



What a gift Cathy Healy and her family have given history buffs in sharing a privileged Boston bride's letters to her mother, which give us a personal insight into early life in Wyoming. Edith Healy's courageous and cheerful adaptation to life in a small Wyoming town and on a sheep ranch is inspiring. Small wonder her progeny have contributed so much to our state's heritage and political life.

Ann and Al Simpson

Cody, Wyoming

Cathy Healy has expertly edited her grandmother's letters from the 1900s to give us a delightful account of a cultured Bostonian's improbable but richly-lived years in the west as the wife of a Wyoming sheepman from Ogden, Utah, who not so improbably, was educated at MIT.

Val Holley

Author

25th Street Confidential: Drama, Decadence, and Dissipation Along Ogden's Rowdiest Road

Edith Holden Healy takes you on journey through the sheep country of Wyoming during the first half of the last century. She is as fresh and powerful as the spring wind coming off the Bighorn Mountains she loved so much.

Grant Ujifusa

Founding Editor

The Almanac of American Politics

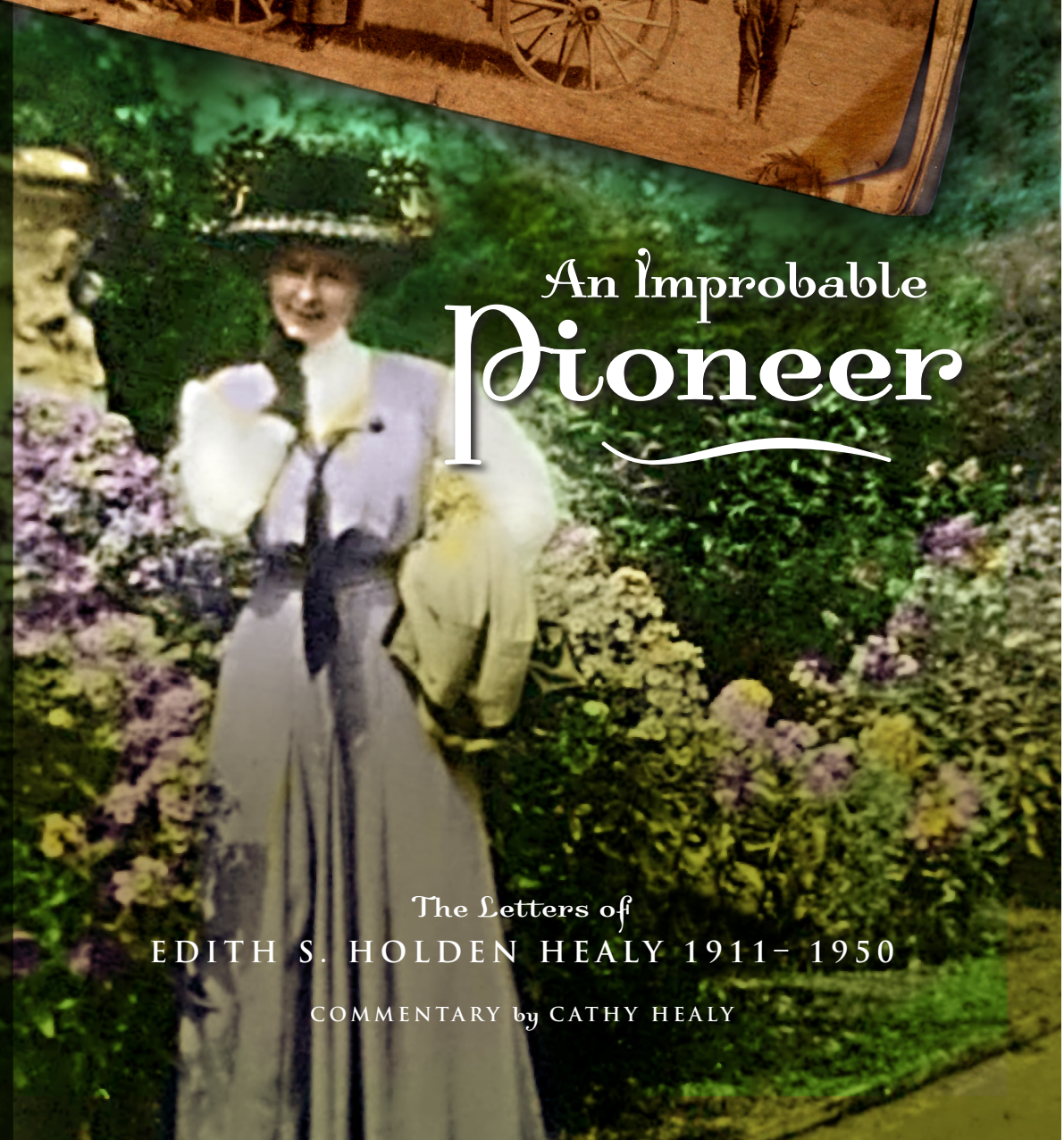


HEALY
AN IMPROBABLE PIONEER

An Improbable Pioneer

The Letters of
EDITH S. HOLDEN HEALY 1911- 1950

COMMENTARY by CATHY HEALY



CHAPTER 14

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN

1924

HEALY'S MOVE TO WORLAND – FIRST IMPRESSIONS
EILEEN AND HELEN JOIN THE FAMILY

The *Worland Grit* bannered the Healys' arrival in Worland across its front page on March 30, 1922. New management and \$50 thousand in new capital (about \$652,000 in 2012 dollars) added to the \$25 million in Worland's first bank made "the First" a strong rival to Stockgrowers State Bank, the newer bank in town. The weekly *Grit* described Alec as "one of the leading capitalists in Wyoming and Utah." Although he lived in Denver, "Mr. Healy already has farming and livestock interests in Washakie County" and planned to move his family to Worland, the county seat. As bank officer, it was Mr. Healy who would direct the First National Bank of Worland, the newspaper noted.

The other major investor, Herman B. Gates of Denver, had been a former president of First National before becoming state treasurer of Wyoming. Gates left political office for the oil business.

Alec and Edith had made their decision. They invested in Worland, in the center of the Big Horn Basin, on the dry side of the Big Horn Mountains. Where Buffalo was grassy and green with a mountain creek tumbling through the town center, Worland, thirty miles from the mountains, originally resembled a colony on the moon set beside the slow-flowing Big Horn River. Along the river lay valley lands of sage flanked by what locals call *benches*, two hundred-foot-high rises of

hills that stretched into eroded badlands as beige gray and wrinkled as elephant hide. The arid lands reached the mountain ranges that ring the Basin with their prolific green pastures and creeks.

The mountains and green foothills drew the first pioneers in the Basin with their cattle and sheep, but the desert soil proved remarkably fertile when watered. Starting in 1903, a large network of canals and irrigation ditches opened the Basin to farmers, particularly sugar beet growers. The Lower Hanover Canal flowed through Worland, with hollow horsetail and snake grasses arcing along the banks.

In 1917, Utah investors built a million-dollar sugar processing factory made possible by the railroad completed in 1913. The factory attracted Mormon farmers to the area. After World War I, it attracted Volga Germans fleeing the communist revolution in Russia.⁹²

Beet farmers toiled to bring in even six tons an acre in those early days (versus twenty-two tons in today's mechanized world). Fall harvest was a back-breaking time with each beet dug up by hand, topped with a long, hooked knife, and tossed into a wagon or truck to be carted to the factory, a practice that continued unmechanized into the 1950s. Wayne Voss, a Worland farmer and investor, remembers his drudgery as a teen in the sugar beet fields.

Alec, whose father had substantial interests in Utah sugar, understood the natural partnership between sugar beets, a refining factory, and livestock. From the first year that the factory processed beets, farmers around Worland began wintering sheep and cattle on the beet tops left in their fields. As an experiment that first year, farmers also tried feeding beet pulp to livestock, said John Mazet, a long-time Holly Sugar employee in Worland. Sheep and cattle put up with the woody pulp, so the practice continued, but in the mid-1950s, leftover molasses from the refining process was mixed with the pulp, and livestock gobbled it

NEW CAPITAL FOR FIRST NATIONAL THE WORLAND GRIT

All the News—All the Time

Advertise Your Business

Watch
for our
Spring
Edition
Next
Week

H. B. GATES AND ALEX B. HEALY LEADING FIG- URES IN ENTERPRISE

Board of Directors Composed of Well-Known
Business Men and Farmers Who Will Main-
tain Past High Standard of Efficiency.

SUGAR BEETS OF RIVERTON FOR WORLAND

Wind River Valley Farm-
ers Will Net \$5
Per ton Beets.

Riverton beet raisers realizing that the Wyoming Sugar Co. is offering the best price for beets in the United States voted Monday to sell their entire 1922 crop to the local company. Production amounting to about 10,000 tons from over 1,000 acres will be shipped into Worland this fall from the Wind River valley which will make the coming campaign the greatest in the local history of the company.

Fieldmen have succeeded in gaining practically 5,000 acres here at home and with this additional Riverton crop, the factory will be busy almost until the holiday season.

The new territory came practically without solicitation and the economic saving in freight shipments to Worland had a great deal to do with the new acreage.

When sugar scales were first published, the Riverton farmers figured that upon a \$5.50 net and the payment of \$2.20 freight per ton to Lovell, of which they would pay one half or \$1.10, their net receipt on a ton of beets would be only \$4.40.

Will Net \$5.00.
The Worland price of \$6 per ton and \$2 per ton freight of which they pay \$1 gives them a net price per ton of beets of \$5.00.

the early lambing business and the reputation of Washakie county as the best lamb section in the state, this increase in pulp is a great help. Many farmers are willing and anxious to enlarge their feeding operations if they can be assured of enough feed and this addition to the local acreage helps to solve their problems. There will be 50,000 lambs raised here this spring and the great bulk will be of the half-blood type considered to be the best bet in the winter feeding game. There is no reason why these lambs should not be kept at home and fed out.

The Wyoming Sugar Co. while primarily interested in the production of sugar is deeply concerned in the success of sheep and cattle feeding here and intends to push this line of work.

WINTER ENDS IN SPRING SHOWER OF CARD PARTIES

Many delightful parties featured the social life of Worland during the past week. Mrs. George Rees entertained the "500" Club on Thursday evening of last week at the home of Mrs. R. C. Shultz. Guest prize was awarded to Mrs. G. C. Muirhead and Mrs. Brutus. The club prizes went to Mrs. Lee Howell and Miss Dorothy Schumacher. The next meeting will be at the home of Mrs. Raymond Russell. Mrs. George Muirhead and Mrs. James Cunningham entertained at eight tables of "500" Wednesday evening at the Muirhead residence. A two course luncheon was served. First prize was won by Mrs. C. E. Gray.

PUBLIC ROADS FEATURE MEET OF ALFATEERS

Legion Washakie Club
Move Put Up To
Committee.

Live men on a live-wire committee put over the "Open Forum" dinner idea in great style at the Cook Hotel Monday night. John Owens, Clyde Shirk, Harold Van Buskirk and Dr. W. O. Gray formed the red-hot aggregation and deserve the major portion of the credit. Fifty tickets were sold and everybody enjoyed the ample feed provided by Host Harris. Willoughby which was topped off with real pudding and whipped cream. Secretary Booker was on deck with his ante-dated checks and pulled in a bunch of Alfateers. Don't forget the next date at the Wyoming Cafe—7:30 on Monday evening, April 10th. Be there. Roads and Clubs.

The two main questions discussed were the formation of the Legion Washakie Club and the National Park-to-Park Highway membership drive. N. W. Hagen, post commander of Floyd Misch Post No. 44 brought up the new Legion plan for closer co-operation between ex-soldiers and the county. William L. Whitebeck, field secretary of the National Park-to-Park Highway spoke on the work being done by that organization to aid the Yellowstone Highway and direct tourist travel through the Big Horn Basin.

committee consisting of J. W. Randel, O. L. Hayes and John Owens, will report at the meeting, April 10th.

"Cleanup Week."

The "Honorable Bear George" McClellan tendered an invitation from the Woman's Club of Worland for the Alfalfa Club to participate in the annual "Spring Cleanup Week" April 10 to 15.

A band for Worland and trees planted around town came up for discussion. George Muirhead heads the horticultural committee which will start a forestry campaign. Other members are J. T. Weaver and Dr. J. A. Farlien. Let George do it but let "Doc" pull 'em up by the roots.

Get on deck April 10th, boys. Don't let this "Open Forum" idea get away from you. Now you're talking.

COAL STRIKE ON NINE THOUSAND MEN OFF THE JOB

With the state and federal authorities in a "watchful, waiting" attitude, the greatest strike in the history of the Nation will commence at midnight on Friday, according to last reports.

Nine thousand miners in Wyoming are affected by the order according to James Morgan, secretary-treasurer of District No. 22, United Mine Workers.

The tussles of the monster labor-capital battle will reach within fifteen miles of Worland as nine hundred men will walk off the job at the Gobo and Crosby mines.

The eve before the battle was called

In recognition of great future development in Worland and Washakie County, outside capital has practically completed negotiations for purchase of the control of the First National Bank of Worland. Thus—the oldest financial institution in this section enters upon another era of service to the Great West. Men who left this country now realize the opportunity at home and have returned to invest their money here.

According to information made public this week, Clarence W. Erwin, president and able pilot of the "First" through the stormy seas of the deflation period has disposed of his interests in the bank to other members of the board of directors, local farmers and stock men and to Alex B. Healy, prominent Denver and Wyoming capitalist and Herman B. Gates, Wyoming and Denver oil operator.

The deal has been in progress for the past two weeks and necessarily has aroused considerable public interest. It has been realized by the new board that notice of the change should have been made public before this but negotiations had not reached the point where this was possible until Monday of this week.

The men who will guide the destinies of the famous old "First" are all well known and strong men of the county.

New Pilots
They are Herman B. Gates of Denver, former president of the institution, former state treasurer of Wyoming and prominent oil-man, Alex B. Healy, one of the leading capitalists of Wyoming and Utah, Porter Lamb a well known stockman and rancher,

Deposits Half Million In 1918.

Since that time, he has built the institution up to the present high standard. During the years of 1918 and 1919, the deposits ran up to the half million mark many times. Mr. Erwin has been secretary of the Farm Loan Association and has been largely instrumental this year in gaining many sorely needed loans for hard pressed farmers.

He has taken his turn at civic duty having served as mayor and at present is a member of the city council. He will remain here for some time in order to aid the new management in getting started on the right foot.

It is probable that Mr. Healy will be the active officer of the First. He is living in Denver at present but will reside in Worland. In addition to his banking business, he has farming and livestock interests in Washakie county.

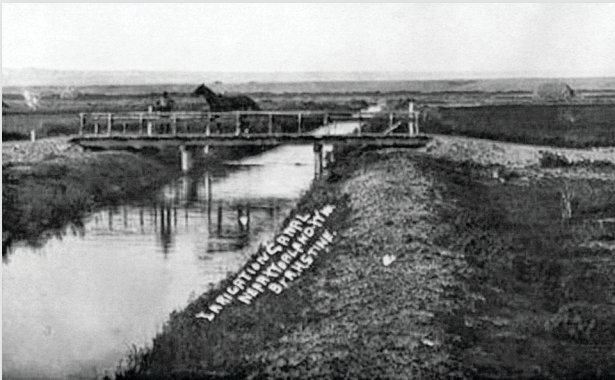
The "First" was a good bank, has always been a good bank and will continue to follow the same high standard. It was stated the capital would remain \$25,000.00 and the surplus at the same figure at present, but \$50,000 new money has been subscribed.

KANE BANK ROB- BERY ATTEMPTED BY 'GREEN' YEGGS

Local authorities have been notified to aid in apprehending cracksmen responsible for the attempted break of the Kane, Wyoming bank early Thursday

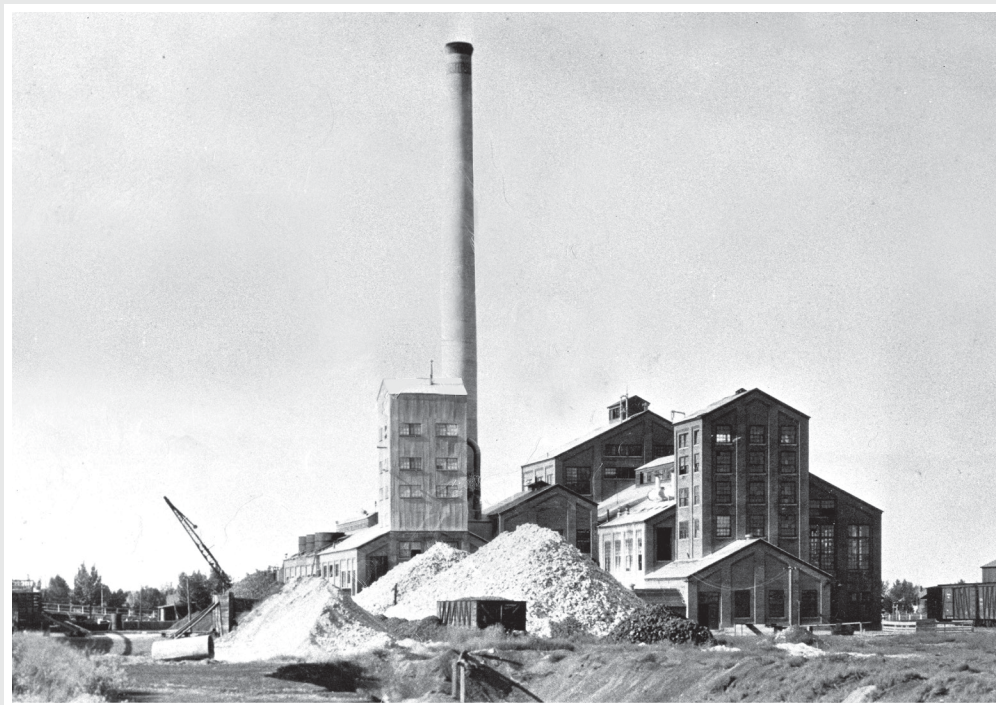
The weekly Grit headlined Alec's arrival in Worland—although it fancied up his name with a non-existent middle initial.

WORLAND, WYOMING



Top: Worland in the late 1920s. Above: Canals like this transformed the semi-arid Big Horn Basin, c. 1910. Below: Smokestacks show the sugar refinery in full operation. Credit: Washakie Museum, Wyoming Tales and Trails, and the Hampton Collection.





Piles of beet pulp will be trucked to feed livestock during the winter. The Holly Sugar factory opened in 1917. Credit: Washakie Museum.



down. Alec was still alive to watch the change. By then, 200,000 sheep were spending winters in the beet fields of the Big Horn Basin. A positive by-product of the mountains-to-farms feeding cycle was that the rangeland could recover from any overgrazing.

Worland's potential was obvious to Alec in 1922. The municipality was surrounded by five thousand sagebrush acres with access to water available for purchase. Oil and natural gas fields lay nearby with more to be discovered.

The town itself had the benefit of industrious residents who converted the dry land into an oasis of trees and gardens of vegetables and flowers. An aerial shot of Worland in 1920 shows a canopy of trees that people had planted around their homes. Worland's greenery was aided by the relatively mild winters and conferred on Worland the nickname, "Banana Belt of Wyoming."

When the school year ended in Denver in 1922, Alec moved his family into a small brick house on the corner of 10th and Grace until they could move into a clapboard and concrete bungalow, a block north on the corner of 10th and Culbertson. A wide veranda wrapped around the sunny eastern side of the bungalow where Alec hung a hammock for his summertime post-lunch naps.

The Healys' home was one of Worland's grandest at the time. One story is that the man who built it nearly went broke because of the expense. The home had a "little house" in the back which was connected to the main house by a dirt tunnel in the basement near the coal chute. The little house had room for a housekeeper downstairs as well as a sitting room and bedroom for guests upstairs. Alongside the little house stood a matching clapboard garage. By today's standards *grand* is a misnomer. 920 Culbertson Avenue had two bedrooms, one bathroom, a living room with a fireplace, a dining room, and a kitchen.

Edith's entry into the Worland community may have been more difficult than in Buffalo. By the time she moved to Worland she had been uprooted three times, twice recently, moving from Boston to Buffalo, Buffalo to Denver, and Denver to Worland. Edith may have felt lonely. During her first two years in Worland, her name appears only once in the *Worland Grit* when she played the violin at a woman's club program. This is a far cry from her full social life in Buffalo.

Only one of Edith's letters survives from this period, written on October 23, 1924. Fortunately, the letter describes what proved to be a critical turning point in her life.

In October 1924, Edith and Alec's sons were back down from the Big Horns where they spent summers helping to herd their father's sheep, but more importantly from their parents' point of view, isolated from summertime epidemics that killed or paralyzed children, such as polio. Alec, Jr., had started the eighth grade and was busy with inventions. Just like his Grandfather Holden, Alec, Jr., loved inventing. Tall and slender with wavy dark blond hair, Alec, Jr., also loved music, books, chess, and his pals. The Healy "baby," Dan was a sturdy fifth grader, practical and talented. He could repeat a piece of music after a first hearing; by high school band, he was able to learn a new instrument in a couple of weeks and fill in with whatever sounds were needed. His independent streak, however, was the bane of his piano teacher, as he played piano flat-fingered to thwart her authority.

Alec, 43, a community pillar, had just been nominated to run for his second term in the State House of Representatives by the Republicans in Washakie County.⁹³

Two weeks later, Edith, 45, headed south by train to Laramie on a mission to adopt a daughter. The couple wanted more children. Edith's mother was forty-one when Edith was born, an advanced age for

pregnancies then. Perhaps it was Edith's forty-third birthday celebrated during their winter in Denver that signaled how unlikely it was that Edith would give birth to another child. Perhaps the Healys knew another child was unlikely much earlier when Dan was born. Edith wrote in a 1949 letter to Cornelia Metz about not having been "properly taken care of after Dan's birth."

At some point, Edith put out the word that she and her husband were looking for a daughter, an older girl, because—as my father told me—his parents knew that everyone wants babies and that it is nearly impossible for an older child to be adopted. Mrs. Eggleston, one of Edith's friends and an Episcopalian connected with the church's Cathedral Home in Laramie, told her about a six-year-old girl there named Frances, promising, "You'll like her, she has beautiful manners."

Frances's parents had homesteaded land in the hills southwest of Sheridan and had five children—Irene, Frances, Jean, Robert, and Harry, the baby. Harry was only 3-months-old when their mother, Myrtle, died on August 13, 1923. The children's father decided he couldn't take care of them. Within a couple of days, Irene, 7, was left with a Sheridan family as a companion for their daughter of the same age, and the four younger ones were taken to the Cathedral Home. Harry died of pneumonia at the Home.

Mrs. Eggleston's daughter, Einna, and her husband, Deane Hunton, adopted Jean, as their only child. Mr. Hunton was professor of Commerce at the University of Wyoming and Einna was the principal at the Iverson School for Girls, a boarding high school serving ranchers' daughters and others who needed to live at school.

Robert, a toddler, was adopted by Helen Turner, a young New York City woman teaching at the Home, who returned to the East Coast.⁹⁴

Frances remained at the Home always feeling "scared to death," she said.

Irene didn't please the Sheridan girl, so the Sheridan family dispatched Irene to the orphanage in Laramie, where she and Frances were overjoyed to be together again. Frances often was punished for sneaking into Irene's bed at night to feel safe with her shy older sister, whose confidence had been crushed.

Edith and Alec arranged to divide Alec, Jr., and Dan's bedroom to make a bedroom for Frances and talked about their new sister-to-be. They planned to name her Helen after Alec's older sister; at the time, they didn't know about Irene.

Edith traveled to Laramie prepared to pick up their new daughter and take her to Denver for new clothes, a new doll, and time alone with her new mother so they could get acquainted before proceeding to Helen's new home. However, when Edith arrived in Laramie, she discovered the rejected eight-year-old Irene. As my Aunt Eileen (Irene) told me, Edith telephoned Alec long distance (rare in those days) to talk about what they should do. Alec agreed at once that they must adopt both girls. Eileen's eyes always got teary when she talked about how Alec never hesitated in his response to Edith's call, even though he'd never met her. Aunt Eileen's eyes laughed when she talked about how even though her father was a very formal man, he could be warm and fun, like when he would dance Edith and the girls around the kitchen.

Packing the girls to take them away was simple. They left with the clothes on their backs, says Aunt Helen. That suited Helen, who marvels now that she remembers absolutely nothing of their leaving. Her memories begin after she and her sister "escaped" the institution, and they were safely on the train with their new mother.

Helen confessed to some fearful moments after she and Eileen became Healys but never doubted the essential mother-daughter

bond. "Mother drilled us and drilled us on calling her Mother. I knew she wouldn't have done that if she hadn't meant it."

Worland, Wyo.

Oct. 23, 1924

My dear Mrs. Eggleston,

I just returned to Worland last night but I know how anxious you are to hear all about everything so am starting this letter immediately as it's going to be a long one to get in every detail and will have to be written in several sittings.

After we left you and Mrs. Whitehead and got settled in the train, I began telling them about the brothers and what their names were and what kind of bedroom they were going to have, just opening off mine etc. and told them as long as they were to stay with me I wanted to call them the names I liked best, which were Eileen and Helen.⁹⁵ We made a game of it, anyone saying Irene, Frances or Mrs. Healy were to get a cross under their names on a paper and anyone saying Eileen, Helen, and Mother got a star. We played it all the way to Denver and by the time we got there they were about letter perfect.

We went directly to Daniels & Fisher⁹⁶ and had lunch and then went to the toy department for the dolls. I led them up to this huge electrically lighted show case and told them they could have any doll they wanted. I know they will never have a thrill like that again. I know it was recklessly extravagant on my part but you only have a chance like that once in a lifetime. They went right to the ones they wanted and hugged them tight. Helen chose one with light bobbed hair the shade of her own and Eileen dark hair like hers. Both dolls go to sleep, say mama and walk. You will be interested in knowing the price. Helen's was \$5.00 and Eileen's was \$10.00. When I found E's was more I was afraid H would see the difference in hers when she got it home so I asked her to look again and offered her several others and she shook her head and still clung to that one, so I said no more.

Then we went to the Junior Department and I got a hold of Mrs. Weems, who is the regular shopper, for she and her assistant Miss Walch have done so much shopping for me through the mails. I told them the circumstances and they were so interested they turned the stock inside out to find things. Mrs. Bosworth, my friend, and I sat in comfortable easy chairs in Mrs. W's office and she and Miss Walsh dressed the children and sent them out like models in their new dresses.

Eileen was easier to find things for. I got her a dark blue crepe made so simply with a little bright embroidery on it and a touch of moiré ribbon. Also a dark blue serge trimmed in bands of old rose and a challis that was lighter with an allover figure on it and orange ruffle around the neck and sleeves and long orange ribbon ends hanging from one shoulder.

Helen looked darling in a sage green jersey cloth made with bloomers and trimmed with lavender and green embroidery. Also a gray, trimmed with cerise bands around neck and sleeves and a little cerise embroidery, oh just a touch. I got also for school little hunter green pleated skirts and pongee middies just alike. Tan colored sweaters and Helen a tan hat and Eileen a black hat. It was hard to find hats to match the sweaters that were becoming to both girls and that they could give me the two sizes. Brown shoes and stockings and the most adorable coats and hats alike for best. Brown camelhair coats with dark fur collars. Looks like mole but it isn't as fragile a fur. Had to go everywhere for hats to match but got darling ones. The crowns are fur cloth that matches the coat and the brims are dark fur that matches the collar. I am going to take a Kodak picture of them in these coats because I know you'll be crazy about them. I went to that store you told me of, but they had very few in stock their sizes, and I thought I'd let them wear the middie costumes to school, as I got three blouses apiece and the other dresses for best were enough.

I got them union suits and waists and combs and toothbrushes, rubbers and overshoes and their pictures taken. Maybe you don't think I hustled. We didn't go to a fancy place as I just wanted little informal pictures and couldn't bother with

someone taking too much time. They had on, Eileen her dark blue crepe and Helen that adorable shade of green.

The photographer couldn't make her smile to save his life.

We finished with the children's things Tuesday noon and took them home to Mrs. Bosworth's to play with her little six year old girl and she and I started down town to lunch and had the afternoon for me. We went to a new place, whose card I enclose. A most attractive place but I didn't find anything. Finally ended up at Gano's and I got both my dress and a hat there. The dress a black Bengaline made straight without any belt and just a touch of two shades of old blue at the neck and sleeves. My beads, earrings and comb go with it wonderfully. A peach of a dress and fitted as though it were made for me, only having to have the sleeves made a little shorter.

I got a stone gray camel's hair coat which comes high in the neck and I can wear my neck piece with it. Nothing to do that I also went to Broadhurst's and got 2 pairs of shoes, winter ladies and bought 2 sets of doilies for everyday use. Went to the Denver got more trying to match my set and four salt cellars for the children shaped like ducks, went to Neusteter's and got a new handbag and some artificial flowers for my living room and fancy candles and a pair of overshoes. Was through by four o'clock. Time to go back to Mrs. Bosworth, pack my bag and lie down a half an hour before taking the 6 o'clock train. And oh you think I am "some shopper!" I'm satisfied with everything I got, too, and didn't get anything just because I was pressed for time.

I couldn't have done it without the wonderful cooperation of those clerks at D&F and Mrs. Bosworth who is with me every minute neglecting her own affairs and drive me about in her car helping me with decisions. We always shop for clothes together. She had a committee meeting at her house and I heard her call a member and tell them they were welcome to come to the house, she wouldn't be able to be there and for the secretary to leave the minutes of the meeting for her to read, and tell her what they wanted her to do on a slip of paper. That is the kind of friend she is to me. And yet when I was leaving and tried to thank her, she said, "for goodness sake Edith, the

obligation is on my side, I've had the time of my life. I wouldn't have missed it for anything."

The 1st night we went to her house. She has a large 1 and 3 children, the youngest 6. At the table that night you never saw such perfect table manners by my two. Even when Eileen had to use her handkerchief, she turned away her head and blew gently. Mrs. Bosworth just marveled at it and said she thought she would have to send her 3 to the Cathedral home for intensive training. I certainly was proud of them. Mrs. B. called several of my friends and told them I was to be there with my daughters and they came over during and after supper to see them. Those children entered the room and behaved as if they were used to all this sort of thing all their lives. I think their good clothes helped them, for they instinctively felt they looked well and it gave them confidence. They certainly did look adorable. I wish you could see that lovely shade of green on Helen. 2 of my friends begged to go up and put them to bed and I was so glad I had brought home some lovely pink pajamas so they look like little soft pink rosebuds in them. I could only get one pair, so those Mrs. W gave me will do for every day, and these for special occasions.

The next afternoon the children had the time of their lives playing in Mrs. B's little girls' play room, wood doll furniture and dollhouse, little chairs and tables and dishes for a tea party. You can imagine we were all pretty worn out when we landed on the train. They love sleeping in an upper berth and each had a dollie cuddled tight.

The next day we spent a lot of it in the observation car. There was a lady in the seat opposite who took so much interest in us. She asked if my husband was light complected or rather said, "I suppose your husband is light" and I thought that the queerest remark, until she added, "the oldest one looks so much like you, and I suppose the youngest one takes after him." That certainly did amuse me. As Mr. Healy is light with blue eyes, it is rather a joke. Helen and my Dan have hair and eyes exactly the same, only Dan's is curly.

Mr. Healy and the boys were down to meet us and I know just what an impression we made. The boys were turned

terrible embarrassed and Mr. Healy tried not to stare too hard to embarrass the girls. Alex Jr., the older one, lagged way behind him. When I asked him what he thought, he said, "I didn't expect them to have nice clothes on, or be so nice looking." Dan asked me the next day if I found them in rags. On the idea of poor Orphan Annie⁹⁷ I suppose. Mr. Healy was awfully busy at the bank so he could only drive us home and go right back, so you can imagine how pleased I was when a friend of mine dropped in later and told me she met him downtown and asked him if I'd come and he said, "yes, and those are two mighty fine girls at the house, you'd better go up and see them, Mrs. Hake." That tickled me to death because 1st impressions mean so much.

My 1st 2 callers were 2 people that I didn't know very well but who adopted children. They came to tell me how glad they were and they knew I would never regret it, which I thought nice of them. One was a man and in a little while later his wife called up. The other was a lady and she couldn't say enough about how much her little girl meant to her. From then on the telephone has been busy.

Mr. Healy had to go to a political meeting but I was tired and went to bed. In the morning he was telling me about it and I said, "did anyone say anything about the girls and he said, "everyone did". That's the small town of it and I think it's fine. I don't think anything has stirred up a town more than this. People I hardly know tell me how fine they think it is, and I don't doubt that it has made people think and I hope it may make others follow the example.

It was amusing last night. There was a Parent Teachers meeting and as I had had charge of the program I felt I had to go. Mr. Healy had a headache so it was his turn to go to bed and let me go out. When they called the roll of grades, that is when a Grade is called the parents with children in that grade stand and they find out which grade has most interested parents, everyone smiled when I stood for the 1st, 2nd, 5th and 8th grades.

Well to go back. The house was a sight when we came in. I expected it to be bad but it was far worse. Rolls of dust and

dirt everywhere and so untidy. Eileen said at once, "give me a broom and I'll sweep these floors, I love to sweep." So I tied aprons on them and it would've tickled you, as it did me, to see Helen going off at the dining room table, rubbing with all her might to get sticky spots off. We did wonders in an hour. After supper or rather dinner as we have called it at night, Eileen came over and sat beside me and said "I've been watching and I can do everything she, the high school girl helping me out, does and now you won't have to keep a servant anymore. You've got me." It made tears come to my eyes it was so sweet and I thought to myself how that willingness to help might have been abused in some families.

I forgot to tell you in Daniels & Fisher one of the saleswomen came to me and said "those are the sweetest children. I was pinning up a dress for one of them and I hadn't said a word and the oldest one burst out with, "we're from the Cathedral home and we just got adopted this morning. We've got new dollies and new names and everything." And the other little one piped up and said "oh my gracious, I've forgotten my name!" Those girls in D&F couldn't do enough for them.

After supper the 1st night, oh I must tell you right now how my oldest boy insisted on taking them to school the 1st day. He begged so hard I thought it would give him the feeling of responsibility so I let him. He, who up to this time had thought of girls as merely cluttering up an otherwise perfectly good Earth, rushes home from school as fast as he can run. With other boys out playing football on the front lawn he sits inside on the piano stool⁹⁸ with Helen, playing every roll she wants to hear and singing the songs, and he can't sing at all.

Dan is more bashful and it will take more time for him to get used to them. The 1st afternoon we're home, he came in bringing 3 marigolds that had escaped the Frost. He gave me one and said, "you suppose the little girls would like one," and I said, "you might ask them". So he presented them each with a flower.

I notice they both wait to walk to school with them each time, so they are proud of them and I am so glad. They are

THE HEALY HOME



920 Culbertson Avenue: Hollyhocks and sunny yellow paint make Edith and Alec's home still appealing today. Credit: Dave Huber.

good girls and the prospect of becoming appropriately close is also a great asset.

Every night after supper we read to the children, Mr. Healy in his chair with Helen on his lap and me on the couch with the other 3 children, makes a family group I want you to hold in your minds whenever you think of us.

Yours Sincerely,
Edith Sampson Healy

This letter is written in different settings as you will realize as you read it. The proofs of the pictures have come. Helen's are lovely but Eileen's is awful. I'll have to take it because they can't sit over. However, I'll take a Kodak picture and may have better luck. I'm so sorry though about Eileen's.

THE FAMILY IS COMPLETE





Christmas card picture 1924: Alec, Edith, Alec and Dan (in their loathed knickers), Eileen, and Helen. The headless dog to the left may have been the "mean Airedale." Later they had springer spaniels, all named "Angus." Credit: Washakie Museum.