

Wyoming Tribune Eagle of April 28, 2016: "Tales of two Wyoming originals." Casper Star Tribune of April 30: "A pair of extraordinary Wyoming originals."

Today you'll learn about two extraordinary Wyoming originals. One went out into the world to seek his fortune—academic fortune, that is. Last month he returned to his home state with ten Yale students in tow. The other is a Platte County rancher who, at age 25, sustained a spinal-cord injury in an altercation with a 5000-pound steer while loading cattle. He has ranched from his wheelchair for the past 22 years.

Do you believe snowmobilers have the right to roar along Yellowstone trails when winter comes on? Are you a hiker who photographs the wildlife of a treasured national park—or are you incensed over the re-introduction of wolves? Perhaps you are a rancher in uproar over bison that wander from the park in search of forage: they might mingle with cows and infect them with the dreaded *Brucella abortus*.

As the world's first national park, Yellowstone is globally recognized for its environmental preservation; yet the park and its surrounding regions are rife with environmental conflict. Justin Farrell, a scholar at Yale born in Cheyenne, examines conflicts between the "old West" ranchers and hunters taking pride in taming nature versus the "new West" incomers who decry them as environmentally destructive. His book, "The Battle of Yellowstone" was hailed by the British journal *The Economist* as the most original political book of 2015. The journal's reviewer adds that the book is not formally about politics at all; rather, Farrell examines the "venomous rows that have shaken Yellowstone National Park in recent decades, and why they are so intractable."

This groundbreaking work, says another reviewer, "shows how the unprecedented conflict over Yellowstone is not all about science, law, or even economic interests, it's about cultural upheaval and the construction of new moral and spiritual boundaries in the American West."

The "new-west" social order engenders struggles between the federal government, the National Park Service, environmentalists, local residents, and elected officials. Mr. Farrell asks why it is that, with all the scientific, economic, and legal efforts at hand, no resolutions to these disagreements have emerged. Why do even seemingly minor issues erupt into impassioned disputes?

Justin Farrell credits his spouse with persevering. "I couldn't have done it without Ashley." At Yale he teaches two courses on the American West. One, a field course to western Wyoming, recently involved 10 days' travels with Yale students.

"The trip was fantastic," he emailed. In meetings with agencies, students examined Wyoming Game & Fish versus US Fish & Wildlife exigencies. They visited a Mormon community and the Eastern Shoshone Tribe. "A great experience for my students."

Yellowstone is but one of Professor Farrell's interests. "Lately I've been writing about how corporate funding has become toxic in politics," he emailed. "It paralyzes any practical progress."

Henry Poling emits cordiality through his good-looking facial features. Indeed, catching his eye will make you forget, here is a man with a disability. Because of his injury 22 years ago, Mr. Poling lost the use of both legs. Yet there was never a question in his mind that he'd continue with his chosen vocation. His mother's ranching family had nurtured his interest early on.

"I was in good shape physically when it happened," he reminisces. "That helped."

When the surgeons at Poudre Valley Hospital in Fort Collins informed him that he would never again walk unaided, he merely asked, "What do I have to do to get out of here?"

One vertebra was completely splintered and had to be reconstructed. The chaps and belt he wore

that day likely saved the others.

He told the doctors he planned to continue ranching. "Often, people are more disabled in the brain than in the body," he tells me.

"They sent in the hospital psychiatrist," he continues. "They thought I was in denial."

His speedy rehab and recovery from complicated surgery amazed everyone. "I went through it all in 25 days."

At first, what bothered Henry about finding himself wheelchair-bound was the thought, "People might look at me, thinking, 'poor thing.' I agonized over people's glances—until a friend reminded me, people have always been drawn to look at me."

What about marriage?

"I like living by myself. I'll continue this way." It's the daily tasks that lend his life structure and meaning. He designed and built his own house. He runs his tractor, tends a greenhouse with aquaponics. In Wheatland he volunteers with an outreach center.

In the early years, before she moved into a retirement home, his mother lived at his ranch in Palmer Canyon. Nowadays, "My friend, Clay, helps on weekends. When branding, gathering cattle, and other tasks that require extra hands, my neighbors, the Hills, generously give of their time."

Sometimes he suffers from back-pain and arthritis, particularly when the weather changes, but Henry Poling plays the hand that's been dealt him. He gets on with life.