

The American Heritage Center is the University of Wyoming's repository of manuscript collections, rare books, and the university archives.



who we are

Many universities have primary source and rare book repositories. Few have such repositories as extensive and significant as the **American Heritage Center (AHC)**. The AHC is the recipient (2010) of the **highest honor**

available to a U.S. repository, the Society of American Archivists' Distinguished Service Award.

The AHC is the University of Wyoming's (UW) institution of manuscripts collections, rare

books, and the university archives. Internationally known for its historical collections, the AHC first and foremost serves the students and other citizens of Wyoming. However, because of its international reputation, a UW undergraduate might wind up doing research next to a scholar from Brazil or a writer from PBS' *American Experience*. **Access is free and open to all.**



Rick Ewig, AHC Associate Director, is being filmed by a crew from the History Channel, for a documentary on the movie *Hidalgo*. Rick Ewig and other AHC archivists have appeared as experts on documentaries for PBS' *American Experience* as well.

Our Mission. The AHC preserves a clearly defined set of primary sources and rare books—reflecting the written, visual, and audio history of Wyoming, the Rocky Mountain region, and select aspects of the American and even global past—and *makes those sources accessible to all*. Our diverse collections support casual inquiry and international scholarship; most importantly, we play an active and creative role in the teaching and research missions of the university.

Our Background

More than 100 years ago, Grace Raymond Hebard—UW faculty member, administrator, librarian,

Cover photos, top to bottom: (1) a class in the AHC Owen Wister Western Writers Reading Room; (2) Owen Wister, author of *The Virginian*, Owen Wister Papers, American Heritage Center; (3) Batman program cover, William Dozier Collection, American Heritage Center; (4) Ornately decorated initial letter from an early 16th century choir book from Spain, handwritten in Latin from the collections of the Toppan Library, American Heritage Center; (5) American Heritage Center, Centennial Complex.



George A. Rentschler Room, American Heritage Center.



Looking up to fifth floor from the Mary Storer Loggia, American Heritage Center.



Toppan Rare Books Library, American Heritage Center.

and Wyoming historian—began collecting the papers and reminiscences of Wyoming’s pioneers. In 1945 her research on

the history of Wyoming, the West, emigrant trails, and Native Americans became the nucleus for what is known today as the AHC. During the 1960s the Center began expanding its collecting beyond the borders of the region, as was true for many similar university-based repositories nationwide.

Our Building

In 1993 the Center and the University Art Museum occupied the multiple-award-winning Centennial Complex. Internationally-acclaimed architect Antoine Predock says of his building’s unique design: “Throughout Wyoming there is a sense of landscape in formation.... The appearance of this ‘archival’ mountain can be thought of as parallel to the slow but certain geologic upheaval.” The AHC occupies 60 percent of the building’s 127,000 square feet. The AHC’s portion of the complex is named for Eleanor Chatterton Kennedy, daughter of a

Rare books on display in the AHC’s Toppan Rare Books Library.



former Wyoming governor, and for Joe and Arlene Watt, cattle ranchers and descendants of Wyoming pioneers.

Our Holdings

Like most major university repositories, the AHC collects regionally, nationally in select areas, and even internationally (particularly in rare books).

- **Major areas of the manuscript collections** include Wyoming and the American West (with a special emphasis on Western politics and leadership and Western authors), the mining and petroleum industries, military history, post-war conservatism, conservation, journalism, transportation, “Asia through American eyes,” and 20th century entertainment such as comics and animation, popular music, radio, television, and film. Total manuscripts and archives holdings are roughly 75,000 cubic feet (or nearly 15 miles) of material.
- **The Toppin Library is the University’s rare book center.** More than 55,000 items from medieval illuminated manuscripts to the 21st century. Subject strengths include the American West, British and American literature, early exploration of North America, religion, hunting and fishing, natural history, women authors, and the book arts.

A student worker retrieving collections material from an AHC storage room.



what we do

The AHC is a research facility dedicated to collecting, preserving, interpreting, and making available for learning and research a wide range of historical sources.

Reference Services

The Owen Wister Western Writers Reading Room is open to UW faculty, students, and staff, as well as visiting scholars, high school and community college students, and members of the public on an equal basis.

The professional archivists and librarians at the AHC provide bibliographic instruction to dozens of UW



Researchers in the Owen Wister Western Writers Reading Room.

classes annually and work with UW faculty to develop projects for their students using AHC collections. UW faculty and courses using AHC collections include 20 different disciplines across all seven of the university's colleges. In addition, in a typical year 3-5,000 researchers from all 50 states and a dozen nations use the AHC's holdings.

Toppan Rare Books Library

The Toppan Rare Books Library is home to UW's rare

books collection, consisting of more than 55,000 items. More than 1,300 people visit Toppan in a typical year, and its curator gives almost 40 special-topic presentations to UW classes and other groups. Unlike most rare book libraries, it is an active teaching site.



Cover of an 18th-century illuminated Koran and pages inside a 15th-century illuminated Book of Hours from the collections of the Toppan Library.



University of Wyoming Football program cover, 1942. University of Wyoming Archives, American Heritage Center.

University of Wyoming Archives

The UW Archives and Records Management program provides records management services for the university and is the repository for the permanent records of departments, colleges, student organizations, and the papers of faculty members.

Alan K. Simpson Institute for Western Politics and Leadership

The Simpson Institute focuses on the acquisition, preservation, and research use of the papers of prominent individuals, institutions, and organizations that have provided leadership—political, economic, social, and cultural—for Wyoming and the region. The institute also conducts related oral history projects and presents a variety of public programming.



Wyoming U.S. Senator Alan K. Simpson (left), his father and former U.S. Senator Milward Simpson (center), and U.S. Senator Ted Kennedy (right), 1979. Kennedy was a close friend to both Simpsons. Milward L. Simpson Papers, American Heritage Center.

Wyoming History Day

Wyoming History Day is the state affiliate of National History Day, the nation's premier history education enrichment



Wyoming History Day students' performance, 2011.

program for elementary and secondary school students. The state program is administered by the AHC and supported by the Wyoming Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources and the Wyoming State Historical Society. The state contest is held at the AHC and UW every spring.

Course Instruction

The AHC's archivists are members of the UW faculty. In addition to teaching bibliographic instruction and historical methods classes to students from UW, as well as elementary, junior, and senior high school students from around the state, AHC faculty also create and teach full-semester UW courses such as History of the Book, Archival Research Methods, and Introduction to Public History.

Exhibits

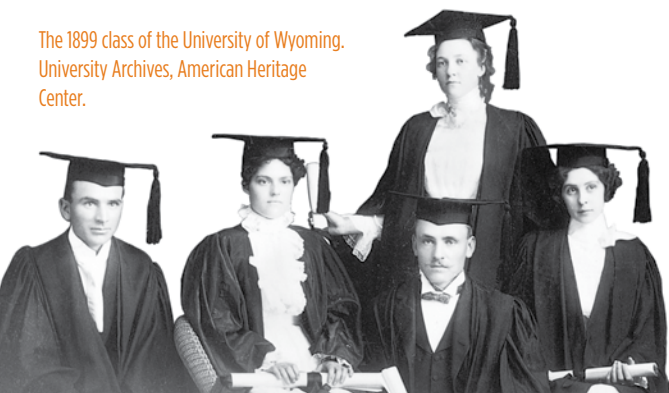
The AHC is not a museum, but the circumstances of its history have resulted in the premier collection of Western art at UW being on permanent display in the



Visitors viewing Alfred Jacob Miller paintings in the Centennial Complex Loggia.

AHC's Loggia and George A. Rentschler Room. The collection includes paintings by Henry Farny (American, 1847-1916), Frederic Remington (American, 1861-1909), George DeForest Brush (American, 1855-1941), Alfred Jacob Miller (American, 1810-1874), and an original bronze by

The 1899 class of the University of Wyoming. University Archives, American Heritage Center.





Grace Raymond Hebard's map of the Bozeman Trail (1864-68) located in her papers at the American Heritage Center.

Remington. In addition, a variety of artifacts from around the world is on display in the Toppan Library's Colket room museum (which are open to the public, though appointments are suggested).

Also in the Loggia visitors will find on display original saddles used by Hopalong Cassidy (William Boyd) and the Cisco Kid (Duncan Renaldo), as well as a rotating selection of books from the Toppan Library. Other, smaller, displays introduce visitors to the wide variety of archival collection material held by the AHC and available to the public for research on the 4th Floor in the Owen Wister Western Writers Reading Room. The AHC also has a number of traveling exhibits available to museums, libraries, and other institutions. Minimal charges are assessed for insuring and shipping these exhibits. More than 35,000 visitors each year view the AHC's traveling exhibits throughout Wyoming and occasionally in other states.



Popular Western film and television stars Duncan Renaldo, "The Cisco Kid," and William Boyd, "Hopalong Cassidy." William Boyd Collection, American Heritage Center.



Edith K. O. Clark diaries in the Agnes Wright Spring Collection, American Heritage Center.

Digital Programs

The award-winning AHC Web site (<http://ahc.uwyo.edu>) receives over 60,000 visitors annually and contains information on its faculty, its policies, its public programs, its exhibits, its grants, its publications, and most importantly, its collections. The AHC has also provided national leadership in the area of digitization, including “mass digitization,” speeding the process of creating digital facsimiles from our collection material.



Digital Collections Web site, at <http://digitalcollections.uwyo.edu/luna>

The 100,000+ items in our digital database (<http://digitalcollections.uwyo.edu/luna>) are accessible 24/7 and bring the AHC’s collections onto the desktops of



students in Worland and scholars in Paris. While only a fraction

AHC scanning lab.

of the AHC's collection material has been digitized, all 3,000 of its manuscripts collections, most of its university archives, and a growing percentage of its rare books are described by catalog records online. For many manuscript and archives collections an online "finding aid" is also available, which will indicate whether any portion of the collection has been digitized and if so provide one-click access.

Public Programs

A variety of symposia, book signings, and presentations are featured yearly, including two endowed lectureships.

The George A. Rentschler Lecturer is a nationally known expert in his or her field.

The Bernard L. Majewski Research

Fellowship supports use of AHC's collections by a recognized scholar in the history of economic geology or a related field.



Wyoming native and nationally known mystery author, C. J. Box, giving a presentation and book signing at the AHC, 2011.

Publications

The AHC publishes a newsletter twice each year, with information on new collections and traveling exhibits, lectures and other events, as well as general information about the evolution of the center and the larger world of historical repositories. In addition, the AHC publishes a colorful annual report each summer.

"Roughnecks" after capping an oil well in the Salt Creek Field, Wyoming.
American Heritage Center Digital Collections.



To be added to our mailing list, contact ahc@uwyo.edu.

Grants

The AHC offers grants for travel to carry out research using AHC collections. The travel grant proposal deadline is mid-April each year. The grants are available to students, scholars, and independent researchers. The



AHC Travel Grant recipient and associate professor of history at Washington State University, Jeff Crane, researching a book about Wyoming's Powder River Country at the AHC, June, 2011.

AHC also offers grants to UW teaching faculty, to develop new courses the make significant use of that repository's holdings.



1926 campaign brochure cover from the Nellie Tayloe Ross Papers, American Heritage Center.

Irene Corbally Kuhn, former NBC war correspondent, broadcasting from liberated Shanghai after Japanese surrender, September 1945. Irene Corbally Kuhn Collection, American Heritage Center.





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