



MSU Extension Service photo

Harriette E. Cushman

Miss Cushman invited all her friends together after she died. She was known for her work with the extension poultry service, the Montana Institute of the Arts, the environment and Native Americans.

600 invited to party a week after the death of hostess

By SUE HOPKINS
Chronicle Staff Writer

Harriette E. Cushman didn't want a funeral or memorial services when she died, but instead wrote a letter inviting more than 600 friends to an informal gathering.

She died last week and the gathering was held Thursday at the Montana State University Student Union Building for about 130 persons.

John Dehaas, one of Miss Cushman's personal representatives, said she planned the event about 10 years ago.

Her invitation said:

"I was raised on Ella Wheeler Wilcox's lines, so many faiths, so many creeds, so many paths that wind and wind, while its just the art of being kind that's all the old world needs."

"I want my ashes to go home to the Lakeview Cemetery in Jamestown, New

"However, that does not quite tie things here in Montana where I have spent over half my life... I want all of you who can to come to the SUB lounge, there under the Blackfoot mural we'll break bread together. Yes, I'm sure that I'll be there. Therefore let's make it a gay affair."

Mrs. DeHaas said Miss Cushman willed her body to the WAMI medical school program for teaching purposes, after which it will be cremated.

Miss Cushman was very interested in Native Americans and several poems written by her about the Indians were read at the gathering.

"One of my proudest moments was when I was christened a Blackfoot," she said in her invitation, which continued:

"Since retirement I have really worked on getting an Indian center started on the

She began working at MSU in 1922 as an extension poultry specialist, which was unusual for a woman, and retired in 1955.

Miss Cushman became involved in the arts by writing, initiated a Friends of the MSU Library, became interested in environmental matters, was a photographer, avid hiker and worked with the seven Montana Indian reservations.

In 1960 she was granted a Fellow Award from the Montana Institute of the Arts, its highest award, and has had an annual art show named after her.

She wrote poetry and short stories. Dr. Merrill Burlingame said she completed a short story which was accepted for publication while she was in the hospital, 10 days before she died.

He said she willed that most of her estate be used for scholarships for Indian students to attend MSU.

Aug. 10, 1978

Obituaries

Harriette Cushman

Harriette E. Cushman, 87, 1222 South Fifth, a pioneer in Extension work and advocate of the arts, died this morning at Bozeman Deaconess Hospital.

She was born in Birmingham, Ala., on Dec. 6, 1890, and grew up in New York. She attended Mt. Holyoke College and later graduated from Cornell University majoring in chemistry and bacteriology in 1914.

She came to Montana as an Extension poultry specialist in 1922 and at the time was the only woman in the nation to hold such a position.

She led in the formation of Montana's cooperative turkey marketing pools, helped upgrade state poultry flocks and improved egg marketing.

She gave special attention to 4-H and women's home demonstration clubs concerning the raising of poultry, and the use of poultry and eggs as food in the home. She received national recognition for service to a number of Extension Service organizations. She was given the honorary degree of Doctor of Agriculture by Montana State University in 1963.

During retirement she was a charter member of the Montana Institute of the Arts in 1948. She was particularly active with the Montana writers, winning many prizes in poetry and short stories. She was made a Fellow of the Institute in 1960, its highest award.

She helped the Friends of the Library movement on a state level, and also locally with support for the Montana State University and the Bozeman libraries.

She was one of the early supporters of the McGill

Museum, has been one of the chief donors to the Museum of the Rockies, and after long service on the board, she was made director emeritus.

One of her chief interests has been in assisting Indian youth. She worked with them in 4-H and museum projects, and has been active in the Indian academic program and Indian Club activities at Montana State University.

She is survived by a sister, Mrs. Viola Webster, Concord, Mass., and three nephews.

Funeral services are pending.

Deceased August 19, 1978
Reception:

Date: Hour: Day: 19 2-4 P.m.
Place: SUB lounge
M.S.U. Campus

Note: If inadvertently I missed a friend, tell them to forgive the omission and come. Especially see that all Extension Service folks past and present, M.A. members and those connected with Museum of the Rockies and Indian friends are notified, that they may share with me.
Harriette E. Cushman