

FISH, RACHEL ANN WRIGHT

February 27, 1903-February 27, 1975

Funeral services, arranged by Schrader's, were held at 11 a.m. Monday, March 3 for Rachel Ann Fish, whose death occurred Thursday when she was enroute by ambulance to a Cheyenne hospital. Burial was in the Wheatland Cemetery. The Rev. Elliott Graves and the Rev. Gordon Trichler conducted the rites at the United Church of Christ. Pallbearers were Kohn Artery, Clark Haeberle, John Suntych, Jack Nixson, Casmer Isabell and Charles Thorne. Beautiful vocal and organ music were provided by Peggy Bifano and Debby Hunkins.

Besides her husband, Howard H. Fish, Rachel leaves three sisters, Mrs. Lucile Beatty of San Jose, Calif., Mrs. Agnes Wright Spring of Willits, Calif., and Mrs. Alice Wallace of Denver, recently of Honolulu. Several close nieces and nephews also survive.

Mrs. Fish came to Wheatland in April, 1928 shortly after her marriage in Fort Collins, Colo., and was a continuous contributor of the finer things of the community and of Wyoming, which she loved. She had a genuine interest in people and a love of children, who were drawn to her and became friends. Rachel worked actively in her many organizations and extended the gracious warm hospitality of her home until shortly before her death, despite failing health. She lived exactly 72 years.

The third of four sisters, Rachel was born in Laramie, near the ranch home of pioneer parents, Gordon L. and Myra M. Wright, who operated at Stage Stop in Centennial valley. Near the banks of the Little Laramie, were the 21-room ranch house, the post office, a blacksmith shop, and the headgate responsible for sending water to the Wheatland irrigation project. The children always regarded their years here as exceptionally exciting ones. The beauty of their surroundings and the experiences of their story-telling parents bore fruit later in the varied writings of their grateful children. This period has been well described by Rachel's sister, Agnes, in a 1974 edition of Persimmon Hill magazine.

The writings of Mrs. Fish include two published novels, *The Newel Post* and *The Running Iron*, the former published simultaneously in the United States, Canada and England. Rachel produced many short stories, some appearing in a select anthology published by Western Writers of America of which she was a member. She wrote a column for *The Wheatland Times* and was the author of numerous warm, pictorial poems, some especially written for friends. Of particular meaning is the poem *Thanksgiving at the Ranch*. Rachel was encouraged in her writing and teaching classes for writers by her husband, Howard, and she actively shared his interest in Wyoming libraries and the arts.

Mrs. Fish was a charter member of Chapter R P.E.O. and was affiliated with the Congregational church of Wheatland. She was past state president of Wyoming Women and Business and Professional Women. She was honorary member of Delta Kappa Gamma. Others recognizing her work and with whom she worked were the Order of the Eastern Star, the Commission on Status of Women, the Wyoming University Extension Advisory Council, the University Alumni Board, and *Who's Who in America*. Mrs. Fish was a continuous member of the Wheatland Study Group, a book review group which she helped organize.

Memorials were established for the Platte County Library, which for many years benefited from the services of Rachel and Howard Fish.