

Elmer Lovejoy, inventor

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Editor's note: This is part of an ongoing series about Laramie and Wyoming history.

Long before Lovejoy's Bar and Grill opened its doors, Elmer Lovejoy was inventing just about everything.

Lovejoy was born on Feb. 2, 1872, in Illinois to George W. Lovejoy and his wife. When he was just 11 years old, Lovejoy came to Laramie, where he stayed until a few years before his death. He developed an interest in mechanics and at just 21 years of age, he opened a general repair shop, Lovejoy Novelty Works, in 1893. The repair shop, located at 412 S. Second, quickly became a necessity for many people.

"Among the most prominent and indispensable business men of the city is Elmer Lovejoy, owner of the novelty works and bicycle hospital on Second Street, who has a reputation all around Laramie for 'mending any old thing,' and the reputation has been well earned," The Dec. 26, 1905, Laramie Republican Illustrated section says. "It is said that whatever Elmer cannot fix should go to the scrap heap, from a \$4,000 automobile to a wash boiler, and when he finishes it there is every indication that it has been well fixed."

Lovejoy's talents were not reserved for Laramie residents. Sometimes he would be woken up in the middle of night with an urgent message from another town requesting his services.

His shop was filled with a variety of heavy machinery driven by a gasoline engine. He also had access to an air compressor to fill up tires in mostly bicycles, but it was also available to fill up the tires in the town's first steam-driven automobile, which he built in 1902.

Just a few years later, he also invented a steering gear for an automobile.

Lovejoy also patented designs for automatic garage door openers.

Aside from a repair shop, his novelty works served as a store with a mishmash of goods from sporting items to phonographs to bicycle supplies. He was also given the pleasure of handling the Edison talking machine.

"Mr. Lovejoy handles the Edison talking machine, and there are frequent concerts of choice selections on that favorite instrument," the article says.

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