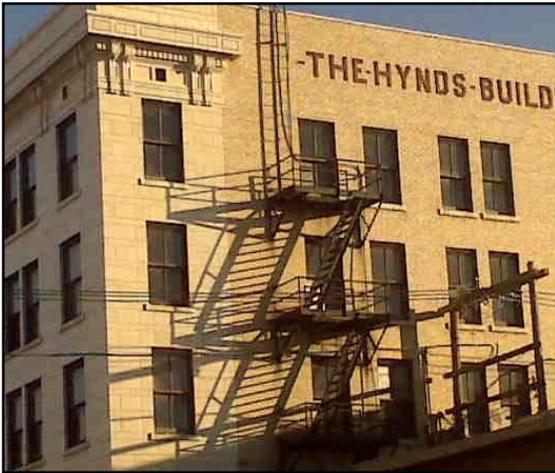


THE HYNDS BUILDING

By Richard T. Ammon



The Inter Ocean Hotel, a signature of the Old West, was heavily damaged by fire in December 1916. The City Commissioners would not allow repairs to the building, but rather told the owner he had to raze what remained of the hotel and rebuild it to modern standards for fire safety. Ed Chase was not willing to do that and the Inter Ocean passed into history.

U.S. Senator Francis E. Warren owned the property where the Inter Ocean had been at the corner of Capitol Avenue and 16th Street. In 1917 he sold it to Cheyenne's first philanthropist, Harry Hynds, for the construction of a five-story office building, the likes of which the city had never seen.

In 1882, Hynds came west from Illinois where he was born, first going to Idaho and then Colorado before finding a home in Cheyenne. A blacksmith by trade with special training, he was very handy with a forge. Hynds worked for Herman Haas who sold Bain wagons, the best for use in Wyoming, it was said. Haas was a perfect employer for Hynds as he was one of the most skilled blacksmiths and wagon-makers in the entire West.

Hynds began driving the Cheyenne to Black Hills stage, taking over the route between the Magic City and Fort Laramie. In order to do emergency work on the trail, he packed blacksmith tools and a bellows in the stage's rear boot. Opening his first business in Cheyenne in 1883, Hynds took over the blacksmith work for the stage line. In 1887, even on its last trip north from Cheyenne, he inspected the stagecoach and pronounced it "fit for any trip."

Three years later he opened the Capitol Saloon on the west side of Ferguson Street (now Carey Avenue) between 16th and 17th streets. Soon after, he also started the Capitol Grille restaurant. Within the next few years, Hynds established across Wyoming and into Utah four saloons and gambling houses, "the straightest in the West", he proclaimed.

During a trip to Utah, Hynds found his wife, Maude, with another man in Salt Lake City. He took matters into his own hands. After being tried for the murder of his wife's paramour, the jury found him not guilty, but he did divorce Maude.

According to Agnes Wright Spring's book, *Cheyenne and Black Hills Stage and Express Routes*, "He fought two professional fights at Rawlins, Wyoming. In the first one, he whipped Jack Lavin, but in the second fight his opponent, John B. Clough, a veteran of the ring, pull the old shoestring trick on young Hynds. When Hynds woke up the next day, he was cured of professional fighting. He had a boxing ring in the rear of the (Cheyenne) saloon with a big sign over it which read, 'Knock Out All Comers in Four Rounds or Give Them \$100'." For many years, Hynds welcomed those Comers.

Hynds became a wealthy man and added to his fortune through oil investments. By 1911 he was a major contributor to the construction of the Plains Hotel, designed to replace the aging Inter Ocean; itself gaining national prominence.

Later in life, Hynds gave much of his fortune to charity. As a gift to the Boy Scouts, he had constructed Hynds Lodge about twenty-five miles west of Cheyenne on Happy Jack Road. Hynds had amassed a fortune of well over a million dollars by the time he died in 1933. He had bought the Converse home at 18th and Warren, where his widow, Nel, lived for decades before moving into the Charles Hirsig house at the corner of 28th and Carey for her final years.

Shortly after the Inter Ocean Hotel had been razed, Hynds contracted architect William R. Dubois to design his state-of-the-art office building in downtown Cheyenne. The following description is taken from the *BEST Properties, Inc.* web site, “Consequently, in his direction to Dubois, Hynds expressed his wish that the new structure ‘be impervious to fire and other perils.’ Dubois’ design exceeded all expectations. The Hynds Building opened to acclaim in 1920 was Cheyenne’s premier office building for the next sixty years.



“The Hynds Building incorporated an enormously advanced design for its time. The structure has no interior or exterior supporting walls. Its mass is carried on a steel ‘T’ beam frame, with poured concrete ceilings and floors. In keeping with Mr. Hynds’ wish that the building be fireproof, no wood was used in its construction. All doors, casings, windows, and frames are metal, as is even the decorative picture rail.

“The exterior is clad in cream-colored terracotta tiles, which have withstood the elements unblemished for nearly 90 years. Architect Dubois incorporated light wells into the floor plan of the building so that no interior office would be without natural light.

“The floors throughout the corridors and ground floor are mosaic tile with a Greek key design border. The corridors also feature green marble base and gray marble wainscoting, whose panels are custom cut to match the grain of the stone when the panels are placed end-to-end. The ground floor transom is set with stained glass. The Hynds Building is as formidable and sturdy today as was the barrel-chested young blacksmith whose name it bears when he first came to Wyoming in 1882 to seek his fortune.” The cornerstone indicates completion in 1922.

Although the main floor of the building has been the home of several banks in the 1950s and 1960s, they eventually moved into their own buildings, leaving one of downtown’s most impressive structures empty for years. There have been irreverent discussions of razing the building, while the future of the Hynds Building remains obscured.

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