



Wyoming History News



Published for members of the Wyoming State Historical Society

March 2018

Volume 65, Number 2

Heard on the Historical Trail



The National Council for History Education recently announced that WSHS member **Sam Mihara** has been named the winner of the Paul A. Gagnon Prize as the 2018 History Educator of the Year. This prestigious award is given to an individual who has made a significant contribution to history education. Sam received the award for his work lecturing around the country about his imprisonment as a child at Heart Mountain Internment Camp during World War II. Sam will be in Sheridan and Buffalo in March. To invite Sam to your area contact him via email at smihara12345@gmail.com. You can also view his website at www.sammihara.com.

“From Gators to Buffalo Robes” was the topic of a program hosted by the **Hot Springs County Historical Society** earlier this month. Thermopolis native Merlin Heinze and his wife Barbara have developed a very successful business worldwide that comes from tanning natural hides and furs.

(Continued on page 3)

INDIAN EDUCATION FOR ALL

Thanks to the new Indian Education For All law passed by the Legislature in March 2017, history, civics and social studies students across Wyoming will soon be learning more about their neighbors on the Wind River Reservation and about other tribes of the region, too. The law mandates that the Wyoming Department of Education, in consultation with the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho tribes, review and, if necessary, revise the standards to better address the cultural heritage, history and contemporary contributions of Native Americans.

Last spring and summer, the department assembled a committee of two dozen people to review the standards and draft suggested revisions. Most, but not all, were Wyoming educators and around half were Shoshone or Arapaho. **Tom Rea**, editor of WyoHistory.org, represented the Wyoming State Historical Society on the committee.

Over the course of two-day meetings the panel concentrated mainly on the social study standards and on the history and culture of the two tribes on Wind River, Wyoming’s only Indian reservation. The panel suggested changes at all levels, kindergarten

through 12th grade. Some of the changes are substantial.

The Wyoming Board of Education was slated to get its first look at the draft Feb. 15. The draft will be available for public comment soon, after which those comments go back to the board for rejection, approval or some other option. Check back next month for news on how to comment. New standards may be in place as soon as the start of the 2018-2019 school year. Teachers would then have two or three years to put them into practice.

The law also requires the state to link to resources on the department’s web site to help school districts meet the new standards—but the Legislature set aside no funds to develop curriculum. That effort is being left up to individual school districts—or to other organizations willing to step up. Wyoming PBS, for example, in 2016, developed a series of short videos on tribal culture and history, together with lesson plans written by Native educators. WyoHistory.org is also developing new content on Wyoming’s Indian history, together with new digital toolkits for classroom use. For more details about this plan you can visit with Tom Rea at trea@tribcsp.com.

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The Wyoming State Historical Society, a non-profit, membership driven organization, encourages the study of Wyoming history. We believe to study the past is to understand the present and prepare for the future. Our vision is to insure that Wyoming's past remains accessible to present and future generations.

**Visit www.wyshs.org and "like"
us on Facebook**

From the President. . .



Dear friends, Energy has been historically, is currently, and will doubtless remain in the future the pillar of the Cowboy State's economy. However, Tourism is our state's second largest economic contributor. The prosperity, or lack thereof, of petroleum, coal and natural gas is in large measure driven by the international commodities market...resulting in thirteen boom and thirteen bust cycles since statehood! As recently as February 12, 2018 Governor Matt Mead told lawmakers "the state's current budget challenges shouldn't prevent spending ... to help diversify the state economy from its heavy dependence on the energy industry." Unfortunately, in times of economic duress, the knee-jerk reaction is to cut investments in historic sites, parks and museums in a misguided attempt to reduce budgets. Governor Mead's own proposed budget called for a reduction in State Parks and Cultural Resources alone of four staff positions and approximately three million dollars. Currently, the City of Casper is contemplating seasonally closing the Fort Caspar Museum, one of the nation's top ten western museums. Thus, our state's economy, already battered and buffeted by the turbulent energy market, is being further eviscerated by self-inflicted wounds.

In 1996, the City of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania faced a similar challenge. Although Philadelphia's population is three times larger than the entire Cowboy State, its tourism predicament was identical- it was treated as a "drive-by city" by eastern tourists, much as western tourists drive past Wyoming's communities on their way to Yellowstone or Grand Teton. A public-private initia-

tive known as "Visit Philadelphia" was established to foster Philadelphia as a visitor destination through focused investments in historic sites and museums, combined with an innovative marketing strategy. The results were staggering. In twenty years, tourist visits to Philadelphia nearly doubled. Spending from these visitors generated \$10.7 billion in economic activity, supported more than 93,000 jobs, and generated \$612 million in state and local taxes. This is the power of heritage tourism.

To maximize heritage tourism dollars, guests must be offered sufficient venues and amenities to encourage them to remain overnight. A Family Group day visit generates a mere \$90.00, while an overnight stay brings \$320.00 into a community ...and these are 1996 dollars! Simply attracting a handful of cars off the interstate highways overnight, every day, can make a significant contribution to our small-town economies! To achieve such economic benefits, public private partnerships must be established that invest in Wyoming's historic sites, parks and museums; rather than denuding our state of these irreplaceable and extremely vulnerable treasures that have the potential to unleash economic prosperity by attracting tourists off the interstates and into our communities.

As President of the Society, I am attempting to visit every one of our chapters this year, permitting me to personally explore the full breadth, diversity and strength of heritage tourism sites throughout our communities. If you know of such a site, or a historic preservation focused business that you feel I should discover, or needs publicity or support, please let Linda or me know.

Until Next Time,
Doug

(Heard on the Trail continued from page 1)

WSHS/WCC Historical Society member **Dr. Jess Clark** is assisting in a tour to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of D-Day in the summer of 2019. Enrollment is required by February 28, 2018. www.efcst.com/2100429CV.

Both the **Platte County and Natrona County Historical Societies** enjoyed a program by WSHS president **Doug Cubbison** about Indian Doughboys in the Great War. WSHS board member **Lisa Thalken** also shared information about the Society's Emerging Historians initiative at the same program. Doug will be visiting the **Fremont County Historical Society** on March 11th, and the **Albany County Historical Society** on March 20th. On April 24th he'll be visiting the **Goshen County Historical Society** in Torrington.

WSHS board member **Sylvia Bruner** presented a talk recently to the **Campbell County Historical Society** about The Bomber in the Big Horns, a 1943 crash of a B-17 in the Cloud Peak Wilderness.

The **Johnson County Historical Society** recently enjoyed a program titled "The Finding of the Thornburgh Wagon Trail," by archaeologist, Colin Ferriman.

WSHS members **John Davis** and **John Waggener** have been enjoying book tours across the state. John D. recently spoke at Western Wyoming Community College about his book *The Trial of Tom Horn*, and John W. has been a guest of various chapters speaking about his book *The Snow Chi Minh Trail*.

WSHS member **Tom Rea**, project director of WyoHistory.Org, will be a guest panelist at the Brinton Museum on April 14th. The topic will be the 150th Anniversary of the Treaty of Fort

Laramie. The event will also feature an overview of the work by Alexander Gardner, a photographer during the 1860s.

The **Historic Bishop Home** in Casper enjoyed a successful Valentine's Day Tea, and are working on future events. The historic home is available for rental for small groups, lunches and events. You can also schedule a tour. For additional details call 237-2443 or info@cadomafoundation.org.

The **Converse County Historical Society** recently toured the Stagecoach Museum in Lusk. If you haven't visited that museum make time to do so. The group's **Emerging historians** will host the second annual Prohibition Party fundraiser at the Headstrong Brewery on March 29th. Plan to attend and have some fun conducive to the period! For details contact Lisa Thalken at 307-797-2493 or lmthalken@gmail.com.

The history of Bedford and Turnerville will be the topic of discussion for the **Star Valley Historical Society** on April 19th. For details call 885-9259.

WSHS member and past president, **Rick Ewig**, was the guest speaker at a recent meeting of the **Laramie County Historical Society**. He spoke about the influence of Fort D.A. Russell and Camp Carlin on Cheyenne. At their April meeting they'll hear from Ellen Thompson who will talk about Wyoming's POWs.

The **Fort Bridger Historical Association** will host the 23rd Annual Jim Bridger Birthday Celebration on March 18th. Email fbha1843@gmail.com for details.

The Homesteader's Museum in Torrington will host "The Way We Worked," a travelling exhibit from the Smithsonian Institution through March 18th.



The Exchange

WILLARD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: WSHS member **Mary Lynn Corbett** is gathering historical information on the Willard School in Natrona County. If you have memories or materials to share please contact Mary Lynn at 234-2009.

JOB ANNOUNCEMENT: The Alliance for Historic Wyoming is seeking a part-time Executive Director. For details visit www.HistoricWyoming.org.

SESQUICENTENNIAL: Several community organizations are planning events around Laramie's 150th anniversary. For details email kdviner@msn.com. Watch *Wyoming History News* for details as they unfold. The **Albany County Historical Society** invites you to visit their website at www.wyoachs.com.



AWARD NOMINATIONS: The new Awards Manual is available by emailing linda@wyshs.org or going to the Society's website. Deadline to submit nominations is April 30.

Wyoming History Calendar

Through March 18-Torrington. “The Way We Worked,” an exhibit sponsored by the Smithsonian Institute. Call 532-5612.

February 28— Deadline to receive Homsher Research Grant Applications. See WSHS website for details.

February 28—Deadline to sign up for D-Day Tour taking place in 2019. See page 3.

March 3— Casper. WSHS Executive Committee Quarterly Meeting. Email linda@wyshs.org for details.

March 11— Hudson. WSHS president Doug Cubbison will speak at a meeting of the Fremont County Historical Society.

March 14—Sheridan. WSHS member Sam Mihara will be the guest speaker, Call 675-1150 for details. Sponsored in part by the Sheridan County Historical Society.

March 15—Buffalo. WSHS member Sam Mihara will be the guest speaker. For details call 684-9331. Sponsored in part by the Jim Gatchell Museum.

March 16—Gillette. WSHS member Sam Mihara will be the guest speaker. Sponsored in part by the Campbell County Historical Society.

March 18-Fort Bridger. The 23rd Annual Jim Bridger birthday Celebration. For details email fbh1843@gmail.com.

March 20-Laramie. WSHS president Doug Cubbison will speak at a meeting of the Albany County Historical Society. Call 766-5652 for details.

March 29-Douglas. Prohibition Party fundraiser sponsored by the Converse County Historical Society and Emerging Historians. For tickets call Lisa at 797-2493.

April 9—Laramie. Wyoming History Day competition. Judges needed. Contact Jessica Flock at jflock@uwyo.edu.

April 14-Big Horn. Treaty of Fort Laramie Symposium sponsored by The Brinton Museum. To register call 672-3172.

April 19-Afton. A program about Bedford & Turnerville history. Call 885-9259 for details.

April 21-Cheyenne. Laramie County Historical Society will host a program about Wyoming’s POWs. For details email mehartman@bresnan.net.

April 24-Torrington. WSHS president Doug Cubbison will speak at a meeting of the Goshen County Historical Society.

April 26—Casper. Natrona County Historical Society’s spring banquet. For details email alena.wagner@yahoo.com.

April 30—Deadline to submit nominations for Society’s Awards program. Nominate someone now. Contact linda@wyshs.org for manual, or view categories online at www.wyshs.org.

June 29-July 1-Fort Bridger. The Society’s annual Trek will be hosted by the Fort Bridger Historical Association. Watch for details.

July 26-Heart Mountain. Annual Pilgrimage. Early registration begins February 1. Visit www.heartmountain.org for details.

Laramie turns 150 years old in May, 2018.

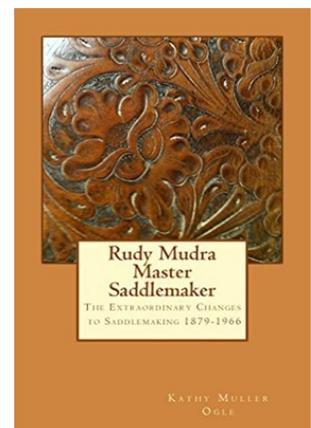
Watch for details!

Note: All phone numbers are Area Code 307

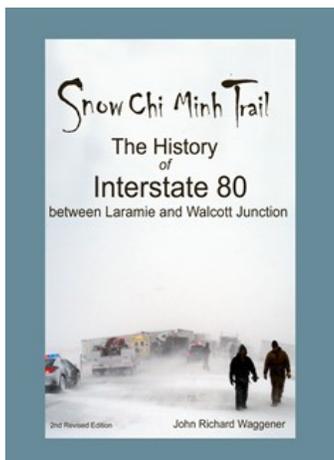
Wyoming History News welcomes information about events of interest to the general membership and others. Information should be sent at least a month in advance and should reach the WHN editor by the 15th. Send items to linda@wyshs.org

On the Book Shelf...

WSHS member **Kathy Ogle** of Cheyenne recently authored this delightful book titled *Rudy Mudra: Master Saddlemaker*. Her work explores the changes to saddlemaking over a period of 77 years, and the saddlemaker’s personal history. Kathy grew up riding a Rudy Mudra saddle, where countless hours of her childhood were spent riding horses on her family’s cattle and horse ranch on the Wyoming and Montana border. This book is available from local booksellers or online.

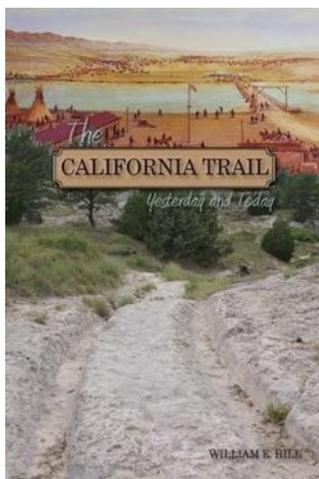
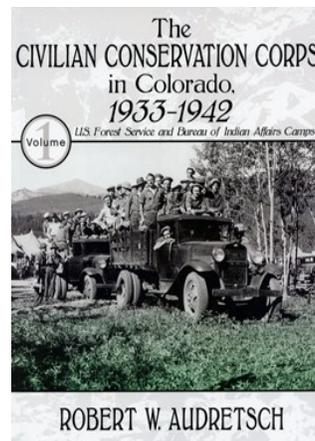


On the Book Shelf.... (continued)



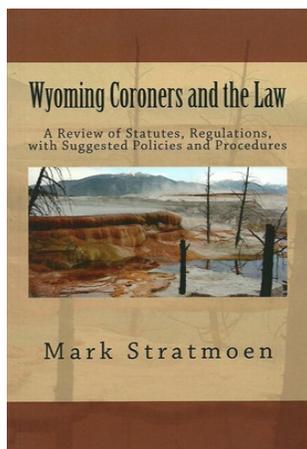
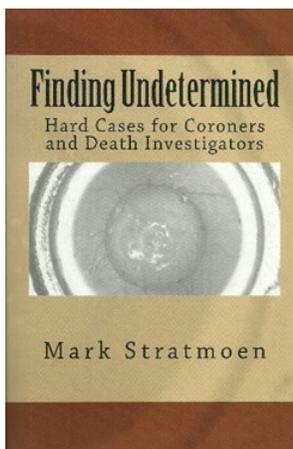
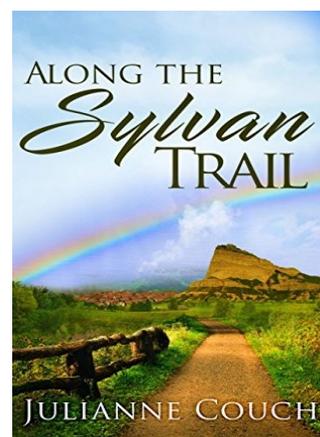
Due to the overwhelming demand of WSHS member **John Waggener's** first edition of *Snow Chi Minh Trail: The History of Interstate 80*, the Society has published a second revised edition. This new edition expands upon the first edition with updated information and some ALL NEW information made available to, or discovered by, the author after the first edition was released. The book retails for \$24.95 plus applicable sales tax and postage. The book is available at LOCAL bookstores statewide or by contacting the Society at linda@wyshs.org.

WSHS member **Bob Audretsch**, and retired National Park Service ranger, has devoted himself full time to researching and writing about the CCC. Currently living in Lakewood, Colorado, the author is proud to announce the release of Volume I, *The Civilian Conservation Corp in Colorado: 1933-1942*. Bob has a life-long interest in history, natures, books, and art, and has written numerous publications in those fields. This book can be purchased by visiting your local bookseller or online.



WSHS member **Bill Hill** of Centereach, NY recently announced the republishing of *The California Trail: Yesterday and Today*. Bill enjoys the history of the West, Wyoming and the historical trails. He said, "Even though I live in the east, my heart is in the west!" This book shares details of the rush to get to California during the mid-to late 1800s. To purchase the book contact the author at hillhousew@aol.com, or

Along the Sylvan Trail, by WSHS member **Julianne Couch**, and published by Sastrugi Press (Jackson), is the author's first novel. One review noted, "... (this book) makes one wish that the landscape were real and that one could meet the characters in real life." Another said, "The author writes with effortless poise about characters negotiating lives for themselves..." The book can be purchased from local booksellers or online.



Two recent releases by WSHS member **Mark Stratmoen** from Riverton are *Finding Undetermined*, and *Wyoming Coroners and the Law*. Mark is the elected Coroner for Fremont County, and worked as a medical-legal death investigator for 18 years. He has written several books and he delights in bringing details of his work to life (so to speak). These books can be purchased at your local bookseller or online. You can also contact the author by visiting his website at www.markstratmoen.com.

The Saga of Medicine Bow, Wyoming submitted by WSHS member Alan Gates

Alice and Alfred Gates moved to Wyoming in 1926 and first settled on the southern edge of the Snowy Range southwest of Laramie, Wyoming. They moved from Colorado when Alfred acquired work as a manager for the Fox Park Timber company.

The family rented a house in Laramie where the fourth son (Alan) was born in 1929. Shortly thereafter Alfred opened a grocery store in Medicine Bow, the Bow River Cash Store. The building still stands and became many types of business, a pool hall, a dance hall, a rock shop and others.

When the depression hit in 1929, many local families could not pay their bills or buy groceries. This resulted in the store closing and many businesses in town collapsed.

Alice Gates was educated at the State Teachers college in Greeley, Colorado and she was the first person to own cameras. She started taking pictures while living in Colorado continuing to Wyoming. Alice became a published author, poet and painter, and many photographs still exist.

There has been so much history around the area and so many historical happenings took place. One being the author Owen Wister who was writing the book *The Virginian* while sleeping on a counter in the store on the south side of UPRR which is also still there. There were several situations that took place close by. Two local law enforcement officers were instrumental in apprehending Bill Carlisle (the last lone train robber). Bill was imprisoned at the Territorial Prison. Big Nose George also had a reputation of robbing banks, trains and murdering folks. The two Medicine Bow lawmen (who had served in World War I) were part of the posse that captured him and hung him to a tree about ten miles west of the Bow.

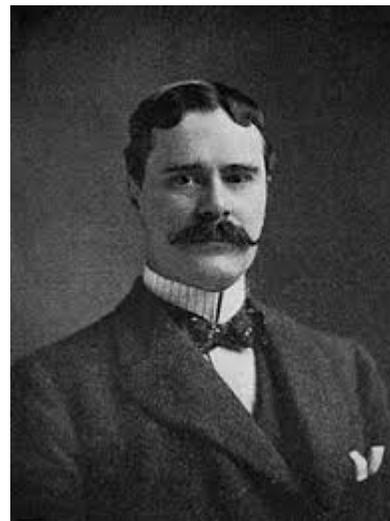
There was a petrified forest north of town which was an area where Uranium was found. East of Medicine Bow a dinosaur graveyard was discovered by local ranchers after which they built a house along the dirt highway (The Lincoln Highway, Highway 30). The house was written up by Robert Ripley who wrote stories and called it "*Believe it or Not.*" Ripley said it was the oldest house in the world (because it was made from dinosaur fossils). About three miles east of Medicine Bow there was a ranch called "Robbers Roost" which became a hiding place for criminals. When my family first moved to the Bow the ranch was owned by Gover-

nor Nels H. Smith. The ranch is still there. Many explorers came to the Bow, including Kit Carson (scout and guide), and Butch Cassidy who was a frequent visitor.

The Elk Mountain Community had a popular dance hall featuring big bands from the era. Some were Lawrence Welk, Billy May and many others. It was rumored that the dance floor had railroad springs underneath which made the floor jump up and down as people danced. That dance hall (The Garden Spot Pavilion) was owned by a Mark Jackson from Hanna who organized a big band that played all over the country, including the KOA radio station in Denver.

My mother went to college in Greeley, Colorado and became a well-known reporter who took pictures of everything. She was a published poet, writer and musical director/teacher. She taught over 100 students the piano, guitar and other things. When she died in 1981 I inherited all her items and have written a book titled "*The Saga of Medicine Bow,*" which contains pictures of the area beginning in 1868. A group of locals have formed a committee dedicated to bringing back the nostalgia and excitement of the area. To contact us please call Alan Gates at 365-8094, Jeanette Fisher, 365-8094, Cindi Chace, 365-8094, or Scotty and Vicki Vernone, 379-2377.

(Editor's Note: Thanks to Alan for submitting this compilation. He encourages you to contact him if you have information that would be of interest to the local effort).



Owen Wister, author of "The Virginian"

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS AND THANK YOU DONORS

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Pinky and Jackie Ellis
in memory of Mary Larson

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- *Save the date: Trek June 29th-July 1.*
- *Inside this edition: The Saga of Medicine Bow*

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In Memory...



Our condolences to the family of WSHS/Natrona County Historical Society member **Mary Larson** who died in Casper on January 21st. Mary worked as a secretary at Mountain View and Willard schools for many years. She is remembered as an important, influential, kind, fun, caring and wonderful woman. Memorials to the Society's Foundation and/or History Day have been requested by her family.

Also to the family of **Adelyn Fraley**, a member of the WSHS/Park County Historical Society. Adelyn died on February 3 in Cody at the beautiful age of 104. She claimed her secret to longevity was garlic. Adelyn loved history and shared it by demonstrating the different hats people wore for various occupations.

Long-time WSHS/Converse County Historical Society member, **John Pexton**, died on December 25th in Douglas. John was a lifelong resident of Douglas, a proud member of the Society, and past president of the chapter. John served in the

United States Army during World War II, attaining the rank of staff sergeant.

And to the family of WSHS member **George Cottingham** of Greeley, Colorado. George died in an oil field accident on November 24th. He loved Wyoming history and would participate in as many events as possible.

Gay Day Alcorn Clark, a WSHS member since 1977, died in Saratoga on December 7th. Gay loved history, and shared it through her writing. A seasoned traveler, Gay often said that researching history took her from cabins to castles. Gay was a past recipient of the Society's Homsher Research Grant, and most recently was writing a pictorial history about the pioneer women of the Saratoga and Encampment Valley.