

American Heritage Center Using Primary Resources—Off-Site Assignment

As a class, go to the American Heritage Center's website at <http://www.uwyo.edu/ahc/>

The American Heritage Center

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AHC HOME

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WELCOME TO THE AHC

The American Heritage Center (AHC) is the University of Wyoming's (UW) repository of manuscripts collections, rare books, and the university archives. Many universities have primary source repositories. Few have repositories as extensive and significant as the AHC. More importantly, few universities have such repositories as welcoming and accessible to undergraduate and graduate students. Internationally known for its historical collections the AHC first and foremost serves the students and citizens of Wyoming. The AHC sponsors a wide range of scholarly and popular programs including lectures, symposia, and exhibits. Not a dusty attic or an exclusive sanctuary, the AHC is a welcoming, lively, place where both experts and novices engage with the original sources of history. Access is free and open to all.

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VISITOR INFORMATION

Check here for full visitor information including AHC business hours.

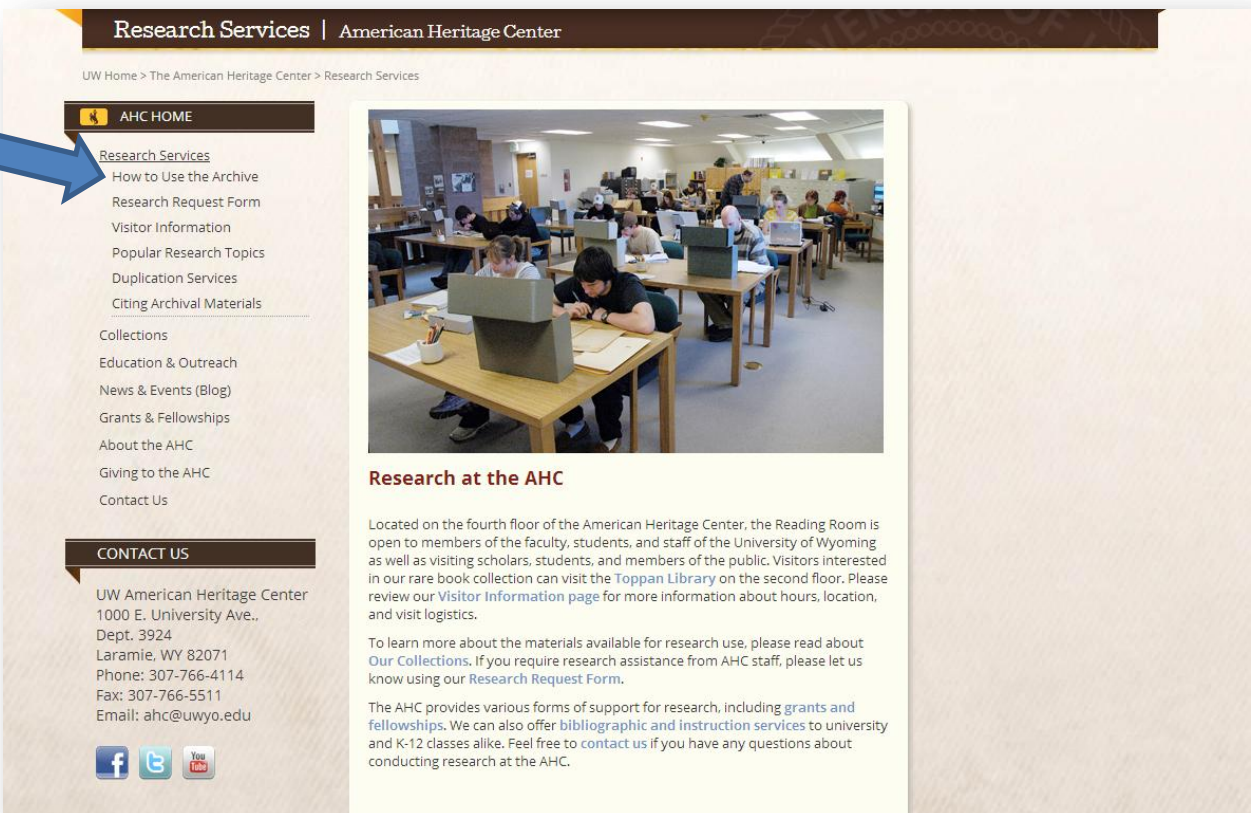
Take a look at the description of the AHC you see there.

Some questions to consider:

- What is a "repository"?
 - Answer: A repository is a location for storage, many times for safety and preservation. An "archival repository" like the American Heritage Center is a place where "archives" are stored and preserved.
- What are archives?
 - Answer: Letters (well, now emails), photos, diaries, and other materials accumulate over the life of an individual, or even an organization. Archives are those materials that have been selected (by an archivist!) for permanent or long-term preservation because they are of enduring value.

- Where might archives be in my own life?
 - Family photos, letters your relatives or their friends wrote to each other, professional papers of your parents, a diary kept by your great-grandfather, an oral history you might do with one of your relatives. These are some examples you might have in your own family.

Now, look on the left side of the web page and click on "Research Services." On the left, click on "How to Use the Archive."



If you like, you can spend some time on the "How to Use an Archive" page exploring the types of collections held at the AHC. Otherwise, click on "Digital Collections."

So, what's a "collection"?

Remember the papers we referred to that are in your family? Say your family wants to donate those materials to an archival repository like the American Heritage Center. If those materials are right for the AHC and we acquire them, that set of material becomes an archival collection that will most likely be named for your family and be kept together as one group. The Melville Family papers, for example. If the papers

belonged to an organization, it could be something like The Buy and Large Corporation records.

Collections | American Heritage Center

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CONTACT US

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Digital Collections

The AHC is actively engaged in mass digitizing its most prominent holdings to allow for remote researcher access to collection material. Our [Digital Collections website](#) showcases material from all of our collections.


The AHC makes digital versions of collections accessible for educational and research purposes only. Please read about [Copyright and Archival Collections](#) for more information.

Some of our noteworthy digital collections are described below. In most cases, the hyperlinks to these collections listed below will redirect to a collection inventory, which then provides links to discreet digital items or groupings of digital items online.


Buffalo Bill Letters to George Beck
The Buffalo Bill Letters consist of over 100 letters from the late 1890's and early 1900's to George T. Beck from William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody concerning the operation of the Shoshone Irrigation Company and its water project. The entire collection has been digitized and is available online.




Charles J. Belden Photographs
Charles Belden was a well-known photographer who created some of the classic images of the American West, with most images captured on or near the Pitchfork Ranch in Northwest Wyoming. Also included are images from Belden's world travels. The entire collection of nearly 3,000 original negatives has been digitized.



John and Frances Casement Papers
John S. Casement was born in New York and came to Ohio in 1850 to work as a railroad construction foreman. After service in the Civil War, Casement obtained a contract to perform tracklaying and grading for the Union Pacific's transcontinental line. The papers primarily consist of correspondence during the time Casement was constructing the Union Pacific Railroad from Omaha to Promontory Point, Utah, from 1866 to 1869. The first five series in the collection have been digitized.



John Roberts Papers
John Roberts was an Episcopalian missionary who worked among the Arapaho and Shoshone peoples on the Wind River Indian Reservation in Wyoming. All photographs and Arapaho and Shoshone of Christian and Episcopalian texts have been digitized. in



In order to focus the students' search, have the students look through the pre-defined list of collections. From there, provide a list of specific collections to review (suggested list below). If you see a collection in that list that fits a topic you're teaching, have all the students click on that one.

Here are some collections in that list that are more manageable by middle and high school students:

- Charles J. Belden Collection (photos of western ranch life)
- John Stephen and Frances Jennings Casement Papers (building the Transcontinental Railroad)
- Nellie Tayloe Ross (Wyoming governor and first female governor in the U.S.)


- Richard Throssel Photographs (photographer of the Crow Indians in the early 1900s)

Clicking on the collection's title will bring up the "inventory" to that collection.

The screenshot shows the Rocky Mountain Online Archive website. The header includes the RMOA logo and the title 'Rocky Mountain Online Archive'. A navigation menu contains links for Home, Browse, Advanced search, About, Help, and Contact. The main content area is titled 'View Document' and includes a 'printer-friendly version' link. The document title is 'Inventory of the Charles J. Belden photographs and negatives, 1908-ca. 1940'. Below the title is the University of Wyoming American Heritage Center logo and contact information. A 'Collection Summary' table lists details such as Title, Dates (Inclusive), Creator, Abstract, Collection Number, Size, Repository, and Language(s). A 'Biography of Charles J. Belden' section follows, providing a brief history of the photographer.

What is an inventory? The inventory lists the contents of the collection, box by box—it's a lot like a table of contents.

Collection inventories will show students how primary source materials are typically arranged within the boxes that make up the collection. Items in the inventory that are highlighted in blue are available online—students can click directly on a link in the inventory to see the folder or item that has been digitized.

RMOA
 Rocky Mountain Online Archive

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Series I.
Photographs, 1908-ca. 1940

Series II.
Negatives 1908-ca. 1940

Container List

Series I.
Photographs, 1908-ca. 1940

This material is arranged arbitrarily and consists mostly of photographs concerning cattle and sheep ranching in Wyoming. Included are images of the Belden family, the dude ranch, and travel.

Description	Container	
Belden with camera near a horse and buffalo skull. 1908-ca. 1940	Box 1	Item 1
Loading cattle on CB&Q cattle cars. 1908-ca. 1940	Box 1	Item 2
Group by rock pillar on Frank's Peak includes Frances PhelpsBelden. 1908-ca. 1940	Box 1	Item 3
Men with horses. 1908-ca. 1940	Box 1	Item 4
Horse roped to a log. 1908-ca. 1940	Box 1	Item 5
Horse roped to a log. 1908-ca. 1940	Box 1	Item 6
Boy and woman with saddle. 1908-ca. 1940	Box 1	Item 9
Sheep crossing a bridge. 1908-ca. 1940	Box 1	Item 12
Sheep camp in the winter. 1908-ca. 1940	Box 1	Item 13
Sheep camp in the winter. 1908-ca. 1940	Box 1	Item 14
Sheep camp in the winter. 1908-ca. 1940	Box 1	Item 15
Cattle by river. 1908-ca. 1940	Box 1	Item 16
Cowboy and Herefords fording a river (print missing). 1908-ca. 1940	Box 1	Item 17
Cowboy roping a calf for spring branding. 1908-ca. 1940	Box 1	Item 18
Cattle by a lake with two cowboys. 1908-ca. 1940	Box 1	Item 19
Cattle in a valley by a river. 1908-ca. 1940	Box 1	Item 20
Cattle crossing a bridge. 1908-ca. 1940	Box 1	Item 21
Cattle by pond with two cowboys. 1908-ca. 1940	Box 1	Item 22
Driving cattle in the snow. 1908-ca. 1940	Box 1	Item 23
Ten horse and mule freight team hauling wood bales. 1908-ca. 1940	Box 1	Item 24
Line camp and winter scene with horse. 1908-ca. 1940	Box 1	Item 25

Each student or student group can answer a specific question about a collection of your choosing or a collection the student(s) has chosen. See examples of potential activities below:

Sample Activities

- Look at ten Charles Belden photographs. Do you think he portrays an accurate picture of life on a western ranch? Explain.
- In the inventory John Stephen and Frances Jennings Casement papers, see if you can find where it states John's type of employment. What is it? Next, in the inventory, click "January – March 1869" and look for a letter from John to his wife Frances dated February 8, 1869. What does John have to say about the Union Pacific Railroad? (there's a transcription on the left side of the web page if you can't read the writing).

- Who was Nellie Tayloe Ross and why is she an important figure in U.S. politics? Look at the inventory to her papers and click on "Governorship for Nellie Tayloe Ross." Find a letter from the year 1924 with the identifying number of ah00948_000945. Who wrote this letter to Nellie Tayloe Ross? What is the letter about? What county is the writer referring to?
- Look at the entry for the Richard Throssel photographs. What Native American tribe did he photograph and when? Look at ten of Throssel's photographs. Do you think his depiction of the Crow people is realistic or romanticized? Explain.

Please contact American Heritage Center archivist Leslie Waggener if you have any questions about the assignment or if you have suggestions. lwaggen2@uwyo.edu or 307-766-2557.