

Railroads and Dinosaurs Featured in 2006 Symposium

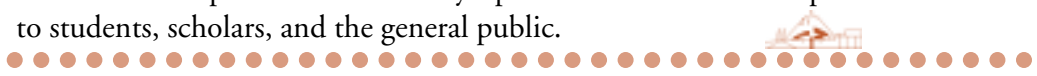


The American Heritage Center (AHC) and the University of Wyoming Geological Museum will host a symposium on February 20-21, 2006, titled "Railroads and Dinosaurs in the American West." The theme of the conference will be the discoveries of dinosaurs which resulted because of the opening of the Wyoming and the West by the Union Pacific Railroad during the latter half of the nineteenth century.

The symposium program committee has published a call for papers requesting proposals which explore the many aspects of dinosaur collecting and railroad development in the Rocky Mountain West. Potential areas of inquiry might include the building of the Union Pacific Railroad during the late 1860s, dinosaur discoveries along the railroad, exploration and surveys for the railroad, history of scientific thought regarding dinosaurs during the late 1800s, and Wyoming dinosaur discoveries during the late nineteenth century.

The symposium will include two keynote speakers and sessions of two or three presentations. The symposium will be free and open to students, scholars, and the general public.

A 1912 expedition uncovered these fossils in Wyoming. S. H. Knight Collection, American Heritage Center.



From the Director



Mark Greene

Among the many items to cross my desk last month were two of particular relevance to the AHC's most cherished (and perhaps most unusual) accomplishments: dissolving the traditional barriers between "special" collections and "ordinary" users. While I have given attention in this column to the AHC's important and sometimes groundbreaking work in collection development and archival processing, these activities—as essential and demanding as they may be—are in the final analysis means to an end. "The end of all archival effort," as one of our profession's pioneers once put it, "is use." We solicit, choose, acquire, organize, catalog, store, preserve, and promote collection material so that researchers can use it. Otherwise an archives is little more than a storage locker.

A great deal of intellectual effort has been expended among archivists over the past century arguing about what type of use—or type of user—is most important. Until as recently as the 1970s, the only real debate was about whether historical material was preserved primarily (if not entirely) to serve the needs of the people or organizations that created the material—for instance, whether the records of a state agency were preserved primarily to serve the civil servants and elected officials who ran the agency—or primarily for "qualified scholars"—individuals with formal academic pedigrees and affiliations with institutions of higher learning. Access for students, much less for "ordinary" citizens, was rarely considered.

To illustrate, in 1971, an important private collector of Western history shared this story with the AHC's director about a research library on the West Coast: "...a good friend of mine was able to acquire the papers of an old Southwest settler which he in turn, gifted to [a famous research library]. Some time later, he wished to avail himself of the opportunity to examine some of the material for something he was writing and when he appeared at [this well known research library] was told he could not have this privilege for he didn't have the proper scholarly background or credentials that would entitle him to use the facilities of [the library]."

This attitude began to change in the late 1970s, for a combination of reasons that perhaps I can come back to in a subsequent column. Thousands of "ordinary" citizens began pursuing research, which brought them to archives and historical societies all over the country. While often grudging, these repositories were responsive to this new clientele, because many archives and historical societies are publicly funded and hold public records—such as census and tax rolls, of particular importance to genealogists, but also Civil War muster rolls for local historians and reenactors, and meeting minutes for citizens leery of what their government might be up to.

But the democratization of access to archival material was limited in two ways. First, many archives and historical societies continued to believe and act as if citizen-researchers and high school or college students and even "serious journalists" were merely necessary evils, and that the *legitimate* use of historical collections was still only made by qualified scholars. Second, even such reluctant change did not often penetrate to university special collections and independent research libraries. Though many university repositories are publicly supported, few tended to hold public records, so demand for access from outside the academy was slight.

HERITAGE
HIGHLIGHTS
Summer 2005

Managing Editor

Rick Ewig

Contributing Writers

D. C. Thompson

Ginny Kilander

Photographer

Rick Walters

Graphic Designer

Vicki Schuster



Which brings us (finally) back to those two items on my desk. One is an article from the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (17 June), marveling at the fact that some university special collections are trying “to accommodate not just academic experts but also plain folks who want to see a cuneiform tablet or a volume in the library’s collection of [in one instance] mountaineering literature” (p. A23). The *Chronicle* believes this is largely an effort to attract “financial and political support” for the universities, or as “promotional and marketing tools.”

These may be the motives of some special collections, only now finding reason to open their holdings to the public and to students, but some, including the AHC, experienced a conversion much earlier, and for much different reasons—although the results are somewhat similar, since you can visit our Toppan Library to see its world-famous fly fishing books or visit our main reading room to study the correspondence of America’s first woman governor.

The second item on my desk is a master’s thesis by a student in the School of Library and Information Science at Duke University. It is a study of 29 Carnegie Foundation Doctoral/Research Universities’ special collections, including the AHC, looking specifically at the extent and success of their outreach to undergraduates—one measure of degree to which the repositories have democratized access to their holdings. The analysis concludes that the AHC has the single strongest and clearest *commitment* to undergraduate outreach and is one of only four repositories that has an *active* as opposed to passive undergraduate outreach program.

The AHC began a commitment to not only undergraduate education, but also to working with students in grades 6-12 and any interested member of the public (in addition to, not instead of, welcoming qualified scholars and other professional researchers), 15 years ago. We did it not for promotional or political benefit, but because we believe that access to primary sources helps teach good history and helps foster an interest in the past—and we are a part of an educational institution with a broad civic mission.

We have been doing this long enough, and believe in it strongly enough, that as the Duke student discovered, we are among the best at doing it—at presenting a helping hand to first-time users; at accommodating the somewhat different needs of sixth graders and senior scholars; at collaborating with faculty to integrate primary source research into course curricula. While every employee of the AHC contributes to this success, it is the AHC’s superb reference archivists and rare books curator who are the most visible and most consistent practitioners of our commitment to access.

Moreover, in recent years they have been actively proselytizing their peers around the country, presenting papers at national conferences examining why and how we successfully open access to young and old, students and scholars. Carol Bowers (reference department head) startled many colleagues at last year’s Society of American Archivists conference when she reported that we did not simply tolerate, but welcomed students as young as fourth grade; Anne Marie Lane (Toppan curator), has given several talks and writes a newsletter column promoting use of rare books in undergraduate classes.

This commitment to the widest possible use of our collections is a key reason I came to the AHC. I hope you will have a chance to come, too, if you have not already.



Robert Greene



AHC Document Sheds Light on Wyoming Historic Figure



Tom Horn, taken during his incarceration for the killing of Willie Nickell. American Heritage Center collections.

Tom Horn was hanged in Cheyenne on November 20, 1903, for the ambush murder of four teen-year-old Willie Nickell, in spite of the fact that the only evidence against him was his own drunken confession. Horn plausibly asserted that the “confession” was merely a tall tale solicited by marshal Joe LeFors and obligingly supplied by himself without the slightest suspicion that anyone might actually believe the yarn.

Why did the jury choose to believe it? In part, because Horn already had a reputation as a killer. Horn’s contemporaries believed that he was a professional assassin, available for hire by big ranchers to dispose of smaller rivals. Ambush murders, somewhat in the pattern of Willie Nickell, had occurred at least four times in areas of southern Wyoming and northern Colorado where Horn worked as a cattle detective for the Wyoming Stock Growers Association. Popular imagination connected Horn with these killings, but no charges were ever brought against the detective for these crimes.

Two of the killings occurred in Brown’s Park, also called Brown’s Hole, in northern Colorado.

Matt Rash, a leader of the local cattlemen, was murdered in his home in July 1900. Isom Dart, an African-American man, was shot down outside his cabin in October. George Banks was a resident of Brown’s Hole at the time. The AHC recently acquired from Linda Banks (a descendent) a remarkable document written by George. On May 6, 1900, according to George’s hand-written account, he overheard a conversation between H. H. “Hi” Bernard, a man known as Hicks, and another called Mexican Pete. According to Banks, the man known as Hicks was actually Tom Horn. Bernard said to Hicks, “You kill Rash and that negro and Thompson and notify Annie and Elbert Bassett and Joe Davenport...to leave the country and you can get your pay any time you want it.”

Apparently the three men were unaware of Banks’ presence. Banks recorded the conversation, but he did not report it to local law enforcement authorities. The document passed down through his family until the AHC received it this year.

In 1952, Ann Bassett’s recollections were published in *The Colorado Magazine*. She, too, asserted that “James Hicks” was actually Tom Horn, and her account otherwise


continued on page 5



AHC Document continued from page 4

supports the Banks statement. Ann and her brother Elbert had been living in the Hole since the 1880s, along with the rest of the Bassett family and the Thompson and Davenport families. Hi Bernard was a latecomer, who acted as manager of Ora Haley’s Two Bar Ranch and large cattle interests in the area. Improbably, Ann Bassett later married Hi Bernard. Although she eventually divorced him, she remembered him as “a thoughtful husband, a friend to children, and a gentleman under any circumstances,” who had been deluded by his employers into warring on legitimate homesteaders.

Since Tom Horn was never prosecuted for the murders of Rash and Dart, his guilt will always be open to some question. The Banks statement is just one more piece of historical evidence. An examination of the known facts of the place and period support the statement’s authenticity. If it is true, it is the strongest evidence yet uncovered that Tom Horn was guilty of at least some of the murders with which he is credited.

--D.C. Thompson 

AHC Holds Papers of World War II Naval Commander

The AHC holds many collections in the area of military history, including a number of well-known military leaders during World War II. One of these is U.S. Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher, best remembered for his role commanding U.S. Naval forces in the Pacific Theatre during World War II, including tactical command during the Battle of Midway and the Battle of the Coral Sea.

Fletcher was born April 29, 1885, in Marshalltown, Iowa, to Thomas J. Fletcher and Alice Glick. Thomas Fletcher was a Civil War veteran who served with the 25th Iowa Infantry. Alice Glick was the daughter of a German immigrant businessman and banker. The couple married November 1, 1877, and later had three children. Their son “Jack” attended local schools, and was granted an appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy in 1902.

Fletcher graduated from the Naval Academy in 1906 and received his first command in 1910 on the destroyer U.S.S. *Dale*, followed by command of the U.S.S. *Chauncey* in 1912. During the occupation of Vera Cruz, Mexico, April 1914, Fletcher served as an aide to his uncle, Rear Admiral Frank Friday Fletcher, and rescued more than 350 refugees on board the passenger vessel *Esperanza*. Both men received the Congressional Medal of Honor for distinguished conduct for their service.



Jack Fletcher assisted from a plane during World War II. Frank Jack Fletcher Papers, American Heritage Center.

continued on page 6



World War II Naval Commander continued from page 5

During World War I, Fletcher captained the destroyer U.S.S. *Benham* operating on convoy escort and patrol duty in British and French waters, and was awarded the Navy Cross. Fletcher married Martha Richards in February 1917. She was the daughter of Gertrude M. and Walter B. Richards of Kansas City, Missouri. Following World War I, Fletcher commanded and served aboard a number of vessels, including two years as captain of the U.S.S. *New Mexico*, and he attended the Naval War College.

In late 1941, he commanded Task Force 17 that included the carrier U.S.S. *Yorktown*, two cruisers, and four destroyers in the Pacific theatre. His task force participated in the raids on the Marshall and Gilbert Islands in February 1942, under Admiral William F. Halsey, part of the first offensive action of the U.S. Navy against Japan. The following month he participated in the naval attack on New Guinea. Fletcher was then promoted to Vice-Admiral and given command of the U.S.S. *Yorktown*-U.S.S. *Lexington* Task Forces. He commanded the U.S. Naval Forces at the Battle of the Coral Sea in May 1942, an all carrier battle considered the last defensive phase for U.S. forces of the Pacific war. The U.S.S. *Lexington* was lost during the battle, and the *Yorktown* damaged. After repairs at Pearl Harbor, the *Yorktown* then joined Admiral Raymond A. Spruance's carrier force and with Admiral Fletcher in tactical command, fought in the Battle of Midway in June 1942. Heavy damage to Fletcher's flagship, the U.S.S. *Yorktown*, compelled him to turn tactical command of the operation over to Admiral Spruance, and Fletcher transferred his flag to the cruiser U.S.S. *Astoria*. Despite U.S. losses, the battle was a turning point in the war, and resulted in the loss of four Japanese carriers. Fletcher was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal for successes under his command in both the Battle of the Coral Sea and the Battle of Midway. Fletcher then commanded the Expeditionary Force of the Guadalcanal operation, and fought in the Battle of the Eastern Solomons in August 1942.

From 1943 to 1945, he commanded U.S. Naval Forces in the North Pacific. After the Japanese surrender he was placed in charge of the occupation of the Japanese islands of Honshu and Hokkaido. He retired in 1947 from U.S. military service and was promoted to full admiral.

Fletcher died at the age of 87 at Bethesda Naval Hospital, Maryland, April 25, 1973, and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery. The U.S.S. *Fletcher* is named in his honor. Martha Richards Fletcher passed away September 14, 1974, in La Plata, Maryland, at the age of 79.

The Frank Jack Fletcher Papers document the life of a U.S. naval officer and span the years 1897-1973. The three-box collection consists of correspondence (bulk 1906-1947), diaries, photographs, speeches, and newspaper clippings. The correspondence focuses on pre-World War II era official orders, with later recollections of the Battle of the Coral Sea and the Battle of Midway. A scrapbook of newspaper clippings documents Fletcher's service in World War II, and two diaries, 1956-1966, document Fletcher's retirement years.

--Ginny Kilander 



Wyoming Students Compete Successfully at National History Day Competition

Students from around Wyoming competed at the National History Day contest at the University of Maryland, College Park, from June 12 to 16. Every entry that placed first or second at the Wyoming History Day state contest attended the national competition.

Three Wyoming entries placed in the top eleven. Kelly Ceballos, Mila Lemaster, and Catlynne Calvetti, from McCormick Junior High School in Cheyenne, placed fifth in the junior group performance category. Their topic was Lewis Hine, a noted twentieth century photographer who documented the working conditions of children factory workers.

His photographs were a catalyst for the passage of the child labor laws during the early 1900s. Tim Shibuya and Tanya Zeist, from Jackson High School, placed tenth with their performance about the Cuban Missile Crisis. Claire Mason, from Laramie High School, placed eleventh in the senior individual performance category with her play about an English woman who trained people to spy in occupied France during World War II.

Kori Livingston, the state coordinator for Wyoming History Day, led a group of more than sixty students, parents, and teachers on the trip. Besides seeing many of the monuments and historic sites in Washington, D.C., the group enjoyed a Baltimore Orioles baseball game and traveled to Philadelphia to see the Liberty Bell, Independence Hall, and many other historic sites.

The AHC coordinates the Wyoming History Day contest, which is co-sponsored by the Wyoming State Historical Society and the Wyoming Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources.

AHC Hires Processing Archivist

The AHC recently hired Chris Garmire for the position of processing archivist to support the efforts of the Wyoming Partnership for Civic Education (WyoPCE) in strengthening and expanding civic education in the state. Chris comes from Western Washington University where he completed the Archives and Records Management Program, which included a 550-hour internship program. In 1997, Chris earned a B.A. in history and political science from the University of the Pacific and in 2001 he earned a law degree from McGeorge School of Law in Sacramento, California. Chris started his new position at the end of August.

The processing archivist processing position is funded for three years by federal monies to support WyoPCE. The grant will support the creation of a series of summer teacher workshops in Laramie which will introduce social studies and other interested instructors to the AHC's resources. The AHC along with UW's College of Education shares executive responsibility for WyoPCE. Kristi Wallin serves as the director.



Wyoming History Day students on the steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, also known as the "Rocky steps" made from the film *Rocky*.



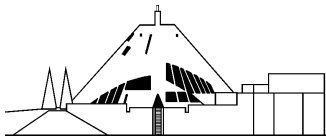
Chris Garmire, processing archivist.





Lewis Einstein received this Christmas card from Leland Harrison and his family. At this time Harrison was the United States Minister to Romania (1935-1937) when Europe was preparing for war. Harrison went on to serve as Minister to Switzerland from 1937 to 1947. Harrison was a friend of Einstein who also had a long career in Diplomatic service. Lewis Einstein Papers, American Heritage Center.

UNIVERSITY
OF WYOMING



American Heritage Center

1000 E. University Avenue, Dept. 3924
Laramie, Wyoming 82071
307-766-4114
ahc@uwyo.edu
<http://www.uwyo/ahc>

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
University of Wyoming