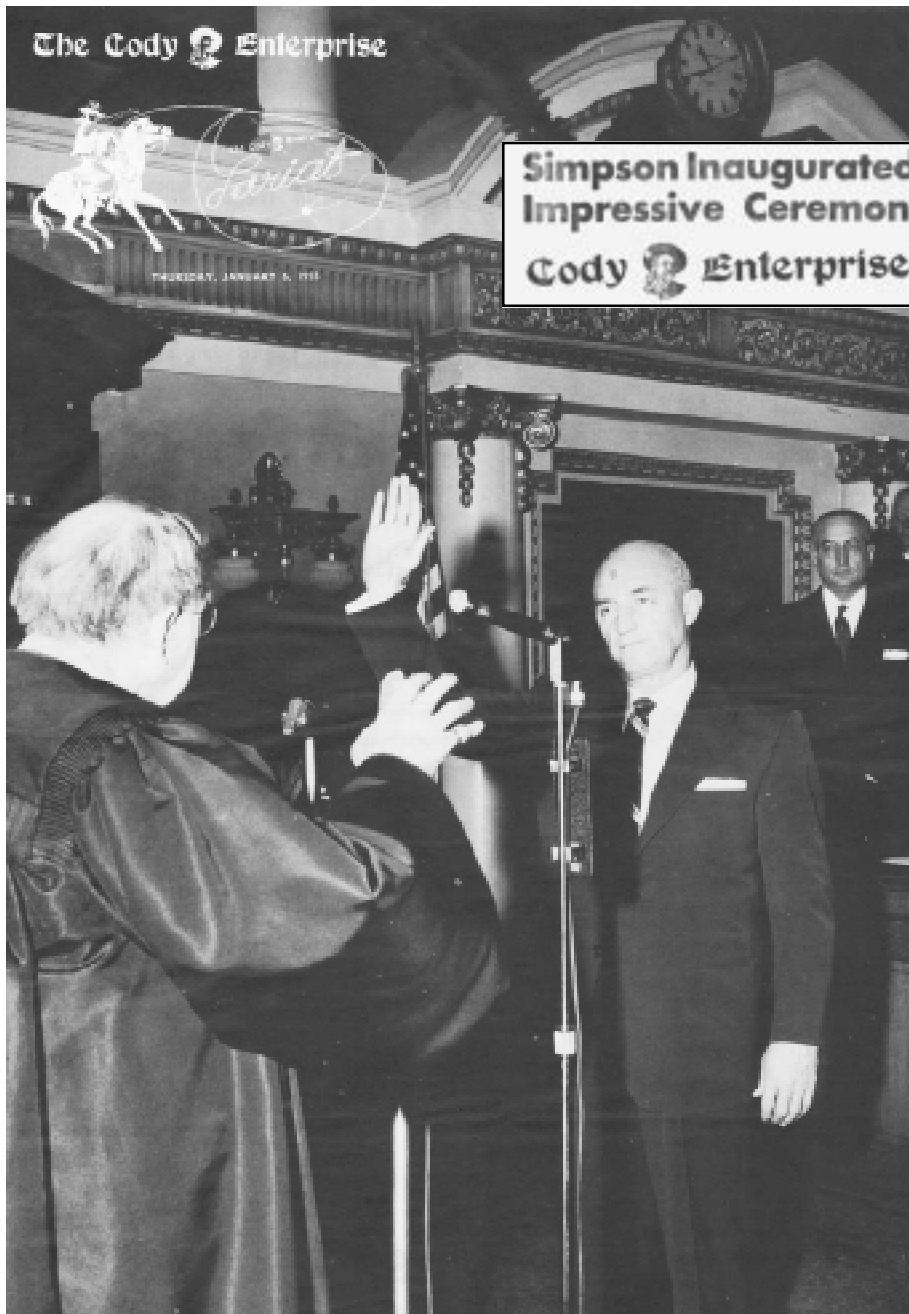


Heritage

Highlights

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Special Issue:
**Western
Politics and
Leadership**

Milward L. Simpson is inaugurated governor, 1955. Milward L. Simpson Papers, American Heritage Center.

From the Director

The Simpson Institute was created last year thanks to the generosity of Julienne Michel, UW benefactor and friend of former U.S. Senator Alan K. Simpson and his wife, Ann. In the last issue of *Heritage Highlights* we announced that Kim Winters had been chosen to serve as the archivist for the Alan K. Simpson Institute for Western Politics and Leadership. I asked Kim to edit this issue which features the papers of an organization, several individuals, and a collection of books from the Toppan Rare Books Library from the fields of politics, religion, education, and law.

I hope you enjoy reading about the leaders of two of the best known Wyoming political families, Milward L. Simpson and Joseph M. Carey, as well as about the educational efforts of Wyoming's League of Women Voters to increase participation in the state's political process. Harriett Elizabeth "Liz" Byrd not only served many years in

Wyoming's legislature, but was also an educator in Cheyenne who was selected as Wyoming's Teacher of the Year in 1967. Nathaniel S. Thomas, during his twenty-five years in the state, significantly expanded Wyoming's Episcopal Church. Byron Hirst's long and distinguished career included prosecuting and convicting Cheyenne's mayor and chief of police for corruption during World War Two.

Do not believe for a moment that the collections highlighted in this issue are the only papers of western leaders held by the Center. These are only representative of the many collections we have and it is impossible in only a few pages to mention all of them. If you have any questions about the above-mentioned collections, or any other collections at the AHC, I hope you will contact us. ■

— Rick Ewig, Interim Director

Milward L. Simpson

A third generation Wyomingite, Milward L. Simpson was the first native governor of Wyoming. Simpson was known not only for his direct approach to politics, but also for his quick sense of humor. Asked in a 1976 newspaper interview why a man from a staunchly Democratic family had joined the Republican party, Simpson explained, "When I was 21 and about to cast my first vote my dad made one of his speeches. He convinced me that Democrats are fine, but Republicans always win, so I registered as a Republican." Simpson was born on November 12, 1897, in



Milward L. Simpson and wife, Lorna, n.d.
Milward L. Simpson Papers, American Heritage Center.

Jackson, Wyoming, to parents William Lee and Margaret Burnett Simpson. Milward's father was an attorney in Lander, Fremont County, Wyoming, where Milward spent the first few years of his life. The family later moved to Meeteetse, Wyoming, and then to Cody, Wyoming.

Simpson attended Cody High School and graduated in 1916. He enrolled in the University of Wyoming, but dropped out to enlist in the infantry during World War One, during which time he served as a first lieutenant in the army infantry. Following the war he returned to UW and earned a B.S. degree in political science in 1921. Simpson was also a prominent athlete at UW during 1917-1921. He was the only UW athlete to have ever concurrently captained the football, basketball, and baseball teams. In 1996 he was inducted into the University of Wyoming Athletics Hall of Fame.

After graduation from the University of Wyoming, Simpson attended Harvard Law School,

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Nathaniel S. Thomas: A Religious Leader in Wyoming

In the history of the Episcopal Church in Wyoming, the efforts of Ethelbert Talbot, Wyoming's first Episcopal bishop, and John Roberts, minister on the Wind River Reservation, are well known. But the work of Nathaniel S. Thomas has been overlooked.

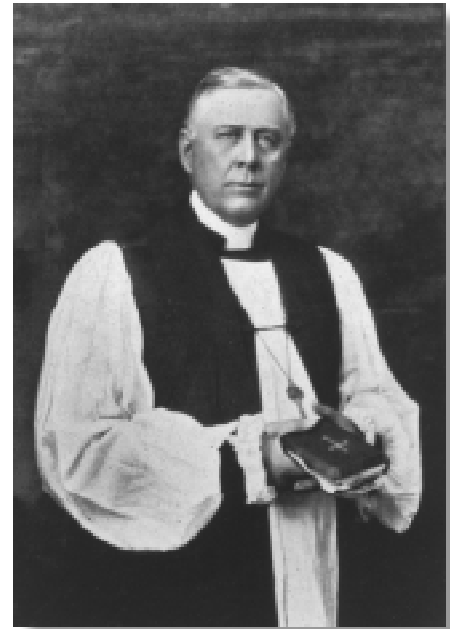
In 1909, Thomas became Wyoming's second Episcopal bishop. Nearly eleven years had passed since Bishop Talbot had left the state, and church leaders had subsequently put Wyoming under the administration of the bishop of Colorado. With an increase in settlement in Wyoming since the turn of the century, the church had much potential for growth, but it would need leadership. Thomas's appointment was a bold gamble.

Thomas, who had spent most of his ministerial career in Kansas, now found himself in a new land, entrusted with a unique mission. Nonetheless, he entered the field with a strong background in education and spiritual leadership. Shortly after assuming his new office, the church's presence began to expand across Wyoming. New churches and Sunday schools were established through the hard work of an army of missionaries, ministers, laymen and lay women. The work was not easy, but Thomas had an innate ability to motivate people. Individuals doubting their abilities or lacking self-confidence received words of encouragement and guidance. Individuals persevering against all odds or making significant inroads received added words of assurance and support. While patience was often required in his occupation, Thomas could be demanding and forceful in order to get things done. Thomas saw the Episcopal Church as being more than just a composite of churches and Sunday schools. He wanted it to have an institutional presence as well, and devoted his energies to various projects and programs. To document and further fuel the church's work, Thomas initiated a statewide Episcopal magazine, *Wyoming Churchman* (1913-1934). He oversaw the construction of Bishop Randall Hospital in Lander (1909), the Cathedral Home for Children in Laramie (1910), St. Michael's Mission

in Ethete (1913), and St. John's Hospital in Jackson (1915). The Cathedral School for Girls (1921) and the Cathedral School for Boys (1924) were built in Laramie near the university to provide preparatory schooling. The church operated Wyoming's first radio station, KFBU, in 1925. Its religious and secular programs were heard across the state and, if atmospheric conditions were just right, in other parts of the country. During the early 1920s, the church took an active role in a short-lived state ecumenical movement.

Probably Thomas's most ambitious, albeit unsuccessful, project was the creation of a national boys' school at Fort Laramie. To Thomas, the fort's historic significance made it the ideal setting. He made every effort to line up financial and political support for this venture. Unfortunately, his effort was ill timed. Just as he was advancing his cause, the newly formed Wyoming State Historical Landmarks Commission was working to safeguard the fort as a historical site. In the end, the commission won.

In 1934, Thomas left Wyoming for Florida. During his 25 years of service, he firmly anchored the Episcopal Church in Wyoming and made sure that its presence would have a lasting effect upon the state for years to come. The Episcopal Diocese of Wyoming Collection at the American Heritage Center aptly documents the pivotal work of this religious leader. ■



Nathaniel S. Thomas, n.d. Episcopal Church. Diocese of Wyoming Records, American Heritage Center.

Milward L. Simpson *(Continued from page 2)*

receiving his law degree in 1925. In 1924 Simpson took over his father's law firm and passed the bar exam in 1926.

In 1926 Milward Simpson was elected to the Wyoming State Legislature from Hot Springs County and served one term. Asked in later interviews why he only ran once he explained that his father moved the law firm to Cody and that, "a darn pretty blue-eyed brunette," Lorna Kooi, had agreed to marry him. Simpson recalled in a 1976 interview, "I'd been courting her for darn near three years...Most of the time she was off on round-the-world cruises with her parents, meeting all kinds of rich fellows. But I was persistent. I sent her a cable and a bouquet of roses at every port." Simpson and Lorna Kooi were married in 1929, and Milward continued to practice law in Cody. They had two children: Peter Kooi Simpson, born in 1930, and Alan Kooi Simpson, born in 1931. Both sons went on to serve Wyo-

ming and the nation.

Milward Simpson headed the University of Wyoming Board of Trustees for 18 years, as well as serving on the National Executive Council of Boy Scouts. In 1954 Simpson was elected as Wyoming's governor and served one term. He was elected United States Senator in 1962 and served until 1966.

The Milward L. Simpson Papers contain material relating to Simpson's days as a lawyer, governor, and senator. They include legal files, correspondence, photographs, legislative files, and personal files. The Milward L. Simpson Papers are a major collection in the American Heritage Center's Alan K. Simpson Institute for Western Politics and Leadership and are currently available for research with written permission from the Simpson family. Anyone wanting to access the papers should contact Kim Winters at 307-766-2594, or kimain@uwyo.edu. ■

Byron Hirst

Byron Hirst achieved national recognition as a "crime fighter" in 1943. Some national magazines even called him the "Tom Dewey of the West." In addition to prosecuting graft in Cheyenne, Hirst was active as a prominent attorney, public-spirited citizen, and businessman. He was a Cheyenne "mover and shaker" from 1937 until his retirement in 1987.



Byron Hirst. From 1933-38 Hirst was a 2nd Lt. in the army reserve. Byron Hirst Papers, American Heritage Center.

He belonged to many civic and religious organizations, often serving as president, or at least as an active member of the board. Hirst, an ardent champion of conservative causes, also found time to promote a wide range of community organizations such as a hospital, country club, and the arts. His civic career included the

Young Men's Literary Club and the Cheyenne committee of the Newcomen Society.

Hirst was born in Grand Island, Nebraska, in 1912, moving with his parents to Cheyenne when he was 15. He earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Nebraska in 1933. From then until 1937 he worked for Senator Joseph C. O'Mahoney as a private secretary. Meanwhile he earned a J.B. and L.L.B. from George Washington University and an L.L.M. from Harvard Law School. He was admitted to the District of Columbia bar in 1936.

Hirst returned to Cheyenne in 1937, and two years later he switched to the Republican party, organizing the Cheyenne "Wilkie for President" Club. He was elected Cheyenne's prosecuting attorney, and in 1943 he successfully prosecuted the mayor, the chief of police, and the chief of detectives for graft. For this achievement, he

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Joseph M. Carey Family Papers

Distinguished for its many contributions to the early political history and business development in Wyoming, the Carey family has a long affiliation with political offices including two successive generations of Wyoming governors.

Joseph Maull Carey was born in Milton, Delaware, in 1845 and attended schools in the eastern United States. After obtaining his law degree from the University of Pennsylvania and passing the bar in 1867, Carey practiced law in Philadelphia before moving to Wyoming. His involvement with law continued and he served as the first U.S. attorney for Wyoming Territory beginning in 1869.

President Ulysses S. Grant appointed Carey to the position of associate justice to the Wyoming Territorial Supreme Court, a position he served in until 1876. Carey then became active in politics and served as a delegate to the U.S. Congress from the Wyoming Territory where he sponsored bills that lead to Wyoming statehood. He went on to serve as a Wyoming Senator from 1890-95. Senator Carey sponsored the Carey Land Act passed by Congress in 1894, which aided Western states irrigation. In 1910 Carey was elected to one term as Democratic governor of Wyoming, at a time when he was a registered Republican.

Carey was also involved in business and agricultural interests. He founded the J. M. Carey and Bros. Land Company, Wheatland Development Company, and the Wheatland Industrial Company. He also served three terms as the mayor of Cheyenne, Wyoming, from 1881-85. Active in

many Wyoming agricultural and civic organizations, Carey was a member of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association and served as president of the Wyoming Livestock Association. He later served as a member of the Board of Trustees at the University of Wyoming.

Joseph Maull Carey was married to Louisa David in September of 1877, and the couple had two sons, Robert Davis and Charles David. Robert served one term as Wyoming governor, 1919-1923, and later as a U.S. senator for Wyoming, 1930-37. Joseph M. Carey and Robert D.

Carey were the only father and son elected governors of Wyoming. Like his father, Robert D. Carey was active in the Wyoming Stockgrower's Association, including serving as president of the organization from 1917-18. After the death of their father in 1924 at the age of 79, sons Robert and Charles managed the J.M. Carey and Bros. Land Company.

The Joseph M. Carey Family papers document the political and business interests of the Carey family. Correspondence, business records, biographical files, speeches, newspaper clippings, diaries, and artifacts are included. ■



*Governor Carey, ca. 1910.
American Heritage Center
Collections.*

Byron Hirst *(Continued from page 4)*

gained national recognition after the press dubbed him the "Tom Dewey of the West."

From 1953 to 1958 Hirst served in the Wyoming State Senate, where he was the executive secretary of the Wyoming Compilation Commission that edited and published Wyoming's annotated statutes for the first time. He was also

a member of the Wyoming Digest Committee that published the first digest of legal decisions.

The Byron Hirst collection contains some correspondence, photographs, and an oral history of Hirst's early days in Cheyenne. There are also numerous awards and mementos of his career as an attorney and conservative booster in Cheyenne. ■

Educational Leadership in Utah:

Brigham Young's Promotion of the Deseret Alphabet

Brigham Young is best known as a religious leader of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. In his capacity as president of

the church, he was also the force behind an intriguing educational reform. In the early 1850s, in his second term as Utah Territorial Governor, he announced that he would like a new phonetic alphabet, called Deseret, taught in the schools.

Regents of the university in Salt Lake City, including George D. Watt, W.W. Phelps, Parley P. Pratt, and Heber C. Kimball, developed the new system of orthography. It was still English, but just a different written form of it that President Young believed would make more sense, as well as take up less space and, therefore, save paper. The original Deseret alphabet had 40 letters; a copy of it was reproduced in an 1861 book in the AHC's Toppan Rare Books Library by Jules Remy called *Journey to Great Salt Lake City*. After slight revision to some of the letters, a 38-letter alphabet was used in three primers. The Toppan Library has copies of all three of these. The first and second primers were published in 1868; the third, published in 1869, was the first book of Nephi from the *Book of Mormon*. (The whole *Book of Mormon*, translated into Deseret by Orson Pratt, was also published in 1869; the Toppan Library, unfortunately, does not have a copy of that.)

For more detailed information on this subject, see the article by Stanley S. Ivins "The Deseret Alphabet," in the *Utah Humanities Review* (1, 1947: pp.223-239), the entry with that title in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* (Vol.1, 1992: pp.373-374), and another one with the same title by Sam Weller and Ken Reid in *True West* (Sept./Oct., 1958: pp.14-16). The latter article has an illustration of the front page of the Salt Lake City newspaper, *Deseret News*, in 1859, showing use of this alphabet. The new system was slow to catch on, however, and with Brigham Young's death in 1877, the impetus behind its use also died.

To get an idea of how this phonetic alphabet works the page with the illustration of birds in a landscape was transliterated, using the Deseret alphabet guide in the front of the book. (A beginner can work out this page in approximately half

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The three Deseret primers. From left to right: *Deseret First Book*, the *Book of Mormon*, and *Deseret Second Book*. Lloyd Taggart Collection, Toppan Rare Books Library, American Heritage Center.

Y D I S E R E T A L P H A B E T

Copy Sounds.			Letter.	Name.	Sound.
Letter.	Name.	Sound.	1	.....P	
0	.....0	as in ..est.	2	.....b	
3	.....a	" ota.	3	.....t	
4	.....ah	" ori.	4	.....d	
5	.....aw	" aught.	5	.....che	as in ..close.
6	.....o	" out.	6	.....g	
7	.....oo	" oon.	7	.....k	
Short Sounds of the above.			8	.....ga	as in ..gate.
†	.....as in ..th.		9	.....f	
1	" "	et.	10	.....v	
2	" "	et.	11	.....eth	as in ..sligh.
3	" "	et.	12	.....tho	" sky.
4	" "	et.	13	.....s	
5	" "	et.	14	.....n	
6	" "	book.	15	.....esh	as in ..flesh.
7	.....i	as in ..ice.	16	.....zhe	" vision.
8	.....ow	" out.	17	.....ur	" born.
9	.....woo		18	.....l	
10	.....yo		19	.....m	
11	.....h		20	.....n	
			21	.....eng	as in ..length.

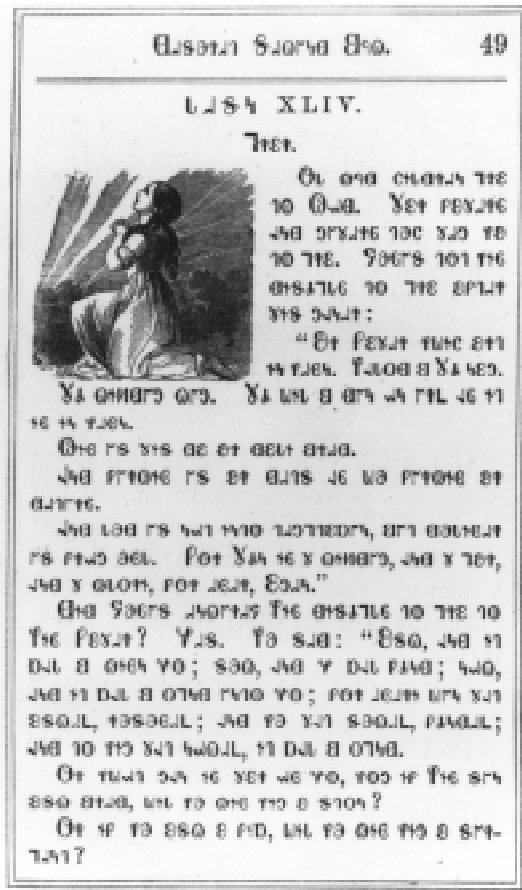
Deseret characters and their pronunciations in standard English (page located at the beginning of each primer.) Lloyd Taggart Collection, Toppan Rare Books Library, American Heritage Center.

The Deseret Alphabet *(Continued from page 6)*

an hour.) It reads (from the top down): Deseuret Sekund Book, LESN 3, The Spuring (Deseret Second Book, Lesson 3, The Spring). In the spuring ov the yeur, the budz in the turez poot fouerth. (In the spring of the year, the buds in the trees put forth.) The levz kum owt, and then tha poot on thaur fin duress ov gauren. (The leaves come out, and then they put on their fine dress of green.) The turez look ga, hwooen tha ahur in fool bloom. (The trees look gay, when they are in full bloom.) The blosumz kloth them in ah ga duress ov hwooit, and ured, and gauren. (The blossoms cloth them in a gay dress of white, and red, and green.)

Nekst kumz the furoot. (Next comes the fruit.) The fin duress ov the turez is biootifool too the i. (The fine dress of the tress is beautiful to the eye.) But the furoot iz plezunt too the tast. (But the fruit is pleasant to the taste.)

Transliteration of the page on the right is left to curious readers who would like to work out a familiar Christian prayer in Deseret script for themselves. These Deseret script books, as well as other historic Mormon books from Lloyd Taggart's Collection, are available for anyone to see in the Toppan Rare Books Library, American Heritage Center. ■



Left: Pages from the *Second Deseret Book*. Lloyd Taggart Collection, Toppan Rare Books Library, American Heritage Center.

Right: Pages from the *Second Deseret Book*. Lloyd Taggart Collection, Toppan Rare Books Library, American Heritage Center.

League of Women Voters of Wyoming

The League of Women Voters was formed in 1920 at the final convention of the National American Woman Suffrage Association. Its purpose at that time was to teach women how to use



Milward L. Simpson, Helen S. Hollister, George Hollister in Washington D.C., ca. 1960s. League of Women Voters of Wyoming Records, American Heritage Center.

their new voting power. Since then, the League has played an important role in defining election issues, encouraging voter participation, and sponsoring non-partisan political debates.

In the 1950s the national board of the league undertook a strong effort to organize state leagues in North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, and Nevada. In North Dakota the formation of a women's league was openly opposed by conservative male groups. In Wyoming, opposition was not so well-organized, but, according to Helen Hollister, "I soon discovered that some men and a few women did not approve of the league." Nevertheless, the Wyoming chapter of the League of Women Voters was organized in 1957 "to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government" and with the stated policy that "it shall not support or oppose any political party or candidate." Instead, the league focused on non-partisan study of election issues and the dissemination of information so that voters could make up their own minds.

Local groups were formed in Casper, Cheyenne, Laramie, and Worland. The first president of the Wyoming league was Mrs. Raymond R. (Gladys) Jones of Cheyenne, the first secretary was Mrs. H. Nelson Smith of Laramie, and the first state agenda item was "a study of the election laws of Wyoming with a view to clarification, interpretation, and revision." Early meetings of the Wyoming league were attended and supervised by a national organizer. "The National Board was very, very strict with us regarding almost every kind of action," Helen Hollister recalled. "We were told to be sure to wear a hat and carry gloves when we were soliciting funds." A few of the women members also needed further education in political terminology. One report, otherwise very good, was submitted by a young woman who "did not clearly understand the difference between 'statue' and 'statue.' "

Over the years the league has conducted non-partisan research on issues such as air quality, cancer, correctional institutions, equality, jobs, land use, suffrage, and waste removal and recycling. From the beginning, water use and water law were important issues for the league. Helen Hollister, first Wyoming state league water chairman, followed Gladys Jones as president. "The idea of non-partisanship appealed to many women," Mrs. Hollister recalled.

Legal advice and political support for the League were always generously provided in the 1960s by Wyoming Senator Milward L. Simpson. Every other year the league's national convention was held in Washington D.C. where Senator Simpson made a point of meeting with the delegates from his home state. A week later an 8 by 10 photograph of the meeting arrived from the senator's office at the delegates' homes.

The League of Women Voters of Wyoming Records at the American Heritage Center include research files and subject files as well as business and administrative records of the organization and instructional materials developed by the league for voters' information. The materials cover Wyoming political contests, ballot access and fairness issues, and social and environmental concerns from the mid 1950s to the 1990s. ■

Francis E. Warren Papers

The Francis E. Warren Papers document the remarkable life and career of one of Wyoming's most notable political figures. Francis Emroy Warren was born in Hinsdale, Massachusetts, in 1844. He attended public school and the Hinsdale Academy. During the Civil War, he served in Company C, Forty-ninth Regiment, Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry as a private and non-commissioned officer. In 1868, Warren emigrated to Wyoming at the request of his friend A. R. Converse, to join him in the mercantile business. Warren quickly became a partner in the business and then, in 1877, Warren bought out Converse and changed the name of the business to F. E. Warren & Company, later to be known as the Warren Mercantile Company.

Warren was involved in numerous other business ventures, the most notable of which were the Warren Live Stock Company, the Brush Swan Electric Company, and the Cheyenne and Northern Railroad. Other investments included an irrigation company, a phonograph company, and extensive real estate holdings.

Warren was actively involved in Wyoming politics. He began his political career as a member of the Cheyenne City Council, serving from 1873 to 1874. He was elected to the Council of the Territorial Assembly in 1873, serving as council president during his first term. Warren served as territorial treasurer in 1876, 1879, 1882, and 1884 and mayor of Cheyenne in 1885. He also served as the chairman of the Republican Central Committee for many years.

In 1885, President Chester Arthur appointed Warren territorial governor of Wyoming. Warren was appointed to a second term in 1889 and became the first governor of the state of Wyoming, when the territory achieved statehood in 1890. He served as governor of the new state for slightly more than a month, resigning after his election by the state legislature to serve as one of the two U.S. senators from Wyoming. Warren enjoyed an illustrious senatorial career, serving from 1890 until 1893 and from 1895 until his death in 1929. At the time of his death, Warren had served as a U.S. senator for thirty-seven years, a term of service

which eclipsed that of any other senator up to that time.

During his senatorial career Warren demonstrated his impressive leadership abilities while serving terms as chairman of the Committee on Irrigation and Reclamation of Public Lands, the Military Affairs Committee, and the Appropriations Committee. He worked closely with Wyoming's other senator, Joseph M. Carey, to push through the Carey Act for the reclamation of public land, as well as an amendment to the rivers and harbors bill that provided support for a survey of rivers in Wyoming and Colorado to identify reservoir sites.

The Francis E. Warren Papers contain personal and political correspondence, military papers, scrapbooks, financial and legal records, photographs, business records for the Warren Live Stock Company and the Warren Mercantile Company, as well as records pertaining to Warren's other diverse business ventures.

In addition to documenting Warren's personal and political life, the collection provides valuable information about the Rock Springs Massacre, the Johnson County War, the Wyoming Wool Growers Association, and life in Wyoming from 1868 through the first three decades of the twentieth century. ■



Francis E. Warren, former Wyoming governor, n.d. Francis E. Warren Papers, American Heritage Center.

Harriett Elizabeth Byrd

“So why don’t you run for the state legislature?” With this casual suggestion, Liz Byrd’s father launched her into a precedent-setting career as the first African American legislator in Wyoming since statehood. In 1981, Harriett Elizabeth “Liz” Byrd was elected to serve as one of Laramie County’s state representatives. Her election to the legislature was on the tail end of an already outstanding career as an award-winning teacher in the Laramie County primary school system.

Born April 20, 1926, into the prominent Rhone family of Cheyenne, Liz Byrd is a fourth generation Wyoming native. Her grandfather, Charles J. Rhone, arrived in Wyoming as a child in 1876 and later became a renowned cowboy and then a railroader. His son, Robert “Buck” Rhone, also worked with the railroad, employed as a machinist. Robert encouraged Liz and her two brothers to educate themselves as a “means of survival.”

Graduating in 1944 from a Cheyenne high school, Liz began to pursue her dream of

becoming an elementary school instructor. Putting the names of all the colleges that interested her into a mayonnaise jar, she pulled out the winner at random: West Virginia State College. She later recalled that her experience at this predominantly black college gave her a newfound respect for herself. In 1949, she graduated from college and returned home to Cheyenne to begin her teaching career. Despite being one of the few degreed applicants, Byrd said she was denied entry to the Laramie County School District due to her minority status. She taught at Fort F. E. Warren Air Force Base for the next ten years before finally gaining a teaching position with the County. Her excellent teaching abilities were recognized when Byrd was named Wyoming’s Teacher of the Year for 1967–68 and Outstanding Teacher by *Instructor*

magazine in 1967. In 1976, Liz Byrd earned a master’s degree in elementary education from the University of Wyoming.

Although she enjoyed her work as an elementary school teacher, Byrd became concerned about the lack of benefits for teachers and inadequate materials used in the classroom. Her father charged her to “do something about it” and handed her the filing fee to register as a legislative candidate. She won the race for state representative as a Democrat in a year when Republicans captured the majority of the seats in the legislature. Byrd continued her teaching responsibilities through her first three terms in the legislature and included her students as much as possible in the legislative process. Her students participated in the passage of bills naming the American buffalo (*bison bison*) as the Wyoming state mammal, the *Knightsia Fossil* as state fossil, and the cutthroat trout as state fish.

Byrd served as state representative for Laramie County for eight years. She then ran for and won one of four Laramie County senate seats in 1988. In her legislative career, Liz Byrd was the prime sponsor of legislation that included raising the age of majority to nineteen; passage of a child safety restraint law; and the conferment of spe-

Continued on page 11



Liz Byrd with her two brothers, ca. 1935. Harriett Elizabeth Byrd Papers, American Heritage Center.



Liz Byrd with her students, Laramie County School District #1, ca. 1965. Harriett Elizabeth Byrd Papers, American Heritage Center.

Mrs. Theodore Gostas POW/MIA Papers

Johanna Gostas of Sheridan, Wyoming, served as Wyoming coordinator for the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia. Her husband, U. S. Army Maj. Theodore W. Gostas, was taken prisoner by the North Vietnamese during the Tet Offensive in February, 1968, and released in March, 1973, following the signing of the Paris peace agreement in January that same year. Upon his capture, the Vietnamese discovered Maj. Gostas was a counter-intelligence officer through an article in the *Stars & Stripes*. His treatment suffered as a result and he was one of only five Americans to serve more than four years in solitary

confinement. Johanna Gostas worked with the national and state POW/MIA groups from 1968 to 1973 and was a National League of Families representative to a 1971 conference on prisoner of war treatment held in Geneva, Switzerland.

The Gostas POW/MIA Papers contain correspondence, news releases, pamphlets, newspaper clippings, and printed materials from various state and national groups relating to Johanna's work on POW/MIA issues. Also included is correspondence from other POW wives and families, posters depicting Wyoming POWs, and materials related to the Geneva conference. ■

Mary O'Hara

Among the extensive AHC collections of women writers of the American West, the Mary O'Hara collection stands out. A writer of fiction as well as a composer of music, Mary traveled from New York with her husband to Wyoming in 1930. They lived on the Remount Ranch near Laramie for fifteen years before moving back to the east coast. During her years in rural Wyoming, Mary O'Hara wrote her three most internationally celebrated novels, which reflect her vivid, poignant ranch experiences: *My Friend Flicka*, *Thunderhead*, and *Green Grass of Wyoming*. All three novels were soon made into blockbuster Hollywood motion pictures. The popularity of the novels and films left a lasting literary legacy for Mary O'Hara's time in Wyoming. Mary wrote her

novella *The Catch Colt* along with a musical play version complete with the composition and the libretto.

Her papers include manuscripts, galley proofs, and reviews of several of O'Hara's written works. There are also three scrapbooks containing letters, fan mail, reviews, and other clippings from a variety of publications concerning *My Friend Flicka* and *Green Grass of Wyoming*. There are also a number of personal photographs. ■



Mary O'Hara, n.d. American Heritage Center Collections.

Byrd *(Continued from page 10)*

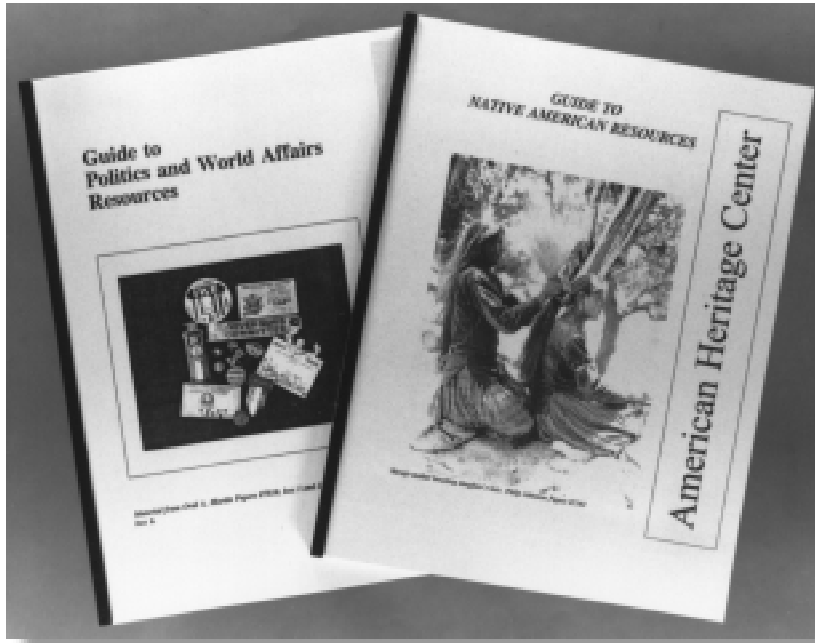
cial license plates to POWs and Disabled Veterans. In 1990, she won a nearly decade-long battle to honor Martin Luther King, Jr. with a day of recognition. The result was Martin Luther King, Jr./Wyoming Equality Day observed yearly on January 12.

After retirement from the legislature, Byrd remained active in the Cheyenne community

along with her husband, James "Jim" W. Byrd. James Byrd also set a precedent as the first African American police chief in Cheyenne.

The Harriett Elizabeth Byrd collection contains memorabilia, news articles, awards, and photographs pertaining to her teaching and legislative careers. The collection also contains personal photographs of the Rhone family. ■

AHC Guides Available



For anyone wanting to know more about the AHC's politics and leadership collections, the AHC has published a *Guide to Politics and World Affairs Resources*, detailing the kinds of collections which have been mentioned in this issue of *Heritage Highlights*. Tying into the theme of this year's American Heritage Center Symposium, *Re-figuring the Ecological Indian*, the AHC also has available a *Guide to Native American Resources*. Other guides produced by the AHC cover topics such as Wyoming history, twentieth century American culture, women's history, and mining and geology. The guides sell for \$5 plus \$2 shipping and handling. Contact the AHC, P.O. Box 3924, Laramie, WY, 82071, (307) 766-4114. ■

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