



AMERICAN HERITAGE CENTER

Many universities have special collections. Few have special collections as extensive and significant as the American Heritage Center (AHC). **The AHC is the University's repository of manuscript and special collections, rare books, and the university archives.** Internationally known for its historical collections the AHC also sponsors a wide range of scholarly and popular programs including lectures, symposia, and exhibits. Access is free and open to all.

In 2010 the Center received the Distinguished Service Award from the Society of American Archivists, the highest honor possible for a US historical repository.

The AHC was officially established in 1945. In the decades that followed, nearly 70,000 cubic feet of historically important documents and artifacts were acquired. **The AHC is among the largest non-governmental archives in the nation.**

AHC collections go beyond Wyoming's or the region's borders and support a wide range of research and teaching activities in the humanities, sciences, arts, business, and education.

- Major areas of the **manuscript collections** include Wyoming and the American West, the mining and petroleum industries, Western politics and leadership, conservation, journalism, transportation, and 20th century entertainment such as popular music, radio, television, and film. Like most major university repositories, the AHC collects both regionally and nationally in select areas.
- The Toppan Library is the University's **rare book center**. More than 55,000 items range 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. Unlike most rare book libraries, it is an active teaching site.

The professional archivists and curators at the AHC provide bibliographic instruction to over 80 UW classes annually in a variety of disciplines, and work with UW faculty to develop projects for their students using AHC collections. The AHC works with **19 different departments** at UW: Art, African-American Studies, American Indian Studies, American Studies, Anthropology, Business Administration, Geography and Recreation, History, Lab School, English, Music, Nursing, Pharmacy, Political Science Secondary Education, Sociology, University Studies, Women's Studies, Zoology. The AHC also works with **60 public school classes** annually. *The AHC serves a larger and broader collection of students than do our counterparts at such renowned universities as Yale, Princeton, Michigan, and Texas.*

Scholars and the public from across the nation and around the globe--annually from all 50 states and a dozen nations (including Australia, Germany, Britain, Botswana, Brazil and Russia)--**also access the collections of the AHC.** The total number of researchers and long-distance reference requests each year exceed 6000.

The AHC is also home to educational programs like **the Alan K. Simpson Institute for Western Politics and Leadership** and **the Wyoming History Day Program**. Each year the AHC offers a variety of symposia, lectures, exhibits, and concerts that feature the AHC's collections for both a scholarly and public audience.

AHC web pages (<http://ahc.uwyo.edu>) **receive over 60,000 visitors annually**, many of them exploring the **80,000+ items in our digital collections** (the AHC has been a leader in so-called "mass digitization"). In addition, the section of our site on Fritz Lang was named one of "Ten Cool Sites" by the San Francisco Exploratorium, which honors exceptional educational sites on the web.

The AHC has been a lead institution in the **creation of three national standards**, for: digitizing historic text and photos; digitizing historic audio recordings; eliminating cataloging backlogs. In the past nine years the AHC has **received four national grants**, from: NEH to educate teachers from around the US on suffrage in the West; the National Archives for backlog elimination standards and processing Great Depression collections; the US Dept. of Education for the Wyoming Partnership for Civic Education.

The faculty of the AHC are state, regional, national, and international leaders in their fields, speaking and publishing on historical, archival, and library topics.