for libraries and institutions looking to maintain their Wyoming history archives, memberships and subscriptions are available through the Society's website, as well as the ability to purchase this, and future issues individually.

Each issue serves as a permanent record, ensuring that the research conducted today remains accessible for the historians of tomorrow. The next issue will be a commemorative issue for Wyoming in celebration of the United States of America's Semi-quincentennial (America250.)

As the Society looks toward its next hundred years, *The Wyoming Historian* stands as a testament to the fact that while names and partnerships may change, the story of Wyoming remains everlasting.

THE BOTANIST OF THE BIG HORNS

Vie Willits Garber's Scientific Frontier

BY ALEXANDRA PHILP

In the early 1900s, Wyoming was often characterized by what it lacked: paved roads, large populations, and formal scientific institutions. Yet for Vie Willits Garber, the state lacked nothing. To her, the foothills of the Bighorn Mountains were a vast, open-air laboratory waiting to be indexed. At a time when women were expected to focus on the domestic sphere, Vie was busy documenting over 600 species of plants, mapping the Bozeman Trail, and proving that a woman's place was as much in the field as it was in the home.

A Master of Two Worlds

Vie Willits was born into a family that valued the Wyoming landscape. Growing up in the community of Big Horn, she developed an early fascination with the local flora. However, she was not content with merely admiring the wildflowers; she wanted to understand their taxonomy.

In 1910, Vie achieved a feat that remains impressive even by modern standards: she earned a master's degree from the University of Wyoming in two distinct disciplines, Botany and History. This dual expertise would define her career. She understood that you could not truly grasp the historical



"Rosaceae" collected by Vie Willits on June 3, 1909 at Willets Springs / Jackson Creek in Sheridan County, WY. Vie conducted extensive botanical surveys; in 1910 alone, she documented over 600 plant species in the region.

Rocky Mountain Herbarium

context of a place like the Little Goose Valley without understanding the soil and the plants that sustained the people living there.

The Little Goose Valley Flora

Her most enduring scientific contribution was her exhaustive study of the plants in her home region. Carrying heavy presses and notebooks through the brush, she identified and listed 615 unique plants. Her work was not just a hobbyist's collection; it was a rigorous scientific record of Wyoming's biodiversity during a period of rapid environmental change.

Her herbarium specimens served as a vital record for the University of Wyoming. Vie's fieldwork was not limited to biology. Using the same precision she applied to botany, she became the first person to carefully map and document the exact route of the Bozeman Trail through her region. She realized that the wagon ruts were like the plants she studied; they were living artifacts that would eventually be reclaimed by the earth if they were not recorded.

The "All-Woman" Spirit

Vie's life intersected with one of Wyoming's most famous historic moments: the 1920 election of the "Petticoat Government" in Jackson. While she was not in Jackson herself, she embodied that same spirit of female self-reliance. As a teacher, rancher, and historian, she was a member of a generation of Wyoming women who did not wait for



Vie Willits Garber was a pioneer in both botany and history. She is pictured here on horseback during one of her many rides conducting research. Her master's thesis from the University of Wyoming remains a foundational document for the study of Bighorn Mountain flora.

Garber Family Photo

permission to lead.

In her classroom, she was known for a "no-nonsense" approach that blended her love for the natural world with a deep respect for Wyoming's past. She taught her students that history was not just something that happened "back East" or in Europe, it was happening right under their boots on the slopes of the Bighorns.

A Legacy in the Sagebrush

Why does Vie Willits Garber matter for Women's History Month, celebrated each year in March? Because she represents the "quiet" history of Wyoming. For every governor who made headlines, there were women like Vie Willits Garber who were doing the intellectual heavy lifting, defining Wyoming's reality and future. She was a scientist before the state had a robust scientific community, and she was a historian before a statewide Historical Society was even a dream.

Her life reminds us that Wyoming's identity as the "Equality State" wasn't just about the right to vote; it was about the right to be recognized as an expert, an explorer, and a guardian of the land. When we look at the Bighorn Mountains today, we see them through a lens that Vie Willits Garber helped polish.



After earning both her bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Wyoming, Vie Willits married Alvin Garber in 1910, nine years after they met. This photo is her wedding portrait.

Garber Family Photo

FEBRUARY EVENTS

Feb 7. - Rolling Setsubun Sushi

Learn about the seasonal traditions brought to Wyoming by Japanese Americans incarcerated at Heart Mountain during World War II. Participants will explore the history of the Setsubun festival and make traditional sushi rolls. Registration is required; visit heartmountain.org for tickets.

1:00 PM

**Heart Mountain Interpretive Center
1539 Road 19, Powell, WY 82435**

Feb. 9 - 2026 Governor's Capitol Art Exhibition Opening

This biennial juried exhibition features artwork from across the state that celebrates Wyoming's landscapes and history. The exhibit serves as the primary way the state acquires contemporary art for its permanent collection in the Capitol. The exhibit will be on display through August 8, 2026.

8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

**Wyoming State Capitol
200 W 24th St., Cheyenne, WY 82002**

Feb. 9 - Tom Hebert on the Natural History Museum (Sheridan College)

Presented by Johnson County Historical Society.

6:30 PM

**Johnson County Library
171 North Adams Ave., Buffalo, WY 82834**

Feb. 11 - Date Night at the Museums

A progressive evening featuring art, artifacts, and music across four of Casper's cultural hotspots. Guests are chauffeured to different locations, including the Casper College Alumni Association Art Gallery and The NIC, for behind-the-scenes tours of local collections. Tickets must be purchased in advance; visit visitecasper.com for details.

6:00 PM - 9:30 PM

**The NIC (Starting Point)
400 E Collins Dr., Casper, WY 82601**

Feb 12 - Cody Culture Club: The Hide Hunters

Authors Steven Rinella and Randall Williams share the untold story of the hide hunters who transformed the American Great Plains in the 19th century. Tickets are \$20; hosted by the Buffalo Bill Center of the West.

5:30 PM - 7:30 PM

**Holiday Inn Cody
1701 Sheridan Ave., Cody, WY 82414**

Feb. 18 - Green River Chamber History Lunch & Learn

Partnering with the Sweetwater County Historical Museum to highlight local heritage. This session provides a platform for community members to discuss the industrial and pioneer history of the Green River Basin while networking with local professionals. Registration is required through the Green River Chamber of Commerce, www.grchamber.com.

12:00 PM (NOON)

**Hampton Inn & Suites
1055 Wild Horse Canyon Rd., Green River, WY 82935**

Feb 18 - Life & Adventures of Frank Grouard

Presented by Johnson County Historical Society. Nancy Tabb will present the "new and improved history" of the Life and Adventures of Frank Grouard.

1:00 PM

**Buffalo Senior Center
671 W Fetterman St., Buffalo, WY 82834**

Feb. 19 - Pioneer Rag Rug Class

A hands-on history workshop at the Pioneer Museum where participants learn the traditional craft of rug making as practiced by early Wyoming settlers. The class covers the historical necessity of repurposing textiles in frontier homes.

6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

**Pioneer Museum
1443 Main St., Lander, WY 82520**

Feb. 28 - The Journey of Robert Yellowtail

Johnny Tim Yellowtail presents the story of his great-grandfather, Robert Yellowtail, a legendary 20th-century warrior and leader for the Crow Nation. The talk explores his life from boarding schools to his role as a pivotal historical figure in the Big Horn Basin. Presentation included with museum admission or membership.

1:00 PM

**Heart Mountain Interpretive Center
1539 Road 19, Powell, WY 82435**

MARCH EVENTS

March 5 - "Spring Thaw" Party

A community gathering to celebrate the history of the Rocky Mountain fur trade. The event includes the Annual Meeting and a review of upcoming preservation projects and the unveiling of the museum's 2026 seasonal living history schedule.

TBA

Museum of the Mountain Man
700 Magnolia St., Pinedale, WY 82941

March 10 - Storytime with Seymour: Birds of the Trail

This family-friendly history program at the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center features Seymour Antelope, the BLM mascot. Children learn about the wildlife that early emigrants encountered on the Oregon, Mormon, and California Trails through interactive storytelling and historical crafts. Free event; snacks and activities are provided while supplies last.

10:00 AM

National Historic Trails Interpretive Center
1501 N Poplar St., Casper, WY 82601

March 13 - Dead Lodge Ghost Investigation Reveal

The Carbon County Museum reveals the "evidence" collected during paranormal investigations of the local historic sites. The presentation connects local ghost lore with the documented history of the residents and events of 19th-century Rawlins. \$5 General Admission, Members Free.

5:00 PM

Carbon County Museum
904 W Walnut St., Rawlins, WY 82301

March 21- Chief Grey Bull: Legendary Apsaalooke Chief

A guest lecture detailing the life and leadership of Chief Grey Bull. This session focuses on the Crow Nation's history within the Big Horn Basin and their complex relationship with the expanding American frontier in the late 1800s.

1:00 PM

Heart Mountain Interpretive Center
1539 Road 19, Powell, WY 82435

March 20-21- Ceili at the Roundhouse Celtic Festival

Held within the historic Union Pacific Roundhouse and Railyards complex, this festival celebrates the Celtic heritage of the many immigrants who settled in Southwest Wyoming to work on the railroad and in the coal mines. The event features traditional music, dancing, and historical workshops inside one of the state's most iconic industrial landmarks. Tickets vary by session; visit evanstoncelticfestival.com for the full performance schedule.

Starts at 3:00 PM (Friday) / 9:30 AM (Saturday)
Roundhouse & Railyards Complex
1400 W Main St., Evanston, WY 82930

March 24 - WWII Homefront Victory Dinner

The Rockpile Museum Association hosts a themed dinner commemorating the efforts of Campbell County residents during World War II. The evening includes displays of artifacts from the local homefront and stories of the "Victory Gardens" and scrap drives in Gillette. Tickets are required; visit rockpilemuseum.com for availability.

6:00 PM
Cam-Plex Energy Hall
1635 Reata Drive, Gillette, WY 8271

March 29 - Big Boy 4014 Coast-to-Coast Tour Launch

The world's largest operating steam locomotive, the Union Pacific Big Boy 4014, officially departs its home base in Cheyenne to begin its historic "America 250" tour. This is a rare opportunity to see this massive piece of industrial history in motion before it heads west toward California. Check the Union Pacific Steam Schedule at up.com for exact departure times.

Departure Time TBA
Cheyenne Depot Museum (Viewing areas)
121 W 15th St., Cheyenne, WY 82001

For more information on each event and additional events, visit: wyshs.org/mission-vision/statewide-calendar-events



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