

Sheridanites in the Halls of Congress

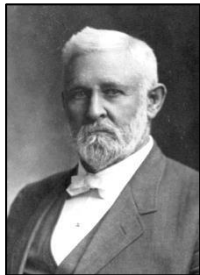
By Trail End State Historic Site Superintendent Cynde Georgen; for *The Sheridan Press*, 2012

Since the 1890s, Sheridan County has maintained a healthy presence in the halls of the United States Congress. Here's a quick look at six men with Sheridan connections who made their mark on the national political stage.



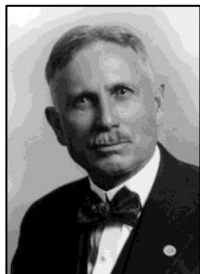
John B. Kendrick in Washington DC, c1931 (Bilyeu Collection, TESHS)

HENRY ASA COFFEEN (1841-1912)



The first county resident to take his seat in the nation's capital was Ohio-born Henry Asa Coffeen, elected as an at-large delegate to the House of Representatives in 1893. Four years earlier, as a Democratic delegate to Wyoming's Constitutional Convention, Coffeen was one of the few to vote against statehood, holding out until women's suffrage was included in the constitution. During his time in Congress, Coffeen's efforts helped place Fort Mackenzie in Sheridan. Following his failure to be elected for a second term, Coffeen returned to Sheridan where he ran a successful grocery business.

JOHN BENJAMIN KENDRICK (1857-1933)



Sheridan County's first U. S. Senator was another Democrat, John Benjamin Kendrick. A native Texan, Kendrick was a cattle rancher before he became interested in politics. After serving half a term as Governor of Wyoming from 1914 to 1916, he was elected to the U. S. Senate. He held the seat until his death in 1933. Like Coffeen, Kendrick cared deeply about land use legislation; he served as chairman of the Senate Committee on Public Lands and Surveys in the 73rd Congress and was instrumental in the passage of several major irrigation bills, including those authorizing Alcova and Hoover dams.

WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON III (1896-1990)



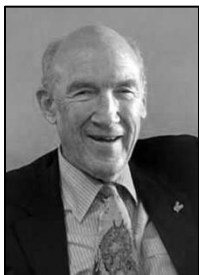
In 1951, Sheridan attorney William Henry Harrison III was elected to the House of Representatives on the Republican ticket. If his name sounds familiar, that's because his great-great-grandfather, also named William Henry Harrison, was elected President of the United States in 1840 and his grandfather, Benjamin Harrison, gained the presidency in 1888. Representative Harrison served two terms in the House in the 1950s (1951-1955) and another two in the 1960s (1961-1965). In addition to law and politics, Harrison owned several ranches.

MALCOLM WALLOP (1933-2011)



Another Sheridan County resident entered the national political scene when Big Horn rancher Malcolm Wallop was elected to the U. S. Senate in 1976 and served for three consecutive terms. Though born in New York, New York, Wallop has strong Sheridan County connections; his grandfather was pioneer Big Horn rancher Oliver Henry Wallop, an English aristocrat who had the distinction of serving in both the Wyoming State Legislature and the British House of Lords.

ALAN KOOI SIMPSON (1931-)



Senator Wallop served for eighteen years alongside fellow Republican Senator Alan Kooi Simpson, who, while not exactly a son of Sheridan County, might be called its grandson instead. Simpson's grandfather was Peter Kooi, founder of the Kooi coal camp and charter member of the Sheridan Rotary Club. In 1929, Kooi's daughter Lorna married Alan's father, Cody, Wyoming, attorney Milward Simpson, who later served as both Governor of Wyoming and United States Senator.

MICHAEL BRADLEY ENZI (1944 -)



Our final legislator with Sheridan County connections is Mike Enzi, currently serving in the in the United States Senate. Although he calls Campbell County home these days (he served as Gillette's mayor from 1975 to 1982), Senator Enzi graduated from Sheridan High School in 1962 before heading off to earn a degree in accounting from George Washington University. Longtime residents of the Sheridan area associate the family name with NZ's Shoes, a Main Street institution for many years.



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