

*I wanted to stop my work long enough to watch the sunrise from behind the mountains. The faint colors of the dawn always gave me keen delight, but there was no time . . .*

# LILLIAN'S MONTANA SCENE

by JOYCE H. LITZ

In 1899, Lillian Weston Hazen escaped from eastern convention to western adventure. She moved to Montana, “a genuine land full of genuine people.” As poetess, reporter, free-lance writer, rancher’s wife, and mother, she watched settlers plow and plant the grasslands, automobiles replace the stagecoaches, and fences surround the open range. With a writer’s keen sensitivity, she felt western life quicken and assume the complexities of a new century.

During the forty years Lillian and her family lived in Montana, this tiny woman with velvet gray eyes and determined chin, hammered away on her antique typewriter, recording it all in homely detail for “Scribner’s Magazine”, the Dearborn (Mich.) “Independent”, the Great Falls (Mont.) “Tribune”, a number of small periodicals, and many unpublished diaries and journals. These were my



*A sense of unutterable,  
ineffable peace takes  
possession of me until I happen  
to glance towards a seventy-  
acre wheat field where grain  
is waiting to be shocked . . .*

personal legacy from Lillian, all stored away in a battered trunk and delivered to me after her death in 1949.

Although I had lived with Lillian for several years, I soon realized, as I read her thousands of words and engaged in some corollary research, that here was a very different person from the one I thought I had known. It was obvious that Lillian Weston Hazen was not at all typical of the shy, retiring lady of her time, and certainly she was not typical of the thousands of wives and mothers who followed their men westward in search of new land and opportunity. This was so, I found, not simply because Lillian was better trained and educated than most women born in the middle of the 19th Century. A rebellious father and a lady novelist forebear had played important roles in molding the remarkable independent-minded woman who became my paternal grandmother.

LILLIAN WAS BORN in Medford, Massachusetts, on October 31, 1864, the daughter of Marie and Edward Payson Weston. Her parents, as it turned out, had little in common. Her mother, a creature of habit, clung to her conservative New England ways all her life. But not so her father. Edward Payson Weston, born in Rhode Island and raised in Boston, was the son of an unsuccessful merchant named Silas Weston, and a quite successful woman novelist named Marie Gaines Weston. Many years later, in far-off Montana, Lillian often signed her prose and poetry columns with the pseudonym, M. D. Gaines.

A frail lad, Edward Weston spent a lot of his youth promoting his mother's writings, peddling her books door to door. This included a novel called *Kate Felton* which gained a creditable readership in 1859. Recognizing that his health was improving and that his talent for walking was unusual, Edward kept at it. It was to lead to an improbable career as a professional pedestrian.

According to published sources, Weston made his first serious attempt at long-distance walking when he bet a friend he could walk from Boston to Washington, D.C., a distance of 478 miles, in time to witness the first inauguration of Abraham Lincoln. Although he arrived too late for the ceremonies, his feat attracted so much attention that in 1862 he privately published an account of it under the title *The Pedestrian*.

Weston's ability to walk rapidly helped a budding career as a police reporter for the *New York Herald*. In the days before the telephone, he got the edge on his competitors by his ability to race to a story and get copy to his editor, in some cases before rival reporters were even on the scene. In 1867 when his daughter, Lillian, was three years old, Weston decided to capitalize on his walking skills and become a professional. He walked from Portland, Maine, to Chicago, a distance of 1,326 miles, in twenty-six days. Forty years later, several years after Lillian had come to Montana, he duplicated his route and bettered his own record by twenty-nine hours.

Edward Weston walked until he was past 70 years old, his white hair flying as he swung along in velvet tunic and high gaiters, carrying a swagger stick. He toured England on foot, walking fifty miles a day for a hundred days, delivering lectures on the efficacy of temperance and the good life. In 1879 he was awarded the Astley Belt in London as the World's Champion Long Distance Walker. He was still going strong at 71, when he walked from Santa Monica, California, to New York City in 76 days, 23 hours.

It can well be imagined that there was no place for a small girl in a professional pedestrian's nomadic life. Thus Lillian spent her first years living with her mother's parents. In the late 1870's, when her father was touring England on foot, Lillian went along. Later her parents sent her on to a convent school in Paris.

Lillian's response to life at a religious school was predictable. She thought the nuns "prayed enough to save the sinful world if praying would do it," and were a strange contrast to the gay city. She saw their lives as "black, black, everlasting darkness; even the students dressed in black."

Although Lillian was glad to leave the convent at term's end, she returned to Paris two years later, this time as a student at the Sorbonne and College of France. She also took courses at the French National Art School, and won several medals for harmony and pianoforte, playing in an English music academy.

WHEN, IN 1887, Lillian Weston returned to New York City to search for a job, the early feminists were demanding economic and political equality, and for good reason. Working women's wages were 50¢ a day, and destitute, uneducated gentlewomen struggled to earn a living by crocheting scarves and selling books. Lillian rebelled at this, believing that "no honorable profession should be called unwomanly," and that every one, male or female, should make the most of native talents and intelligence and be duly rewarded.

She set out to prove her point and although not yet 20, was soon a successful free-lance writer and roving reporter — a profession then hardly considered feminine. The roving girl reporter reviewed everything from Edwin Booth's *Hamlet* to the city's latest garbage disposal methods. Her "Lillian's Letters," a weekly column of news and gossip delivered with humor and occasional sarcasm, was published in the *New York Sunday Herald* throughout 1888 and 1889 and was widely quoted in other newspapers. Indeed, one reader, a prospector in distant Idaho, christened his rich new gold find, "Lillian," and frontier women cheered her demand for modern styles when Lillian protested restrictions placed on women's attire and conduct.

"The last performance of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show was given last Saturday afternoon," she wrote. "They invite outsiders to take a ride in [the Deadwood stage] at every performance. I longed to accept the invitation, but, being a girl, it would not have been proper for me so I had to sit quietly and watch a man mount the box seat, the place I desired to occupy myself. . . ."



TURN-OF-THE-CENTURY GILT EDGE — *huddled at the foot of a rugged mountain*

In 1895, Lillian married Frank Hazen, a conservative Dartmouth College graduate. This handsome, silent Bostonian and Lillian were as opposite as two people could be. She was eager, straightforward, talkative, and sometimes tactless; he was polite, sensitive, and reticent. Yet their's was a happy marriage. They had two children — a daughter, Barbara, born in Brookline, Massachusetts, and a son, Richard, born in New York City.

**E**VEN BEFORE HER MARRIAGE, Lillian had been attracted to the adventurous western life, and, as she recorded in an unpublished manuscript, "A Hundred Miles in a Blizzard," she was enthusiastic when Frank decided to seek his fortune in the great northwest.

"In the latter part of April, 1889," she wrote, "he found a job as a bookkeeper in a mining camp . . . and asked me to join him, saying there was a regular stage running from the camp to the railroad, [and] that they usually made the trip in ten hours so he didn't think I would have any trouble particularly as it was late in the season and the weather and roads would probably be good. . . ."

But when she arrived at Fort Benton, once the booming head of navigation on the Missouri River, but by 1899 a sleepy village on the Great Northern Railway, a spring blizzard was blowing and she found, for the last hundred miles of her trip, not a regulation coach with four horses, but a double-seated open buckboard.

The driver pushed her into a gigantic fur coat and boosted her and the children aboard. Late that night, they reached the third station, a lone ranch-

house sixty miles from Fort Benton where they were snowed in for two days and nights. The following day dawned fair and clear, however, and despite her frigid introduction to Montana, Lillian wrote they set forth "with light hearts." Late that day they were joined by Frank and descended into busy Gilt Edge, huddled at the foot of a rugged mountain in Central Montana.

Lillian described the town in one of her personal journals: "It did not thrive until the beginning of the century; the mines were dug and the mill built in the gulch which broadened out into treeless reaches of rangeland and, a mile or so from camp, ranchers built their homes. For a time, though, it was wild, reckless, and prosperous and, in 1901, Fergus County candidates for office found more voters there than in Lewistown. It boasted a hotel, a schoolhouse, some plastered houses, and more than one street. It was wide open — gambling, drinking, and fighting in every saloon, and the bartenders were kept busy. Calamity Jane was there one winter, and it was said that she was never the last up to the bar when somebody set up the drinks. Sometimes a thousand dollars was lost on the turn of a card. And many a weird western character wandered through. One spring afternoon a bandit known as Slippery Tom held up the whole town for over two hours and was fined a mere \$10.00."

That first evening in Gilt Edge, Lillian was trying to cook dinner on the wood stove when nine-month-old Richard woke up crying. Suddenly she felt so desolate that she took the baby in her arms, rocked back and forth, and cried, too. But in a few days her buoyant spirit took charge and with only a sprinkling of bad moments, Lillian jumped into her new life, ferreting out the good things and dismissing the bad.

Silver Dollar Saloon — *gambling, drinking, and fighting in every saloon and the bartenders were kept busy.*



Actually, Lillian and Frank's three room hilltop cottage overlooking the town was a mansion compared to most. Although civilization came in each day with the U.S. mail and a newspaper, there was rarely a doctor in Gilt Edge. Lillian had to order patent medicines from New York City for her family.

She bemoaned the fact that in Gilt Edge no one farmed, no one raised chickens or fresh vegetables. Everyone thought of only one thing: gold. People dreamed of great wealth in the future and ignored the necessities of the present, heard only the clink of precious metal, and saw only the diggings. "How sad," Lillian's artistic sensibilities lamented, "in such a beautiful country more green than any man-made park."

Nevertheless the mine and mill at Gilt Edge fascinated her. Half way up the mountain from town, the mines were modern with steam drill, telephones, electric lights, and every labor-saving device known to that day's technology, all freighted over the mountains by oxen, mules or horses. The miners worked seven days a week, many hours a day, extracting the gold by the radical new cyanide process. As often as she could take them, she and the children visited the mines, going deep underground to wander through newly-discovered caves of stalactites and stalagmites, fragile, delicate shapes in brilliant colors. They would stop to watch the drillers preparing to blast and then follow the horse-drawn ore cars back to the surface to view Lillian's favorite

Gretencort Collection — Brenner Studio



Gold Reef Mill in Gilt Edge as it looked in about 1901 — *everyone thought only of . . . gold.*



THE HAZEN FAMILY SHORTLY AFTER THE MOVE TO LEWISTOWN IN 1903

show — taking the liquid gold from the furnace and pouring it into a trough to cool into \$2,000.00 bars.

The Hazens spent two years in this wild country where in winter storms roared out of the mountains almost daily, the windows were covered with frost for weeks at a time, and where even when skies were clear, the snow and mud were too deep for walking. With the rest of Gilt Edge they restlessly awaited the first signs of the mountain spring when dark patches began to spread over the sunny hillsides and snow melted into the icy, trout-filled streams which poured into the great Judith Basin.

In 1903, civilization and politics beckoned with Frank Hazen's election as clerk and recorder of Fergus County. The family moved to Lewistown, "Gem of the Judith Basin," and settled into a quiet, small-town life. This contentment was ended in January, 1905, when eight-year-old Barbara's whooping cough turned to pneumonia. In two days, she was dead.

Lillian's poem "Through a Glass Darkly," published in the *Great Falls Tribune* on November 24, 1906, mirrored guilt over her inadequacies as a mother — feelings never quite discarded.

*She is safer in His keeping than she ever was  
in mine;  
Yet I cannot help the longing for a visible sure  
sign.  
Was it given me, I wonder, when I first knew  
she had gone,*

*As I followed through the shadows that for me  
would meet no dawn?*

*Vaguely I could feel she faltered on the thresh-  
old of that life*

*Where between the soul and body, there can  
never more be strife.*

*And, perplexed at some great freedom that the  
spirit body gave,*

*She regretted still the clay one doomed so soon  
to the dark grave.*

*Oh, I could not bear to see her lying there, so  
cold and still,*

*For the spectre Death had grasped her, and had  
worked his wicked will.*

*Had I battled for her strongly? Ah, I might have  
done so much,*

*And my memories were awful, quickened by  
that icy touch.*

*But I could not leave my darling, so I crept  
back in her room*

*And my eyes were dim with weeping, and no  
light pierced my soul gloom,*

*Till I saw her, radiant, lovely, lying in her narrow  
bed,*

*And I realized soul beauty when I gazed upon  
my dead.*

Despair and withdrawal from life were not, however, Lillian Hazen's style. In a short time she recovered her equilibrium, even from this dreadful blow.

LILLIAN AND FRANK were front row spectators to Montana's boom times in the second decade of the new century when the federal government threw land open to homesteaders and people flowed in to invest their life savings in the precarious occupation of ranching. In 1916, Frank, Lillian and their son, Richard, determined to join the rush. Although well over 50, Lillian again found herself roughing it — this time as a rancher's wife.

They bought 1200 acres of undeveloped land in the Judith Basin near Acushnet, Montana, and built a white, square ranch house straddling a flat ridge above Rattlesnake Gulch. They erected a large red barn, stretched miles of fencing, and tossed thousands of rocks from their newly-planted wheat fields.

Later, in an article entitled "The Aspirations and Inspirations of a Ranchwoman," published in *Scribner's*, September 17, 1922, Lillian hinted at the degree to which her new homesteading duties interrupted her literary pursuits.

"Country life did not flow on as peacefully and uninterruptedly as I had supposed. Between housework, care of the fowls, four-footed pets, and other duties, it took me several days to write even a short story. Once I was in the midst of a most telling phrase when I heard a great hubbub in the hen house. I knew, at once, something had scared the feathered folk and rushed out with visions of weasels, coyotes, and other creatures." Instead she found a three-month-old calf contentedly chewing his cud while the hens voiced their indignation.

Generally, however, Lillian enjoyed western life. "Everything in life was reproduced in the Ranch World," she wrote, "comedy and tragedy, thrills and entertainment galore." She recorded the small tragedy when her Percheron mare, Babe, refused to leave her dead colt. "Tears filled my eyes as I saw Babe, her beautiful black head drooping so low it almost touched the still little body. I spoke to her. She looked up, recognized me and whinnied. . . Babe had never before asked my help in vain, but—I must fail her now. . . I put my arms around her neck, and talked to her as I would to a young woman who had lost her first born and gently tried to draw her away from the little one. . . I took off my apron, wound it into a kind of rope that I put around her neck, held both ends in my hand and tried to lead her towards home. I coaxed her to move a few steps, then a few more. She would stop frequently, and look around for the colt, but I kept talking to and petting her. She trusted me absolutely, and with my voice in her ear, and my hand smoothing her shining, thick, black mane, she slowly left the coolie."

Although Lillian was a writer, well-educated and more sophisticated and artistically sensitive than the neighboring farmers' wives, her journal told of her private struggle to measure up to their standards.

"A Montana rancher must be 'all man' to hold down his job and his wife must be a real helpmate. I lost my pride in intellect and culture when I saw what my neighbors could do, dare, and suffer, without a murmur and realized that I was inferior, measured by their standards of courage and endurance."

Occasionally, however, she defended herself, as she did in "Ranchwoman's Guest," published by Scribners in 1922:

"As time went on, I was informed on different occasions by my husband or son how the wife of one neighbor ploughed, another ran a binder, another shocked grain; they all could milk and make butter, not to mention pitching hay for stock and harnessing horses. Gradually, the idea dawned upon me that my family and neighbors thought I was leading a very idle life. . . .

"But the last straw was when my son told me that our hired man had said I did the least of any rancher's wife he ever saw. Nobody likes to be considered a slacker, and this impertinent remark made me downright angry. Still, it did seem as though such unanimity of opinion must have some foundation in fact, so I decided to probe the matter to the very bottom. I was always busy, always dead tired at night. Where did the time go? What did I do? I felt like a man who tried to be economical and yet could not make both ends meet. He would probably keep an exact account of how I spent my hours and minutes for one day, at least, for purposes of self defense.

"The next day was the twenty-fourth of August, and twenty minutes after our Big Ben proclaimed the hour to be half past four, I was up, dressed, and in the kitchen . . . making coffee, toast, and cereals and frying potatoes and eggs, I set bread to rise, and put up two lunches . . . I wanted to stop my work long enough to watch the sunrise from behind the mountains. The faint colors of the dawn always gave me keen delight, but there was no time. . . .

"I had six motherless little chicks that I kept boxed up in the kitchen at night; they had to be fed, watered, and put outside . . . the table had to be set, and the kitchen swept and tidied, not to mention feeding the fowls and letting them out of the hen house. Six o'clock, breakfast time . . .

"Then my husband said he had got to sack a lot of oats and could get through much quicker if I would help him. . . After we had finished, I remembered my bread, and again started for the kitchen, when my husband said he hoped I would come back in time to help him through the corral with a load of seed wheat he must take to the hired man who had commenced to drill. The corral was full of loose stock and he needed someone to shut and open the gate, and see that none of the animals got out.

"I kneaded my bread, put it in pans and returned to the corral. . . 'I think the windmill ought to be turned on,' remarked my husband just as he was leaving. 'I'm afraid the reservoir is nearly empty and would you mind feeding Lord Brae and Stubbs some grain?'"

"I assented and immediately climbed the steep hill to the windmill. . . When, at last, I returned to the kitchen, my bread was more than ready for the oven. I replenished the fire, then set to work making pies. . ."

"I was glad to sit down to peel the apples, as I was tired, and my husband and the hired man would be in at half past twelve and expect a hearty dinner. I had it ready on time, but shuddered at the pile of cooking dishes to be washed after the meal.

"My husband had agreed to haul wheat, that afternoon, for a neighbor who was threshing, so left the house long before I had finished washing dishes. I decided to lie down as I was so tired. Just then, my husband drove by on his way to the threshing outfit, and called out that the windmill needed turning off. Again, I wended my way up that steep quarter of a mile to the windmill. I stopped at the top to admire the view. It was fine. A wide expanse of greenish yellow prairie with its innumerable shades, making a delightful contrast with the chocolate brown of ploughed ground, and the broad fields of golden wheat. . . One is enveloped in a kind of live silence, as the hum of insect life makes itself heard, like the pulsing of Nature's great heart.

"A sense of unutterable, ineffable peace takes possession of me until I happen to glance towards a seventy-five acre wheat field where the grain is out and shocked waiting to be threshed. Several head of cattle have broken through the surrounding fence and are actively tossing the bundles, and gorging themselves on the grain. What to do I did not know. I dared not ride the saddle horse in the barn and I could not drive them out on foot. Still if they were not put out before the men returned at six, they would destroy bushels of oats. I decided that I must walk a mile or more to where my son was binding, and tell him.

"After hearing my unpleasant news, my son unhitched, put his horses in a nearby barn, and hustled home with me. By that time, it was after three, and I lay down, feeling I could not get supper for four men if I did not rest a few minutes. I was actually numb with fatigue. About half past four, I rose and went to the barn for grain to feed my chickens. Then I went to a tank and toted water for them, gathered the eggs, and cleaned up the chicken house.

"At seven, my husband, the hired man, and the shocker sat down at the table but my son had sent word he would work late. It was pitch dark when

he came. About the same time, my husband brought in the milk. I strained it, then washed the dishes. It was after nine when I felt at liberty to lay my weary body on the bed. Thinking how short the time before Big Ben would again ring out half past four, I was a fellow with the man who said he got up so early he met himself going to bed.

"I was just drowsing off when it occurred to me that I had forgotten to fill up the collie's water dish, and on a hot night he would need plenty to drink. I rose and hurried into the kitchen to the water pail, then outdoors with a dipper full. Just then the wavering call of a coyote fell on my ear, and I remembered that I had not shut the door of the chicken house. Groping my way, twenty or thirty yards in the darkness, I remedied this oversight, then turned to the house. . . ."

**M**ONTANA, at this time, averaged about four people per square mile. Neighbors were few and far between but anyone in need was given a helping hand and strangers were always welcomed, fed, and bedded. From the beginning, Lillian adopted this warm informal life style as her own.

"In town, when expecting dinner guests," she wrote, "I took the opportunity to display my finest linens and best chinaware, polished up the silver and lay awake nights trying to think of rare delicacies likely to tempt their jaded appetites. At the ranch, if anyone happened to be on the premises at mealtime, neighbor, stranger, prince, or pauper, he was invited to sit down at an oilcloth-covered table in the kitchen and eat what was before him; it might be fried chicken and ice cream or boiled meat and cabbage. Hired help and guests sat down at the table together in their every day clothes, dirty, whole, ragged or ornamented with patches. We had real heart-to-heart talks, though, around that kitchen table, and I thoroughly enjoyed them.

"At first, I was rather overwhelmed by so many impromptu dinner parties, and decided a woman must be hired to assist me. Thinking to kill two birds with one stone, we engaged a married couple who agreed to sleep in the bunk-house and help with the work, the man in the field, the woman in the house.

"Soon, my husband confided to me he dared not drive a team the man hitched up without carefully examining the harness. . . and the woman had a positive genius for spoiling good food. . . I also informed my amused spouse that if I had to do the cooking, it would be easier to feed four than five, so he could hire a bachelor, with my blessing and let the married couple go.

"I cooked for a succession of bachelors before we found one that suited us. Some were lazy, some knew nothing of ranch work, some knew too much, or thought they did, and some were mean to the horses. Among these last was one who made quite an impression on me, his ideas were so pronounced and peculiar from a religious standpoint. He was firmly convinced he bore a striking resemblance to the pictures he had seen of the Savior, so wore his hair and beard in accordance with his belief. He thought it was wicked to go to the theater or play cards, so his sole diversion was playing a mouth organ from which he drew forth sounds calculated to make one long to be deaf.

"One morning, he and my son were ploughing in the same field when the words, 'mad dog you, mad dog you,' broke the soft spring quietness. My son left his plough to investigate the trouble, when the man burst forth with a tirade about the stupidity of that 'mad dog' horse, and finished by striking the animal brutally over the head, saying, 'he would him, by dog.'

"He got his time then and there. Before the man left, however, we learned that he thought it was wicked to swear, so reversed curse words and spelling to quiet his conscience."

**G**OOD TIMES for the ranchers abruptly ended in 1918 with the beginning of a three year drought which coincided with the discovery of oil in Fergus County. Writing in *The Oil and Gas Journal* on June 4, 1920, Lillian perceptively described the oil madness that seized her community:

" . . . Lewistown is crowded with oil men from all over the country. Representatives of the big companies are securing leases of thousands of acres while new companies are being rapidly formed and incorporated . . . Everyone is blowing bubbles, bubbles, pretty bubbles, in the air—dripping with oil.

"The taxi cabs, hotels, movies, and all other trades and callings are doing a howling big business. The whole population is oil mad, 'scheming schemes, and dreaming dreams' to make money out of that oil. Some are selling stock, values running from 10 cents to \$100 a share. Others are rushing hither and thither to get leases . . . or trying to dispose of leases they have obtained . . .

"The Lewistown daily paper is rapidly expanding its circulation [by] printing oil news. It gives glowing descriptions of what oil has done to benefit other localities, prints everything the editor has ever heard, seen, or dreamed about oil, and tabulates the wealth obtainable from a twenty-five barrel oil well—

fifty barrel, hundred, thousand, up to twenty-five thousand.

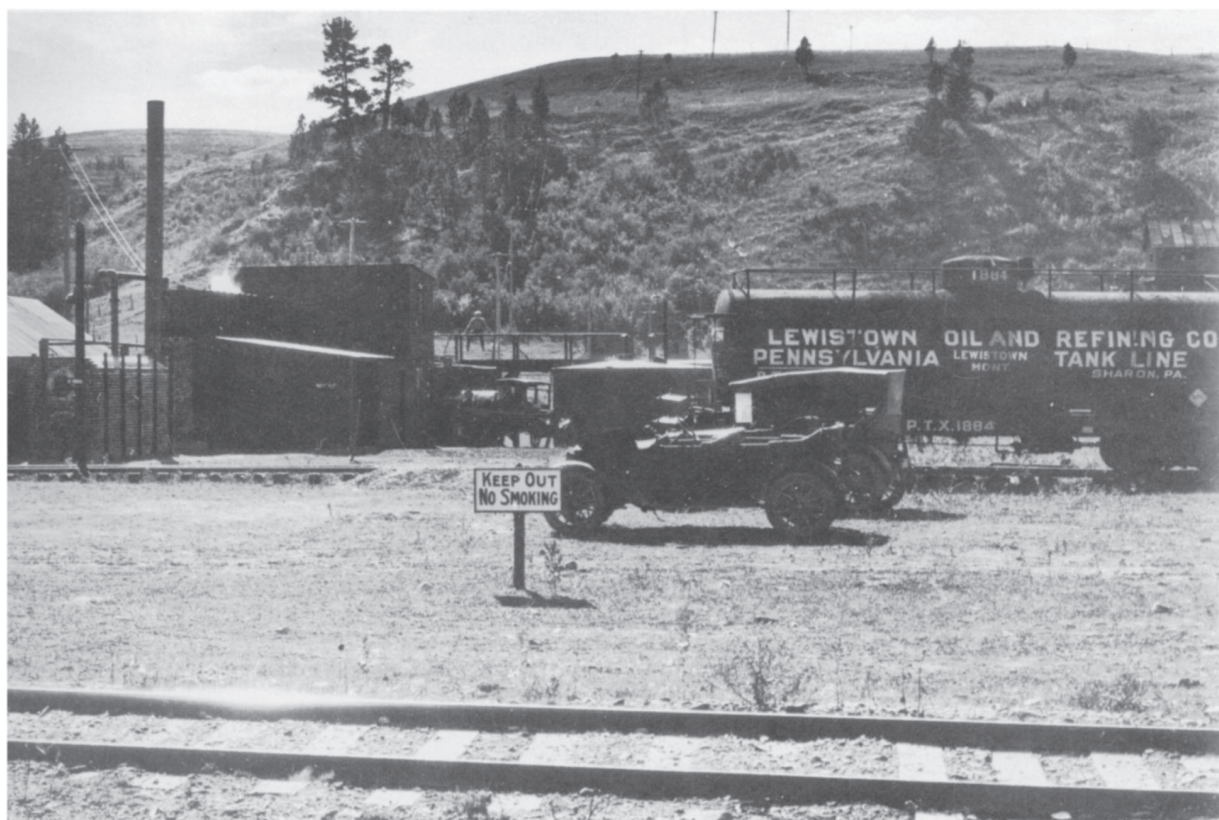
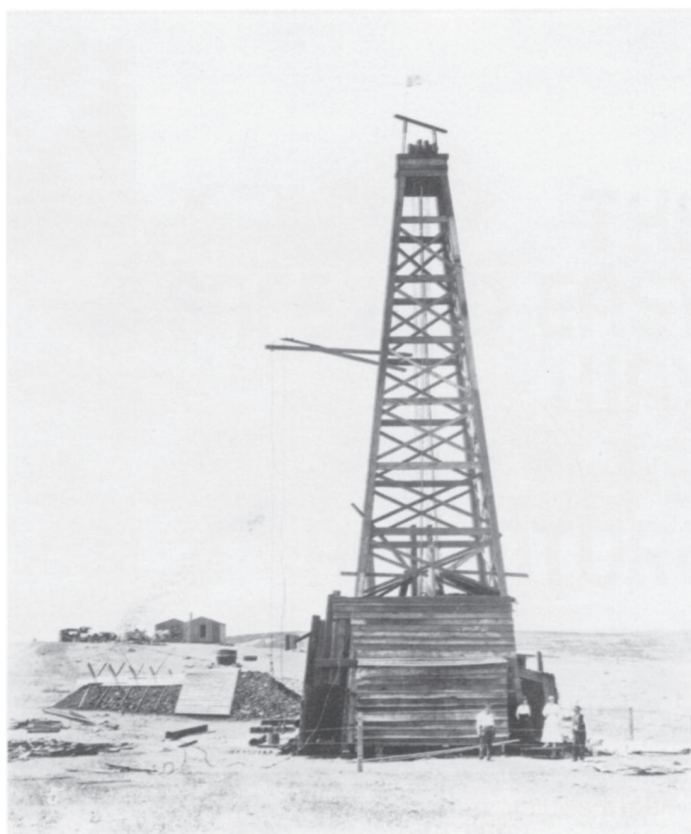
"It seems a pity that the ranchers, who have been obliged to bear the brunt of the two crop failures, cannot share the oil boom profits, but it works the other way with them, making labor scarce and high.

" 'I wish that oil was in hell,' cried one countryman, after a trip to Lewistown. 'There's no fun in town for a man of ordinary means. Nothing less than a fifty dollar bill looks like money any more to a restaurant man or a storekeeper. If you buy a paper, the newsboy expects you to give him a quarter and say, Keep the change.'

" 'Every other man you see pulls a wad of bills from his pocket as big as your two fists, and they don't work for it either like one does in the country—just earn it, jaunting around selling oil stock to suckers. Nobody thinks or talks of anything but oil. I tried to hire a ranch hand and he wanted a hundred dollars a month. Fellows say they can make lots more than that when the Frantz Co. builds their twenty mile pipe line from Mosby to Winnett. I suppose they can, but a rancher who has had two or three successive crop failures, and is paying eight or ten percent on borrowed money can't afford to pay his help a hundred dollars a month, and board them'."



LEWISTOWN AND THE OIL BOOM —  
*everyone is blowing bubbles, pretty  
bubbles in the air . . . dripping with oil.*





*The cattle would just fall from weakness, and die quietly . . .*

**A**S LILLIAN and Frank Hazen struggled to earn a bare living, she sympathetically analyzed the ranchers' sad plight during the agricultural depression of the 1920's in an article, "Farmers' Finance," published in the Dearborn (Mich.) *Independent* on March 4, 1923:

"The two principal factors that have caused what Mr. McAdoo calls 'the present tragic agricultural situation' are—arbitrary prices set on farm produce that bear no relation to the cost of production and the high interest rate farmers are obliged to pay on borrowed money. When a rancher puts in his crop, he must pay for implements and machinery whatever price the manufacturer has set on these necessities, the 'going wages,' for labor and everything else that he needs, irrespective of his means or the price that will be set (he has no voice in the matter) on his own produce in the fall. In other words, the farmer has to take what is given him, and give what is asked. Could any business succeed under such conditions? . . .

"Not long ago, a representative of one of the smaller packing houses went about amongst the homesteaders and poorer ranchers and offered to buy their stuff, ship it, and pay the market price the day the animals arrived at his stock yards. As few of them had even one car load of cattle, which necessitated several of them clubbing together to ship, not to mention that cars were almost unobtainable at times, so they let the benevolent agent drive off their stock. The day the cattle reached the stockyards, the market ranged from three to seven cents a pound, and these ranchers [*regardless*] of the condition of their beasts, received three cents a pound.

"They would not have made any profit this year at seven cents a pound, but three cents was a regu-

lar holdup for anything like a good steer. In fact, any four-year old must have cost their owners from ten to fifteen cents a pound to raise [during the drought and terrible winter of 1919] that . . . virtually ruined many of the ranchers and cattlemen in the Northwest. . . .

"That spring, the winter wheat came up as usual, its fresh, bright green gladdening the eyes after the barrenness of the cold months just passed. . . The fields of grain faded from bright green to a sickly yellow, and by the middle of July, everyone had given up all hopes of a crop. The weather was blazing hot, night and day, and reminded one of the ancient saying, 'Thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron.'

"The poorer ranchers who lacked cash and credit had simply to watch their horses and cattle starve to death. The cattle would just fall from weakness, and die quietly, usually on the range . . . but the horses hung around home, having faith until the very last that their masters would give them a feed. A horse stands up until he is a living skeleton. One can almost see through him. Then, when his weak legs will uphold him no longer, he sinks to the earth but keeps his head up, still watching, waiting, hoping for the help that does not come. At last, the head sinks down on the ground, too, the legs stretch out, the large, patient eyes close, a shudder, and the poor brute has ceased to suffer. Sometimes, though, a horse with uncommon vitality even after he is 'down' will make such terrific efforts to stand up that he thrashes his eyes out of his head before the end comes. Many of the ranchers shot their horses rather than have their feelings harrowed by the sight of their dumb suffering . . ."

**M**ONTANA RANCHING did not recuperate from those drought years until the end of the depression, and, early in 1931, because money was so scarce, Frank again joined Fergus County politics as County Commissioner. He and Lillian returned to Lewistown, taking their grandchildren, including me, with them as Richard's wife, my mother, had died in 1930. Thus at age 69, Lillian was a mother again but, as with everything else, she took it in stride. She displayed the same warm creative interest in raising her grandchildren that she had shown in all other areas of life.

Often, on summer Sundays, she and Frank would load a picnic lunch and the grandchildren into their old 1929 Dodge and head for the mountains—sometimes Gilt Edge (by then a ghost town)—where they would spend the day rambling the slopes to find wild flowers for Lillian's pressed collection. Sometimes she fascinated the children by sketching each in detail before they picked it, and they loved to hear tales of her early days in the booming mining center.

Lillian's Lewistown neighbors remembered her swinging to and fro in a hammock hung on her cool shaded porch where she read her old tattered French books or the latest best seller or her *Saturday Evening Post*. She continued to clack away on her old typewriter but she had run out of energy though she sold a poem occasionally.

In the meantime, the ranch was sold and my father, Richard, moved out of the state, taking us children with him.

In 1940, Frank and Lillian began making an annual winter trek to California. Once they visited Santa Barbara, where Lillian spent each day on the beach writing. Some of these poems were later pub-

lished. Although they stayed in Pasadena one winter, she called it the "City of the Living Dead." Rather than the company of other elderly people, Lillian preferred the bustling, energetic city of Long Beach with its free band concerts and where she was close enough to Los Angeles to hear such favorite performers as Jascha Heifetz.

But each spring found the Hazens back in Lewistown in time for Frank to plant his half acre garden. When, in 1948, Frank and Lillian began to lose momentum and admitted they were tired of managing their big house and yard, my father went to Lewistown to help them move. Amazingly, he found them down to the final stages of moving, but rather dazed and undecided in the midst of a forty-year collection of mementos. As best he could, Father helped them decide what to take to their new home with him.

Although Lillian remained active and alert, interested and interesting until she was bedridden three weeks before her death, there were times when she felt her life unfulfilled:

*Shorter and shorter grow the hours  
Of work for me  
Waiting and fearing, darkness lowers  
On land and sea  
Summer is over, harvest comes  
Too soon for me—  
Shadows and stillness—muffled drums—  
And mystery.  
Blighted are all my youthful dreams  
By Misery—  
Yet still the far horizon gleams  
With light for me.*

Lillian Weston Hazen died in November, 1949, in Logan, Utah. Frank refused to accept her death, and until his own death in March, 1952, pretended that she was away for a short visit.



LILLIAN WESTON HAZEN  
IN THE 1920's

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#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Joyce Hazen Litz's interest in her grandmother's life and writing began as a project for an American Studies course at George Mason College, where she is currently a senior. A native Montanan, Joyce Litz spent her first years on Lillian's ranch near Lewistown. In subsequent years she has resided in many western states, as well as living for two years in Argentina. She now lives in Fairfax, Virginia, where in the family tradition, she works part time as a journalist while completing work for her degree.

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