

George A. Rentschler Fellowship on the Study of the American West American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming

The University of Wyoming's American Heritage Center (AHC) invites applications for the 2026 George A. Rentschler Fellowship on the Study of the American West through **March 31, 2026**. The fellowship aims to support a 20-day research stay at the AHC for academic scholars at any level, from graduate students to tenured faculty. AHC archives on the American West include information on the lives of men and women who shaped the West. Strengths are Wyoming and the Rocky Mountain West (including politics, settlement, and western trails) and the "Western image" as represented by writers, artists, historians, and others.

We are dedicated to supporting a thriving and wide-ranging research community and encourage applications from scholars of all backgrounds, including those traditionally underrepresented in academic research. The AHC values the importance of considering history from many angles and welcomes diverse perspectives and approaches to research.

The Fellowship

The fellowship honors George A. Rentschler (1892-1972), who expanded his family's pre-Civil War era foundry business in Ohio into a complex of machine tool, railroad equipment, and engine manufacturing. Companies headed by Rentschler were among the U.S. government's major suppliers of naval engine and ordnance during World War II. He received a Certificate of Commendation from the Navy for his work. Rentschler also had a great passion for the landscapes and legends of the American West. The fellowship is made possible by his late wife, Rita Rentschler Cushman, and his late son Frederick B. Rentschler. It is intended to provide research support for scholars studying the history of the American West and to facilitate the Fellow's use of the AHC's archival collections.

Commitment to Varied Perspectives

The AHC values a wide range of viewpoints and backgrounds in all aspects of its fellowship program. We strongly encourage applications from individuals who contribute to the breadth of academic perspectives, including but not limited to, those from various racial and ethnic groups, all genders, diverse sexual orientations, people with disabilities, and veterans. Our goal is to create an environment that welcomes different outlooks and approaches to research.

Features of the Fellowship

The fellowship includes a \$3,000 stipend to support a one-month (20 business days) residency at the AHC. However, the stay can be divided into shorter periods or reduced in length to accommodate the fellow's schedule, with the stipend being prorated accordingly. Fellows will have access to personalized support from AHC staff and the opportunity to engage with the university community. **The residency should be completed by August 31, 2027.**

At the conclusion of their stay, fellows are expected to prepare a précis outlining the sources consulted, how those sources shaped the research findings, and how the fellow will incorporate this information into a final product. Fellows are expected to credit the AHC in any publications that use its collections and to provide the AHC with copies of final publication or work.

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Application

Proposals for the 2026 Fellowship Program should include the following:

- A project description (no more than three single-spaced pages) that includes:
 - An overview of the research question(s), methodology, and expected outcomes.
 - Specific reference to how the AHC's collections will significantly contribute to the ultimate success of the proposed project.
 - A brief explanation of how the project aligns with the applicant's research interests and expertise.

Additional attachments:

- The applicant's CV.
- A timeline outlining the plan of research and dates for anticipated products.
- Names and contact information of three references.

Please ensure that the project description does not exceed the three single-spaced page limit. The additional attachments (CV, timeline, and references) do not count toward this page limit.

Email all application materials as one pdf to Dr. Mary Beth Brown at mary.brown@uwyo.edu by March 31, 2026.

Selection Criteria

Proposals will be awarded based on the following criteria:

- The extent to which the proposed project draws upon the collections of the AHC.
- The research project's potential contribution to the understanding of the history of the American West.
- The potential for professional presentation and/or publication upon completion of the Fellow's research.
- The applicant's ability to complete the research project in a timely fashion.

Additionally, consideration will be given to proposals that incorporate varied perspectives and methodologies.

The selection committee, comprising AHC staff and University of Wyoming faculty, is dedicated to an impartial and comprehensive review process, reflecting our commitment to excellence in research. The recipient will be informed by email.

Notification and Award

The selection committee will review all applications and notify the chosen fellow via email no later than May 15, 2026.

Payment of Stipends

The Fellow will receive the stipend at the end of their stay and receipt of the précis. No advances will be authorized.

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Travel, Accommodations, and Local Information

Fellows are responsible for arranging their transportation, lodging, and meals during residency. For travel directions to Laramie, Wyoming, and information about accommodations, dining, and local attractions, please visit the Laramie Tourism website at visitlaramie.org. Information about the University of Wyoming, including campus maps, can be found at uwyo.edu.

About the American Heritage Center

The AHC is a public research institution located on the campus of the University of Wyoming in Laramie. The Center houses collections of local, regional, and national significance. Its holdings emphasize the American West, from the 19th to 21st centuries. The AHC has extensive holdings in military history, popular entertainment (including Hollywood and comics), mining and petroleum, as well as the environment and natural resources. The AHC also serves as the University of Wyoming's manuscripts repository, rare books library, and university archives. With more than 90,000 cubic feet of material and 3,500 collections, the AHC stands among the largest non-governmental repositories in the nation.

For more information about the AHC, please visit our website at uwyo.edu/ahc.