

Wyoming State Parks & Cultural Resources

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Honoring Wyoming's 100-year-old farms and ranches

2016 WYOMING CENTENNIAL FARM AND RANCH YEARBOOK



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Front Cover Photo: Mcroft Ranch, Sublette County
Back Cover Photo: The Moore Ranch, Campbell County

ARTS. PARKS. HISTORY.

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Office of the Governor

Dear Centennial Farm and Ranch Families,

Congratulations on being honored in the 2016 Wyoming Centennial Farm & Ranch Yearbook. The yearbook records the history of Wyoming farms and ranches, selected this year, which have been family-owned and operated for 100 years or more. Thank you for keeping our ag industry strong and our ag heritage rich. Your commitment to Wyoming agriculture is significant. The 2016 Wyoming Centennial Farm & Ranch Yearbook recognizes your achievement.

As you well know, the State of Wyoming has deep roots in agriculture. One of the ranches recognized this year dates back to the 19th century. The ranching legacy in my family runs through four generations. Starting with my great grandparents in Teton County, then my grandparents, my mother, and my generation, we have been at it for over 100 years. We are proud of that, as we know you are proud of your family histories. Farmers and ranchers contribute so much – food and other valuable products, wildlife habitat, historic structures, and beautiful landscapes that benefit tourism, natural resource health, and quality of life.

I cannot imagine life in Wyoming without farming and ranching and don't have to. Agriculture will always be integral to our state. It will be part of my life, as it is part of yours. With long-time family operations, the industry remains vibrant and carries western lifestyle and traditions forward into the future.

I close with some comments about the ENDOW (“Economically Needed Diversity Options for Wyoming”) initiative. A Rural Council is part of this initiative. The Rural Council will make sure rural interests have a strong voice in the formulation of the 20-year economic diversification strategy to be finished by August 1, 2018. The ENDOW planning effort is comprehensive and will include opportunities to grow the ag business in our state.

Thank you for your dedication to Wyoming agriculture. Carol and I send our best wishes.

Sincerely,



Matthew H. Mead
Governor

The Annis Ranch, 1916

The Annis Family, Natrona County



Back row: Frank, Fern, Oscar, and Carroll. Front row: parents Amanda and Martin Annis (about 1912).

Story written by Diana Annis Weber and edited by Ben, Marty, Toni, Pansy, and her daughter Ruby.

The Annis Ranch is located in a peaceful valley on the Arkansas Creek just before it merges with the Sweetwater River and Pathfinder Lake. Homesteaded by Oscar Annis in 1916, it has remained in the Annis family for 100 years.

In 1911, at the age of 16, Oscar Annis left his home on a horse farm in Illinois and headed west. He worked his way through the Dakotas and Nebraska helping with broom corn and wheat harvests, learning to run horse drawn threshing machines as well as other jobs. At some point in 1912, he decided he wanted to hunt bear in the Rocky Mountains, so he hopped on a train and rode it to the end of the line which turned out to be Casper, Wyoming. Getting off the train there, he started walking to Casper Mountain. Not realizing how far it was, night caught him at Matt Montgomery's home on Garden Creek. Matt is known in history as the man who was deputized to take Ella Watson and Jim Averill down off the tree on which they were hanged and bury the bodies. While staying there, Matt convinced Oscar that he could not make money hunting bears and hired him to help run freight between Casper and Rawlins and other



Oscar Annis, 1917, WWI Private First Class, American Expeditionary Forces (AEF), 14th Engineers, Campaign #5, 14th grade, railroad in France.

places. Over the next few years, Oscar worked with Matt, as well as cowboying for several ranches, including the Dumbell and Turkey Track, and laying pipeline. He purchased some land in Casper during this time which was later sold.

When Oscar turned 21, in 1916, he and his brother Carroll took out homestead claims next to each other on the Arkansas Creek east of the Ferris Mountains. They built a one room cabin which is



1955/1956, Annis Ranch School house, in the door way: Linda Joy Annis; back row: school teacher Mrs. Bertha Ames, Pansy Fern, Dell Mark, Frank David, Benjamin Edward, Richard Trueman Annis; front row: Arnie Pearl, Mellissa Anne, Lucinda Mae Annis.

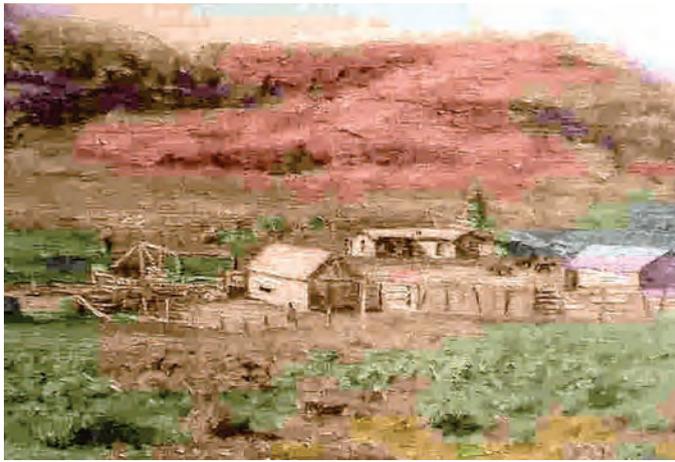
still part of the main ranch house today. In 1917, they were drafted into the Armed Forces. Oscar spent time in France during the end of World War I in the American Expeditionary Forces as an engineer. After his honorable discharge Oscar proved up on his claim. He purchased his brand, the 3H, from the three Holmes brothers as well as their cattle. Sometime in these years, his parents, Martin and Amanda Annis and his brother Frank came to the area with their Axtell trotting horses and took out homestead claims as well. After proving up on their claims, the others all sold out to Oscar. Carroll and his wife Ruth (Holmes) moved to California and Martin and Frank went back to Illinois after finding Wyoming unsuitable for their horses. Trotters were not good stock horses and the neighbors did not appreciate them possibly crossing with theirs. Someone even went so far as to run the prize brood mares through five fences. Many of them had to be put down.

During the next ten years Oscar worked for various ranches, built cabins, and did a number of jobs with a team and a Fresno (similar to a loader) at Station Eight, the Casper refinery, and a dike at Pathfinder dam. He also built a barn and garage at his ranch. Through the years he purchased two more homesteads from the Flanders and Bob and Reggie

Kline, who wanted to move on, as well as a farm near Alcova as a place to raise alfalfa for his herd. Frank's log homestead cabin was taken apart and moved to the farm in the late 1950s.

Oscar was very proud of his herd of Hereford cattle. He searched far and wide to find good bulls. For many years he raised horned Herefords and then later started adding more polled stock. Few things would upset him more than to find a fence-jumping Angus bull from a neighbor's pasture in with his cows! Oscar was also one of the first ranchers in Wyoming to get involved in the brucellosis program. He started vaccinating for it early on and promoted it to other ranchers.

In 1929, Oscar met Esther Anderson (the Anderson family ranches near Cheyenne and raised the first registered horned Hereford cattle in Wyoming). He added a kitchen with a well under it and a hand pump as well as a bedroom onto his cabin and in 1931 he and Esther were married. Oscar was 35 years old at this time. They had two boys, George in 1932 and Harvey in 1935. At some point they each took out a desert claim and raised millet to prove up on them. In 1937, Carroll and Ruth were killed near Chugwater in a car accident leaving two young daughters. Oscar and Esther took the girls in



Oil painting of the Oscar Annis Ranch headquarters done in 1935 by W. H. Tonne.



Oscar Annis Ranch headquarters around 1980.

but a short time later Esther died of a combination of whooping cough, strep throat, and cerebral meningitis. Oscar sent the girls to live with relatives of Ruth. The boys stayed with the closest neighbors, the Flanders, who lived about one and a half miles away, as well as other neighbors.

In 1939 he hired an 18 year old girl, Pauline Cain, from Casper to watch the boys and they were married in 1940. Oscar was 44 years old and Pauline was 19 at this time. From this union twelve more children were born. Richard Trueman in 1940, Pansy Fern in 1942, Benjamin Edward in 1943, Frank David in 1945, Dell Mark in 1946, Lucinda Mae in 1947, Arnie Pearl in 1949 (just after the big blizzard), Mellissa Anne in 1950, Linda Joy in 1952, Diana Annis-Bell in 1954, Rose Irene in 1957, and Limon Ethan Allen in 1959, making a total of seven sons and seven daughters. Limon, the seventh son, was born in the log cabin at the ranch on the Fourth of July.

In 1950 a two-room bunkhouse was added beside the three-room cabin. Most of the older kids moved into the bunkhouse and were pretty much on their own as long as the noise did not disturb Oscar in the house. When that happened, he would show up at the bunkhouse door with his razor strap. Just seeing the strap would quiet things down really fast!

Since the ranch is so isolated, a one-room cabin was

built in 1939 for a schoolhouse. Oscar and Pauline would put ads in newspapers and travel to interview teachers. For the first few years the teacher would live in the schoolroom and take meals with the family. Later, Carroll's house was moved closer to the schoolhouse as a home for the teacher. This cabin school was used until 1961. At that time a mobile home was brought in complete with electricity, running water, and bathroom. The living room was used as the classroom and the teacher lived in the rest of it. The school was open until 1973 when Limon graduated from eighth grade. The teachers were all women and most were elderly (some were over 70). Oh, the pranks that got pulled on these poor unsuspecting ladies! All seven girls and the two youngest boys went on to Casper for high school.

Even though the school district brought in electricity to the school in 1961, Oscar refused to run the line on over to the ranch house until 1969. Pauline had finally had enough of the pioneer life and demanded some improvements be made. A crew was hired to build a concrete block garage close to the house and the family lived in it while the house was raised on jacks and a concrete floor was poured under it. Until this time it had a board floor that was so worn the kids could no longer play marbles on it because the marbles would fall between the cracks and be lost in the dirt. The wind would blow up through the floor in the winter and it

was basically impossible to keep warm. One winter, a skunk dug under the house and decided to take up residence there. Unbeknownst to the rest of the family, David set a trap in the skunk's entryway and that night as we were eating supper, we were assaulted by an aroma that totally ruined our meal. Since it was a very cold winter we all got to live in that unpleasant environment for a long time. An addition was also added between the house and bunkhouse complete with a bathroom and an area for a washing machine and dryer. No more "bath with a path" and "running water if you ran and got it" (the kitchen well had gone alkali a number of years before this).

In 1976 Oscar passed away at the age of 81, leaving the ranch in a family trust. All seven of his sons were pallbearers at his funeral. Richard had taken over most of the ranch operation before this time and continued to manage the ranch until health issues caused him to need more help. Ben's son Martin came to help out, then in 1997 Martin leased the ranch from the trust. After the death of Pauline and Richard in 2003, Ben sold his farm near Kaycee and bought the ranch from the trust. Martin and wife Toni manage the ranch today with the help of their three boys: Mark, Richard and Joseph. They live in the original ranch house while Ben and wife Donna live in a newer house built into the hillside of the valley.

At its best time the ranch ran around 250 head of cows and had 4,680 acres of deeded land and 13,000 acres of BLM lease. Today it has 4,210 acres deeded, 13,000 acres leased, and runs 250 head of livestock.

All of the second generation Annis' are alive today except Richard who passed away in 2003 and Frank David in 2011. Oscar now has 33 grandchildren, 58 great-grandchildren, and 4 great-great-grandchildren. A family cemetery has been created on an acre of the property which used to be Frank's homestead. Family graves which were in Casper have been moved to the ranch. The original log schoolhouse is now a family museum.



Carroll & Oscar Annis, 1914.

The family continues the tradition of meeting at the ranch on Thanksgiving each year. The gathering includes four generations and often has as many as 75 people stuffed into the house. In June of 2016 the ranch hosted a centennial celebration with over 135 relatives in attendance including members of Carroll, Frank, and sister Fern's families.



Gov. Matthew H. Mead, Annis Family, Rep. Cynthia Lummis, Sen. Mike Enzi.

The Birch Ranch, 1907

The Birch Family, Niobrara County



The lilac that's been growing here for over 100 years.

Written by Dave Birch.

My mother's father Leonard Heine was born in Germany and at age one came to the United States with his parents and settled at Fremont, Nebraska. On October 30, 1907, he homesteaded south of Jireh, Wyoming near Keeline. He married Pearl Whitehill and their first daughter Genevieve was born at Fremont. When my grandmother moved to Wyoming she brought out a white lilac and it's still growing in our yard. Their other five children were born at Jireh: Richard, George, Margaret, Mary, and Elbert. They walked 2.5 miles to the grade school at Jireh and later went to high school at Manville.

My mother Mary met my dad Clyde Birch while he was working for the Union Pacific Railroad. They were married in Evanston, Wyoming and my oldest sister Florence was born there in 1946. My dad became a signal foreman on the railroad causing my folks to move a lot and my sister Lois was born in Grand Island, Nebraska in 1950. They were back to Evanston in 1954 when I was born.

It was expected that Elbert would take over the Heine homestead that had got a little larger but he wanted a larger ranch and it was unlikely more land could be added so he moved to a ranch northwest of Manville. Then my parents were given the chance to buy my grandparents place. My dad has been raised on a small farm and missed it. He hated moving

so much and often away from his family while working on the railroad. So on November 1, 1955 we moved here and I've lived here ever since.

In 1958 they lost a baby girl Rhea. They started with 7 or 8 milk cows and milked cows by hand till around 1969. They went to mostly Shorthorns and Galloways and we have stayed mostly with Galloways as they seem to fit our area best.

They also got sheep shortly after moving here and the sheep have been very important in keeping the ranch in the family all these years.

My sisters and I went to grade school in Manville and high school in Lusk. Florence graduated in 1964, later met and married Dennis Neese, and has lived in the Phoenix, Arizona area. Lois graduated in 1969, married twice but had health problems much of her life and died in 1990. I graduated in 1973, stayed here helping my folks and working part time for other ranchers. In 1973 our family got one of two mail routes running out of Keeline then in 1979 both routes were combined and in 1992 the Keeline Post Office was closed and since then we have driven the route out of Manville. In 2014 a unit box was put in at Lost Springs and that was added to the route.

In 1975 the nursing home that my grandmother Pearl Heine at Torrington was closed so she was

moved back here where she lived the next five years till she died. On December 2, 1976 my dad Clyde died. My mother and I continued to run the ranch and mail route. In 1982 Dianne Irwin from Douglas and I got married. My mother moved to Lusk and worked in the nursing home. She would sometimes drive the mail route for us and stayed interested in the ranch. She died in 2001.

Our daughter Angie was born February 14, 1985. She married Jacob Gardner in 2015 and they live in Guernsey, Wyoming. Our son Trevor was born November 21, 1986. He joined the National Guard when he got out of high school. He now works in Lusk while living at the ranch.

Dianne has driven the mail route most of the time since we got married and often in the winter we both go on the route as it's common for the roads to be bad. We usually start lambing at the end of February and shed lamb through March and sell lambs around August 1st. Because of coyotes, we only run sheep on half the place.

We calve in April and May and sell calves around the first part of October. Over the years we have added some land to what my grandparents had but have stayed fairly small. My dad did some dry land farming but we found it better to seed the field back to grass as the soil blew real bad. Most years we have to buy hay. We get by with old worn out machinery.

Ever since I was a little kid auctions have been important to my family, getting much of what we use at them and a lot of entertainment to us. A very special part of our lives has been our yearly camping trips usually in August to Little Granite south of Jackson. Some relatives started going there in the 1940s and my dad and I started going in 1966. Dianne and I have gone there nearly every year since we got married. Both Angie and Trevor enjoy going there. Sometimes a cousin will meet us there. It's a special week to get away from work and driving. Rest and relax. Our three dogs, two Corgis and a Sheltie, enjoy it too. It is hard to get away and worry about things going wrong at home, but it is worth getting away.



Gov. Matthew H. Mead, Birch Family, Rep. Cynthia Lummis, Sen. Mike Enzi.

Eastfork Livestock, Inc., 1908

The Joel Bousman Family, Sublette County



Knute Jomen.



Edith King Jomen.

Written by Joel and Susan Bousman, 2016

This is the history of our ranch as the best that we know it from information gathered from our family collection of old papers. Although our history may not be the traditional straight-line for residence, we know that some of the land on our ranch has been in family ownership continuously from 1908 to the present. Our Wyoming Centennial Ranch is located at what is now Boulder in today's Sublette County.

Our recorded one-hundred-year story begins with Joel Bousman's grandfather, Knute J. Jomen, an immigrant from Norway. In 1908, Knute, with a partner, purchased a 160-acre homestead from Fred B. Morris on Pocket Creek, a tributary of the East Fork River. The following year, Knute bought out his partner and also acquired Eli Morris' 160-acre homestead, a brother of Fred. Eli's property was the headquarters for the family ranch in the early years.

Knute Jomen was born in 1877 and came to the United States in 1893. We do not know of Knute's early travels but old papers show he was part owner in mines of the South Pass area and he owned a town lot in Lander, Wyoming. As far as the ranching business, Knute and a partner owned the "three

links" brand beginning in 1901 and sold livestock with that brand registered for this area. We conclude that Knute Jomen was actually in the ranching business as early as 1901.

Joel's grandfather Knute's own 320-acre homestead was on the south side of the East Fork River and he acquired this patent in 1905. In 1909 he purchased another 320 adjoining acres from his next door neighbor, William E. White, including his cattle and horses. For numerous years this section of land has not belonged to our family but is a part of our neighbor's ranch.

One reason Knute located in the East Fork River area was that his sister and brother-in-law already lived here. Hans J. Olson, also a Norwegian immigrant, procured the first water right on the river in 1889, a territorial right. This water is for irrigating his homestead land situated on the north side of East Fork River.

Hans Olson and his wife Bertha J. Olson (Knute's sister) lived on Hans' homestead-what we call our South Field-in the last decade of the 1800s. Bertha obtained an adjoining 40 acres through the Homestead Act, and here they built a new house and raised their family of eight children who were



House at Upper Place.



Haying.



House at Olson Place.



Haying: Knute and daughter, Margaret Jomen.



Margaret and Thomas Jomen.



“Widow” Edith, Margaret, and Tom.

first cousins to Joel’s mother. The Olsons managed the Olson post office for a few years. Hans was involved in logging and a sawmill, as was Knute Jomen. The Olsons owned a store and sold lumber and the Olson School stood nearby.

In 1913, Knute purchased the Olson Place when the Olson family moved on. At that time, the address for people living in this community was Olson, Wyoming, a part of Fremont County. This Olson property then became the ranch headquarters-as it is today-and the land on Pocket Creek from then unto now is called the Upper Place.

Through these early years, Knute secured more land next to the Upper Place from the U. S. government; Knute purchased a homestead from William E. Church and since then we call it the Church Place; and Knute received the grazing rights on a school



Gladwon Jensen.

section. Also, parts of his business were the rights to graze on both a Forest Service allotment and a Bureau of Land Management allotment.

It is confusing sometimes understanding that Knute Jomen is Joel’s grandfather and not great grandfather. Knute was 41 years old when he married Joel’s grandmother, Edith N. King, age 21. They were married in 1918 and lived in the house on the Olson Place. This was the start of Edith’s 53 years of life and work on our ranch.

Thomas P. King, who is Joel’s great-grandfather, was a member of the King family who had emigrated from England to Canada to work with the railroad. They then moved to Albany County, again with the railroad, and there they also proved-up on homesteads for ranching. Thomas P. King and his wife, Josephine Fitzgerald, were living in Evanston when Edith was born. This family, including six children, returned to Laramie and then with Thomas’ brother, Richard King and his two children, they moved to the East Fork area. In 1906, they traveled from Laramie in three wagons, along with their cattle and horses, and started a ranch a few miles down the East Fork River from the Olson Place. No one in our family owns any of the King property today but this facilitates the fact that Joel Bousman’s grandchildren are the sixth generation living in this East Fork Community.

Two children were born to Knute and Edith: Margaret, Joel’s mother, and a son Thomas. Knute and Edith attempted to obtain the Pocket Creek grazing homestead under Edith’s name but because of Knute’s poor health, the homestead

was not completed. Also, in their effort to stay in business, half of the ranch, the Olson Place, was sold to Henry Hittle in 1928. In our family's old paper collection is a letter that talks about Knute's illnesses. Knute Jomen died of pneumonia in the winter of 1930 leaving Edith with the ranch and two small children.

The ranch was named the Jomen Livestock Company, owned jointly by Edith and Margaret, age five, and Tom, age three. Edith was the manager-doing a lot of the work herself-riding and moving livestock, building fence, irrigating and putting up the hay. She hired an older couple to tend to the house and children.

Gladwon Jensen, a member of the neighboring Jensen families, was working part time for Knute when Knute died. Gladwon and Edith were married in the fall of 1931. Gladwon was twelve years younger than Edith, but these differences of age were not unheard of on isolated ranches. Even though Gladwon and Edith were husband and wife, Gladwon was only employed by Jomen Livestock Company. It had to remain this way until Tom turned 21 years old, in 1947.

In 1938, Gladwon obtained the patent to his homestead, the Pocket Creek grazing homestead. Also, they were able to buy back the Olson place from Hittle. Through those ten years, they owned only the Upper Place. The Olson Place again became the ranch headquarters as it is today. Gladwon was also able to gain many units of grazing rights on Select School State of Wyoming land.

By 1948, Margaret is married to Floyd Bousman, and Uncle Tom is 21 years old. The ranch then becomes a three-way partnership called East Fork Livestock Company; the partners being Gladwon, Edith, and Tom. The three ran the ranch together until Gladwon and Edith's divorce in 1965. Gladwon left the ranch and its name becomes Jensen and Jomen, operated by Edith and Uncle Tom.

Joel's father, Floyd Bousman, was born in Springfield, Missouri in 1919. At a young age,



Margaret Jomen.

he traveled west engaging in many extraordinary adventures. At about 20 years old, Floyd was employed with a man who operated a guest ranch, located on the south end of the Wind River Mountains near Big Sandy. After ending his employment, and while traveling through the mountains, Floyd met Gladwon Jensen at the Silver Creek Cow Camp. Gladwon hired Floyd as a hay-hand and this is how and when Floyd met Joel's mother Margaret (Marg).

One week before the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Floyd enlisted in the Army Air Corps. Marg traveled



Uncle Tom Jomen.



Floyd Bousman with Joel Bousman.



Joel Bousman.



Left to right: Edith Jensen, 'cousin', Floyd Bousman with Brad, Margaret Bousman, Tom Jomen

to Louisiana where she and Floyd were married. While they were stationed in Los Angeles, CA, their son Bradford was born. When Floyd was deployed overseas, Marg and baby Brad came home to the ranch until the War's end. Floyd returned to Boulder and he and Marg purchased the Boulder Lake guest ranch. Joel was born in 1948 in Rock Springs. His first winter was spent snowed in with his family at the Boulder Lake ranch. Later, they acquired another ranch near the town of Boulder, the Roop Place, where they raised cattle. Joel's sister, Edith Susan, was born in 1952. When their cattle business became viable, they sold the guest ranch. Brad, Joel, and Susie were particularly active in the ranch operations. They attended the Boulder grade school and graduated from Pinedale High School.

Some of Joel's fondest memories are the days he spent working at his Grandma's place along with his Uncle Tom and Gladwon. Joel continued his education at the University of Wyoming, graduating in Agriculture Economics. He met Susan G. Griffin while in college and they were married in 1969. Susan grew up on her family's ranch south of Riverton where she also played an active part in ranch operations.

Uncle Tom Jomen, like his father, suffered from poor health. In 1969, when Tom and his mother Edith could no longer operate the Jensen and Jomen ranch, they sold the land and cattle to Floyd and Margaret Bousman and what is now our ranch became a part of the Bousman ranch management. We (Joel with Susan) worked for Floyd and Marg in between semesters at college and Joel's enlistment in the Army Air Defense. When we were home on the ranch, we lived at the Olson Place. In 1972, Joel and his parents formed Bousman Livestock, Inc. Tom Jomen died in 1972 and Edith passed away in 1980.

In 1978, Bousman Livestock, Inc. was again separated, and Joel and Susan Bousman became the owners of the new corporation called Eastfork Livestock, Inc., with its headquarters still at the Olson Place. Margaret Bousman passed away in 1988 and Joel's father Floyd in 2005. Today, the Brad and Sandy Bousman family, as well as Susie and her husband John Blaha and their family, all

own and operate their separate parts of Bousman Livestock, Inc.

In 1980, we moved into our new house built next to Bertha Olson's homestead house, in which we resided our first ten years. We were able to double the size of our business in 1988 with the purchase of the half of the Tibbals Ranch, which borders the Olson Place. The Tibbals family had interest in the mines of South Pass and commerce in South Pass City and the Tibbals Ranch was financed from these connections. Along with the private land, our purchase included the rights to graze two more School Sections and a large BLM allotment.

We are parents to four children: Tomi Sue, Julie Jo, James (Jim), and Cotton. Tomi Sue and Julie together own land on the East Fork River. They call their company JT Ranch, Inc. and Eastfork Livestock, Inc. leases their ranch. Tomi Sue and her husband, O.R. Wille, live in Baggs. They have three near-adult children. Julie and her husband, Bill Quick, reside in Denton, Maryland and their four children live with us part of each summer to experience ranch life. Both of our sons, Jim and Cotton, own stock in Eastfork Livestock, Inc. as well as being employees.

Jim met Kristy Cornelison while attending the University of Wyoming. Kristy grew up on her family ranch south of Evanston and they were married in 1996. They lived several years in the Tibbals house. Cotton met Kari Fink while attending the University of Wyoming. Kari grew up in Lovell and they were married in 2003. The ranch purchased a modular home and moved it onto ranch headquarters for them to live.

With three families now working on the ranch, we expanded with two more BLM allotments plus we lease neighboring ranches and land. There are many everyday challenges for our business such as the high altitude, short growing season and long winters; the regulations we must meet on the federal lands that we use for grazing; and lately, the large predators, the wolves and even grizzly bear. Because of the instability of our federal grazing leases, we made the decision in 2014 to purchase a three-pivot hay ranch in Fremont County, north of



Joel and Susan Bousman.



Our present house at Olson.



Joel and sons; Cotton and Jim.

Riverton, as a part of Eastfork Livestock, Inc. under the name of Eastfork Farms, LLC.

Jim and Kristy, along with their two children, Sarah (a student at the University of Wyoming) and Dennis (a high schooler at Wind River in Pavilion) now operate the Eastfork Farm. They constructed a feedlot for our Eastfork calves and they grow excellent quality alfalfa hay to feed them. They drive here to help with the work especially with moving our cow herd.

Cotton manages most of the Eastfork Livestock operations with help from Kari. Their daughters, Jaylee and Miranda (11 and 9 years old), have become knowledgeable cowgirls and fine riders. Their youngest daughter, Virginia, and their little son, Neil, are both very anxious to be part of it all. Joel remains the financial boss and we both continue to work when we can.

The guiding light for those of us who operate this ranch today is Edith King Jomen Jensen, Joel's grandmother. Her perseverance and hard work, even in difficult times, are the incentives for us to continue to manage and hopefully achieve. One lesson she instilled in us was we must have good neighbors to help us along, but first we must be good neighbors. We often think of her and hope she is proud of us and proud of this Wyoming Centennial Ranch acknowledgement.



Left to right: Dennis, Kristy, Jim, and Sarah Bousman.



Left to right: Tomi Sue Wille, Jim Bousman, Cotton Bousman, Julie Jo Quick.



Left to right: Kari, Jaylee, Virginia, Cotton, Neil, Miranda Bousman.



Gov. Matthew H. Mead, Bousman Family, Rep. Cynthia Lummis, Sen. Mike Enzi.

Briggs Ranch, LLC, 1916

Floyd & Kathryn Briggs, Sublette County



Briggs Ranch, 2010.

The Briggs Ranch sits approximately six miles northwest of Pinedale at 523 Ehman Lane in Sublette County. The 800-acre ranch is a combination of flood irrigated hay meadows, rangeland, and a gravel rise which provided building sites for the house, out buildings, and corral. To the south of the buildings on the rise is about eighty acres of border dikes which were plowed in the early years to plant grains and, later on, alfalfa/grass mix. It is one of the few ranches in the area that have tried alfalfa due to the elevation and short growing season.

The main ranch house is a log cabin brought down from Rock Creek in the Kendall Valley area by Carl B. Ehman, which has been added to over the years. In August 1916, Nels Jorgensen purchased the Ehman Ranch which he combined with other land purchases to create the ranch we see today. The old homestead cabin of George Jorgensen (1923) was skidded up to its current location south of the ranch house. It was used as a bunk house for seasonal workers and converted to a shop in the 1960s when a new bunkhouse was built.

Nels Jorgensen and one brother came to Nebraska in 1885 and worked for two years on a railroad grading crew saving money to bring two more brothers over from Denmark. Eventually, these

four young men brought over the rest of their close family including parents, another brother, and three sisters. This extended family stayed in the Dannebrog, Nebraska area.

Nels moved to Green River, Wyoming in 1888 then on to Seattle looking for work after the Union Pacific Railroad went on strike. He found work as an ordinary seaman on a merchant marine freighter and was introduced to his future wife Karen, a dressmaker. After sailing for six years, he had moved up to first mate, but he missed the open plains and grasslands so Nels moved back and found work in Green River. Then, missing the girl he had met, Nels sent for Karen Lauritsen and in October 1894 they were married. Nels grew tired of the railroad and started acquiring milk cows by buying yearlings from neighboring communities to operate a future dairy. Several of his coworkers were also growing weary of the railroad and stories of a beautiful green valley 100 miles to the north became the stuff dreams are made of. Five men decided to invest in a 640-acre ranch on the East Fork of the New Fork River in 1897. Nels was chosen to work the investment for the gang since he was the only one with cows. So, Nels and Karen moved north with one young son, leaving behind their first-born girl who died in 1895 and was buried in Green River.

He worked this ranch until 1899 when he sold his interests to G. Hittle and used his proceeds to purchase a 605-acre ranch on Willow Creek, west of Pinedale. Here he stayed and raised a family of three boys and two girls: George A. (1897), James C. (1900), Carl T.L. (1902), Carrie J. (1906), and Laurita N. (1909). They also buried a baby boy Hans born in 1908. Today, this ranch is the Murdock Cattle Company.

Nels supplemented the ranch income from 1900 to 1911 by freighting supplies from railheads in Green River and Opal with 10-12 horses pulling 2-3



Top: Main Ranch cabin with first floor addition and attic, prior to 1932. Bottom: Main ranch house, 1970. Upper dormers added.

wagons in tandem, bringing much needed supplies and lumber to John Vible's store by the East Fork River in Boulder, Wyoming. Nels owned more than a hundred draft horses that he used for work on the ranches, from haying in the summer to feeding in the winter. In 1916, Nels supplied teams of horses for the chuck wagon for the newly formed Upper Green River Valley Cattleman's Association of which he was a charter member. Records from this first year show Nels' cattle herd totaling 384 head going to summer pasture and these numbers grew to 891 head by 1938.

Throughout these years, Nels' adult children, when not needed on the ranch, worked contract labor jobs and as range riders. Nels had his boys move into the ranch houses on his land, and in this way, James received the Ehman Place to run in 1931 and by



Dorthean, Janice, Kathryn, and James Jorgensen

1938 had 125 head of cattle of his own. The boys, George, Carl, and James, helped each other on all the places, moving equipment, horses, and hired help ranch to ranch as the seasons progressed.

When it came time to ship the cattle, the ranchers in those days would have to drive the cattle to the railhead in Rock Springs and ride the train to Omaha with the cattle to sell them to the buyers there. Sometime before 1930, when James had finished taking the cattle to market, he was introduced to a city girl by his cousin Ella. A courtship ensued and Dorthean W. Wilson, a bookkeeper by trade, married James in September of 1930 in Omaha, Nebraska. Travel for the couple was slow, and past Rock Springs the sage brush rolling plains were quite bleak, but good natured James promised Dorthean the view was worth it, just a few more miles. When the valley finally opened up to the New Fork River Drainage, with the Wind River Mountains to the east, the Wyoming Range to the west, and the Gros Ventre Mountains to the north, Dorthean fell in love.



New barn designed by Floyd, built in 1958.



Portraits of Nels Jorgensen and Karen M. Lauritsen.



George, Carl, and James Jorgensen 1903.

James and wife Dorthean Jorgensen had two girls: Kathryn J. (1932) and Janice J. (1937). In 1948, James continued in his father's footsteps and purchased the Dick Lumen Ranch, northwest of the current Briggs Ranch on Highway 352, from Frank Gosar who won it in a card game, so the story goes. They moved their family to the new ranch in 1949 which had better road access in the winter. Kathryn was in high school and she and a friend met the two new boys from Council Bluffs, Iowa in town during the winter of 1949. Floyd L. Briggs, Jr. and a friend had come to the Pinedale area one day after graduating from high school in Council Bluffs, Iowa to work for John Bloom during hay season. The boys liked the area (and the girls) so they stayed, getting other jobs and finally marrying and raising families in Pinedale. Floyd worked for the Bureau of Reclamation until January 1950 and moonlighted running the projector at the local Skyline Theatre. While dating Kathryn, the leftovers in the refrigerator seemed to always disappear when Kathryn brought Floyd home, so James and Dorthean decided to hire Floyd for the calving season in the spring of 1950, since they were already feeding him.

Floyd was drafted into the Marine Corps in 1951 and before going to Korea, Kathryn and Floyd were engaged. Kathryn went to University of Wyoming but her heart wasn't into it. She and Floyd were married on April 5th, 1953 on a snowy Easter Day. They moved to California for 5 months where Floyd completed his tour of duty. They returned to the ranch, and worked for James and Dorthean for the next 9 years, raising four girls: Gayle M. (1953), Janet K. (1955), Linda A. (1958), and Susan E. (1962). In the 1960s, Dorthean and James decided to sell the ranch and offered it to both daughters and sons-in-laws. The ranch was divided in two, with Floyd and Kathryn buying into the Ehman Place. Dorthean held the note for the ranch loan, and every fall once the calves were sold, Floyd and Kathryn would make a payment to Dorthean, smaller in the lean years and bigger in fat years, depending on the cattle market. For additional income Floyd milked six cows and bought up bums which they fed with skim milk, shipping the cream for added income. With bank loans for equipment, and payment schedules at Montgomery Ward, the couple slowly



Winter feeding.



Floyd and Kathryn Briggs.



Branding.

paid off debts and became the sole owners of the Ehman place in 1985.

Currently, Nels' grand-daughter Kathryn and husband Floyd are still the owners of the Ehman place, renamed Briggs Ranch, LLC in 2006. They have leased the ranch to another long time ranching family, Gene and Betty Lou Pearson and son, Gene Paul and Jaimie. The Pearsons also leased cattle from the Briggs' ranch and Susan's cattle as well carrying the original NJ brand of her great-grandfather. Nels' four great grand-daughters live near and far. Gayle and her husband Leonard Powers have moved back and are staying on the ranch for the winter of 2016. They have a son Chris and a daughter Natalie. Janet is a nurse, and lives with her husband Jeff Goulette on a former piece of the ranch just off the Cora Highway. They have three sons, Dave, Brian, Preston, and a daughter

Bonnie. Linda Wolcott works at a green house/nursery and visits from her Casper ranch whenever she can. She has two daughters, Kimberley and Brianna. Susan lives across the road from Kathryn and Floyd with her husband Sid Stanfill, on 40 acres which produces grass hay for area horse owners.



Gov. Matthew H. Mead, Briggs Family, Rep. Cynthia Lummis, Sen. Mike Enzi.

Clausen Ranches, Inc., 1910

The Clausen Family, Converse County



Gov. Matthew H. Mead, Clausen Family, Rep. Cynthia Lummis, Sen. Mike Enzi.

Fred Isaac was born in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada on January 1, 1881. His mother was French Canadian and his father was English and Jewish. They had traveled to England for a time and when they returned to North America lived in Chicago where his father, John, worked in a meat market. They later bought a farm near Brush, Colorado. Soon they gave this up and moved to La Junta, Colorado. Fred came north with a trail herd to Montana when he was about 16 years old.

One of the stories is that he broke his leg the first autumn he was in Douglas, Wyoming and decided to stay on. He was a top horse hand and roper and worked at several ranches around Glendo and

Wheatland. He worked for Tom Bruner on upper LaBonte Creek. Mrs. Martha Bruner was a midwife and he often drove the wagon when she needed to travel to attend a birth.

Mrs. Bruner had a young niece named Helen Susan Woodruff. Helen was born in Dennison, Iowa on April 9, 1879. Shortly after her mother died in 1900 she came to Wyoming and spent some time with the Bruners. She had traveled extensively and had helped her brother prove up on a homestead in the Green River, Utah area. She was a spirited and capable young woman who played the piano beautifully. She was cultured and pretty and caught the eye of many of the local young men. A devoted

Christian, she was very careful with her attentions, always proper and correct and careful of the company she kept.

The exact story of their meeting has been lost, but meet they did and were married on Thanksgiving Day in 1908 at a ranch on LaBonte Creek, then owned by Tom Bruner and leased by Fred Isaac. The place was known as the Eggleston Ranch in recent years.

Fred, like many of the men of his time, longed to own land. They spent their first years of married life living at the Bruner ranch. In 1910 they proved up on a homestead on Sand Creek. They rode horses back and forth about ten miles each way. This homestead is now part of the Clausen Ranch's summer pasture, which is made up of several sections of land bought from surrounding homesteaders down through the years.

In 1912 Fred and Helen traded her farm near Dow City, Iowa to Lewis Darale for the original Kern ranch on LaBonte Creek. They had a new home built in a beautiful spot on the west side of LaBonte Creek and moved into it, but after having several wells drilled and finding no good water they moved back to the east side of the creek into the original house built in about 1890 by John Kern.

Fred and Helen had given up on their dream of having children to carry on their work and fill their home. Helen was forty years old and had been ill all summer and fall. Doctors in Douglas really couldn't tell what was the matter with her, but a tumor was suspected. She put her affairs in order and after the fall work was done, moved to town and prepared for surgery to remove the tumor. Dorothy loved to say, "And the tumor was me!"

Born February 1, 1920, Dorothy Helen Isaac was a treasured child. Her aging parents doted on this beautiful little girl and committed to raise her as a cultured and well-mannered Christian young woman. Fred and Helen miraculously had another child the next year, a little boy named John. Their mother taught them at home until a school building was built on their ranch in 1929.

In August of 1935 Fred and Helen saved enough money to send Dorothy to church camp. Dorothy was 15 years old and this was her first trip away from home. She was driven to the camp in a neighbor's car. Before the week of camp was over the neighbor reappeared to tell her Fred had died unexpectedly on August 6, 1935.

A neighbor of his said: "I never knew a more honest man than Fred Isaac nor a better neighbor. He was a good husband and father, and in his passing Converse County has lost a splendid citizen."

The rules of the time for proper deportment for young ladies were very specific and set, especially with parents trained in another century. Dorothy was an excellent stock tender but had never been exposed to any mention of the breeding or birthing process. After her father's death, however, she was responsible for the herd and for breeding and calving the cows. Helen was fifty-five years old by this time and in poor health. The Great Depression was officially over, but its financial devastation and the drought of the previous years had left Fred Isaac's ranch in debt.

Helen, Dorothy, and John worked to pay off the feed bills and to survive. They were able to make expenses the first year by selling off the cows and living carefully, very carefully. Dorothy and John drove to town for high school. They were able to lease the ranch to several different surrounding families during this time. Dorothy graduated from high school as Salutatorian in 1937. She received a scholarship to Colorado Women's College in Denver where she received a teaching certificate.

John graduated from Colorado State University and then went into the United States Navy where he served during World War II. After the war he worked as an engineer and lived largely in the southern United States.

During one of the summers Dorothy taught at Nunn School (only three miles from her home), she was working in the hay field when she saw three young men she didn't know fishing on her property. She took a rake and chased them away as trespassers. When Dorothy's employment at the Nunn School

ended in 1943 she was offered a position in the northern part of Converse County at the Clausen School.

When she was moving into the teacherage at the Clausen School, the older sons of the family came to help and meeting them, one, James, looked familiar. He was one of the uninvited fishermen she had chased off her property with a rake a few years earlier.

The Clausens were Scandinavian emigrants who had homesteaded in Northern Converse County. Nellie Anderson was born on November 9, 1891 in Stromsburg, Nebraska to parents recently emigrated from Sweden. She was one of the few unmarried women of her time who homesteaded in her own name and proved up on her homestead; quite a gallant feat for the time. Her brother, Frank Anderson, came from Stromsburg and took up a homestead a few miles farther north as did her two sisters Jenny and Ida. After World War II, Frank and Ida returned to Sweden. The other sister, Jenny, returned to Nebraska.

Hans Pete was born in Denmark and trained as a butcher. He came to the United States in 1908; his emigration route took him through Ellis Island, New York. He worked for a time on the Milwaukee Railroad and moved west to Osceola, Nebraska. In Osceola he became a naturalized citizen. In 1914 he enlisted in the 114th Infantry and served on the Mexican border during the Border War. After his discharge at the end of the war he returned to Osceola and continued to work as a butcher.

In 1918 Hans came to Douglas and took up a homestead about 17 miles north of Douglas in the Lightning Creek area. During the early days of his homestead he worked at several jobs including as an oilfield hand and at his trade of butcher.

On January 9, 1919 Hans married Nellie Matilda Anderson. They had seven children: Francis, Clara, James, Esther, Newton, Marie, and Arthur. Hans was known as Pete to many of his friends and neighbors. He was respected and well liked as a member of his community. Hans and Nellie spent their years together on his homestead to which they

added her homestead and several others including those of her sisters and brother and some they bought from neighbors. Hans died on October 31, 1943. Nellie managed to keep the place for several years but eventually sold out. She died June 16, 1967.

Dorothy Isaac taught at the Clausen School for a couple of years, where she became close friends with the Clausen's daughters Esther, Clara, and Marie. She often talked about Mrs. Clausen's attempts to "fix her up" with oldest son Francis but she became close to younger son, James, encouraged by Hans.

Dorothy and James were married in Cheyenne on January 9, 1947. They moved to her family ranch on LaBonte Creek. They worked hard and built up a herd of Hereford cattle. Dorothy taught at the Braae School until the birth of their first son, Fred, in March of 1949. She continued to teach until 1954. Dorothy always longed for a daughter; she had almost given up on another child when she gave birth to son Robert in November 1955. However, by the end of her life in 2002 Dorothy had four beloved granddaughters.

Both Fred and Robert attended school at the country school on the ranch. James and Dorothy were forward thinking in the area of estate planning and Clausen Ranches were incorporated with the State of Wyoming in 1975.

Fred married Sharon Exley in 1970. He was in college and became a petroleum engineer, a profession that took them and their family to many interesting places. They have two sons, Don and Chuck, both decorated veterans and two daughters. Chris is a business administrator who lives in New York and Anita, a devoted mother who lives in Colorado.

Robert married Kellie Naron in 1976. They bought the majority of the shares of Clausen Ranches, Inc. in 1995. They have three children: Aaron, AuBrie, and Aiden. Aaron was recently elected to the Wyoming House of Representatives representing House District 6 and ranches on the family ranch. AuBrie owns a successful business in Cheyenne.

Aiden works in supply chain and lives in Casper. In 2009 Robert and Kellie moved into a new home they built very close to the site of Fred and Helen Isaac's dream home.

During the years the ranch has increased the number and quality of cattle, changing to Angus cattle in the 90s. We have made improvements to the irrigation systems and hay production, continuing to depend on the water in LaBonte creek. With the changes in the cattle market we have leased some local ranches to accommodate increasing herd size. The original homestead from 1910 continues to summer Clausen Ranch's cattle with improvements to the water wells, changes to solar mills and water storage systems, as well as strategic fencing.

Four generations of the Isaac and Clausen families have lived and worked on this land. We are proud to have been recognized as a Wyoming Centennial Ranch Family in 2016.

The Bell-Otte Ranch, 1902

The Corson/Roberson/Otte Families, Albany County



Photo 1 (see photo descriptions at end of section).

Story written by Celia Corson

The place was named Toltec by William Taylor in 1884. He was a merchant at Rock Creek and had been studying the Toltec Indian mines in Mexico. He found some “workings” in a hill in northern Albany County, Wyoming that reminded him of the Toltec Indians. So he named it Toltec¹. It was nestled in the North Laramie Mountain Range fifty miles north of Rock River and fifty miles south of Douglas on the Fetterman Road. Not many years after Taylor named Toltec, Bert Bell decided that very spot would be where he’d homestead. The reason he chose that particular place was because it had an exceptional spring there. The spring not only ran year round, but also produced exceedingly good water.

Bert, whose given name was Albert Henry Bell, ran away from his home in Pennsylvania, never to return, when he was twelve years old because his father was very abusive. He desired to go to Texas and become a cowboy. Although it took him a good while to get there by foot, he was successful on both accounts. In 1881, after becoming a top notch hand, he took a job trailing cattle north to Montana and stayed there for a while. While the winters were harsh, he preferred that to the malaria that befell so many of his buddies back in Texas.

¹Mae Urbanek, *Wyoming Place Names*, (Missoula, Montana: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 1988) 207.



Photo 2.

He had an uncle who was working for the Bar M Land and Cattle Company north of Rock Creek, Wyoming, so in 1883 he headed that direction. He ended up working for Frank Prager. That is when he discovered Toltec, Wyoming and decided he’d make that his homestead. While he proved up, he continued to work for Frank Prager off and on. Bert was appointed as a Post Master to the Toltec Post Office which ran from January 7, 1891 to September 30, 1933 in his log cabin. He married Hattie Ewalt (who was a school teacher in Laramie) in December of 1900. Two short months later, Hattie had enough of the ruthless winter and a husband who was cheerful but highly uncommunicative, so she asked for the buckboard



Photo 3.



Photo 4.

and some money to go town and buy some needed supplies. Family lore states Bert did not hear or see her again. He filed for divorce in 1902 on grounds of desertion. On April 8, 1902, T. M. McKean (Secretary of the General Land Office in Cheyenne, Wyoming) signed Theodore Roosevelt's name on a Homestead Certificate, transferring Toltec, Wyoming to Bert Bell.

One of Bert's friends sent a letter off to the Heart and Hand column of the Kansas City newspaper, as if it was written by Bert himself. The letter read something like, "Wanted: A mature woman, congenial and good cook. Object: Matrimony. Reply: Bert Bell, Toltec, Wyoming." Somehow in Ohio, Eva J. Kelly saw Bert's ad and she replied by letter. They corresponded back and forth. In the fall of 1903, Bert went to Chicago with his steers and then traveled onto Ohio to meet Eva. With almost nothing in common, the meeting must have gone well, for Eva J. came to Wyoming on the train and they obtained a marriage license in Laramie on December 7, 1903. Bert then took her to the ranch by buckboard and they planned to marry immediately at Spring Hill (which was close to present day Esterbrook, Wyoming). However, a winter storm hit the high country of the North Laramie Range and they were snowed in until spring. Just over five months later, they were finally able to travel Spring Hill and they were married there on May 15, 1904 by Frank M. Newell, who was the Justice of the Peace. In 1911, Frank's nephew, James Miller Newell, would marry Eva's



Photo 5.

oldest daughter, Freda Dustman, and they lived towards Esterbrook. Eva's second oldest daughter, Ida Kelly, married Joseph G. Tuttle about 1913 and they homesteaded the Tuttle Place which later became part of the Bell Ranch and is located just east of Toltec.

Bert continued to buy parcels of nearby land



Photo 6.

to add to his growing ranch. Sometimes he'd have to foreclose on loans he'd made to nearby homesteaders due to lack of payment, and those parcels were also added to the Bell Ranch. Ten percent interest was average for those time so Bert always charged ten percent on loans he made—so many called him “Ten percent Bell.”

Toltec became known to the family as the Home Place and is still called so to this day. Bert and Eva had three sons: Albert Hiram who went by Ab (1908), John Shelby (1911), and Wilson Marshall (1912). They were raised on water from the exceptional spring. Around 1910, when he was about 55 years old, Bert made an uneasy truce with his father and they conversed through letters. After his father's death, his mother visited the ranch several times.

Bert died suddenly when he was 73 years old. The entire family had been down sick with the flu. The day Bert turned the corner; he went out and exerted himself by chopping some wood. By evening his lungs had filled with fluid and he had a terrible cough. He fought the pneumonia valiantly but lost the battle on December 23, 1928. Still weak from the flu, his seventeen year old son, John, was the only one strong enough to plan the service and the burial. He was assisted by his brother-in-law, Jim Newell. Together, they burned down an old trapper's cabin on the hill just west of the Home Place (Toltec) to thaw the ground enough to dig a grave in the ten below zero temperature. Eva, still



Photo 7.

too deathly ill to attend the service, managed to direct the dressing of Bert's body through sheer grit. On December 26th, Jim conducted the service; John and eight neighbors attended (the rest of the family were still too sick). The location where Bert was buried was christened Graveyard Hill and is in view of the exceptional spring. Later, Bert's oldest son, Ab, buried his infant daughter next to Bert after she died. John later built a nice woven wire fence and purchased a marble headstone for Bert. Over the years, cattle were real hard on the fence and so in the 70s, John purchased white cattle panels to surround the graves. They remain to this day.

“Eva was not prepared to manage the land or the money she inherited.”² She moved to Kansas City and enjoyed her life there until the money ran out and the bank would no longer honor her drafts. She returned home “having broken and mortgaged the family and the ranch. After a life of hardship and loss, one cannot blame her for desiring to have an easier life and to have some enjoyment. After several weeks of discussion and planning, Eva and the boys agreed it would be best to try to split the ranch and the debts and try to stay afloat financially rather than giving up all that Bert had worked for.”³

Wilson promptly sold his part and lit out for greener pastures; he ended up settling in Big Piney. Ab and

² Barbara Jean Bell Sinclair, *The Eagle's Song*, (Self Published Family History Xerox Manuscript, 1983) 18.

³ *Ibid.*



Photo 8.

Eva “continued to go deeper into debt, and when the bank did foreclose, they moved to Rock River”⁴ to live. John not only paid off his part of the ranch, but borrowed the money to purchase the parts of the ranch owned by Eva and Ab. So as the Great Depression began, John found himself with a large ranch very deep in debt. He kept good relations with all of his family. He married a devout Mormon gal, Genevieve Peterson, from the Big Horn Valley in 1931. She had come to the area as a “School Mar’am.” John worked hard and did whatever was necessary to keep the ranch running and pay off the debt. In addition to ranching, he trapped and sold pelts; carried the mail twice a week; rounded up and caught wild horses and sold them to the Army; and guided hunters. When Eva’s health began to fail, she moved in with John and his family. She died January 13, 1949 and was buried in Laramie.

John and Genevieve had one son and three daughters: John Henry, Laura Lee, Linda Marie and Barbara Jean. They all grew up on the clear, cold water from the exceptional spring. They all attended a rural school at the Home Place taught

⁴ *Ibid.*

by their mother. Then Genevieve went to Laramie with the children and John “held the fort down” at the ranch for many years until they all graduated from high school. She and the children traveled back and forth on weekends whenever the weather and road conditions allowed. Both John and Genevieve believed that the many sacrifices were worth it because they both knew the value of a good education. Interestingly, John had only been able to obtain an eighth grade education when he was growing up, but he never stopped reading and learning.

John purchased what is now known as Forty Mile and fenced the entire 6000+/- acre pasture with the help of his children. John was fanatical about building reservoirs. Thanks to him, the ranch is dotted with them. He built both irrigation reservoirs and stock reservoirs. “(He) had the ability of seeing sights for reservoirs and encouraged his neighbors to build them also. He developed hundreds of acres of hay meadows,”⁵ and irrigated pastures by building miles and miles of irrigation ditches. “(He) was the first rancher in the community to

⁵ *Linda Bell Otte, History of the Bell-Otte Ranch, Personal Memoir, Written October 2007.*



Photo 9.

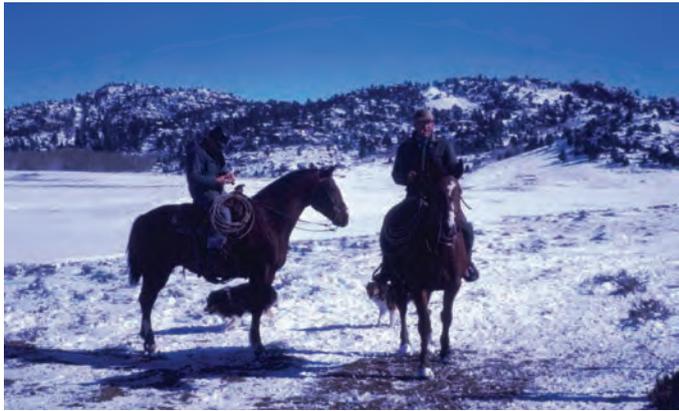


Photo 10.



Photo 12.



Photo 11.



Photo 13.



Photo 14.

apply fertilizer to his meadows to increase his hay production. He was (very) proud and happy when he was finally able to run a thousand head of steers!”⁶ John was a cowboy through and through. Mechanical things frustrated him. He was an expert horseman and stockman; he loved to break colts and he had a gift for teaching them to neck rein.

In 1958, John and Genevieve built a new home at the Reed Place at the southern border of the ranch because there was already a barn and corrals there. That same year, the middle daughter, Linda, married Dean Otte, and they lived and worked in Laramie for a year. Then they approached John and Genevieve about coming to the ranch. They moved into the white house at the Home Place next to the exceptional spring and later built a brick home at the top of the hill. In 1959, the four of them incorporated the ranch. Dean grew up a Nebraska farm boy but through hard work and diligence, he became a Wyoming cowboy and learned to ride and rope. However, Dean’s special gift to the ranch was making things better. He was an expert mechanic, welder, and irrigator. Whatever the ranch needed, he built it. He was an expert problem solver; he made the roads and fences better. When they started baling the hay instead of stacking it loose in cribs, he began to run the haying crew. They put up about 2000 tons of good native hay. He sold and hauled a jillion loads of small square bales by pulling his gooseneck trailer behind his red stock truck. He also guided hunters and built the large corrals

⁶ Linda Bell Otte, *History of the Bell-Otte Ranch, Personal Memoir, Written October 2007.*



Photo 15.



Photo 16.



Photo 17.

between the Reed Pasture and the Davis Pasture in 1994. They had two daughters, Celia Marie and Shawna Dee, who grew up drinking water from the exceptional spring. Like their mother and their grandfather, the girls attended a one-room rural school until Celia entered the eighth grade. Celia's youngest children, J.D. and Addie, would later also attend a one-room rural school at Garrett, Wyoming with the Sturgeon brothers and Cathy Atkinson as their teacher. Then Linda moved to Laramie with the girls so they could attend junior high and high school. Again, the importance of school was taught by example to their children. After the first year of living apart, Dean knew he didn't want to miss out on nine months of his family every year. So they completely changed the operation of the ranch. They started baling and selling all the hay and pasturing other people's yearlings. This enabled not only Dean and Linda to live in town all winter, but John and Genevieve also. Due to the exceeding harshness of the winters, this was a good thing for everyone.

Dean and Linda ranched with Linda's parents until John died in 1992 and Genevieve died in 1993. The shares of the ranch were divided equally among their children, so Dean and Linda purchased all of them from Linda's siblings to keep the ranch together. Dean was diagnosed with lung cancer in May of 2002. He lost his battle with that cancer in November of 2006. Linda lived alone in the house at the Home Place, just up the hill from the exceptional spring, every summer until her death in April of 2012.



Photo 18.

Celia and her first husband, Glenn, married in 1981 and lived in a trailer house moved in below the exceptional spring at the Home Place (Toltec). Due to losing John in 1992 and Celia and her first husband divorcing in 1993, it became impossible to continue to hay at the ranch, so in 1995, they quit and began to run pasture yearlings instead. When Celia and Jack Corson married in 1994, they each had children from their previous marriages: Jake Roberson, Shell Roberson, Teresa Corson (deceased), and Gene Corson. In 2000, the twins, J.D. and Addie Corson, joined their family. All of them were raised on water from the exceptional spring. In 2001, Jack and Celia asked to come to the ranch. Jack, a ranch boy from Baggs, WY, was willing to give up his teaching profession, which he loved, to do so. They moved into the home built by John and Genevieve at the Reed Place in June of 2002. That fall, Jack's youngest brother was killed in car wreck so they moved to Baggs that December to help Jack's family for the winter. The next summer they sold their place in Laramie and bought a home in Baggs and their lives fell into a pattern of working at the ranch every May through December and then "going south" to the Little Snake River Valley for the winter. They worked hard to increase the ranch's income so that as many of their children as want to, could live and work there. Jack has often said, "If we build it, they will come."

As far as the ranch is concerned, Bert and Eva's fifth generation of descendants consist of Celia's children: Jake Roberson, Shell Roberson, J.D.



Photo 19.



Photo 20.

Corson, and Addie Corson. Like their forbearers, each one has their own special gifts that will help to make the ranch better. Also like their forbearers, each one learned at a young age, how to work hard for long hours, make sacrifices, be tough, responsible, courageous, and uncomplaining. They make the future of the ranch especially bright!

In addition to the family history, the ranch is steeped in other history as well. Indians once populated the ranch and signs are still found. There is a creek and a reservoir named “Soldier Creek” because the soldiers used to camp there. Not far from there, to the north is the site of the old Forty Mile Stage Station. None of it remains, but the family knows the location of where it was. The stage route went right through the western part of the ranch. Homesteaders were once thick all over the ranch. Now, all that remains of those courageous people are some water rights they filed and some ruins of their old cabins, barns, and pitch post corrals. Their last names live on, however, as most of the pastures on the ranch, and several landmarks are named for

them (i.e. The Reed, The Davis, The Bone, The Phillips, The Tuttle, Ellison Pass, the Eggleston Reservoir, etc.). The ranch always and still has mail service only twice a week!

Throughout each generation, and too numerous to mention in the space allowed, are the neighbors who have worked at the ranch, helped out, and loved and supported the family. Those neighbors have greatly contributed to the success of the ranch and a deep gratitude is felt for each of them. Jake and Shell’s Dad, Glenn Roberson, also helps out at the ranch sometimes. Forgiveness is a wonderful thing and he and Celia and Jack all work together well.

Great gratitude and honor is felt by the entire family for the commitment, vision, hard work, and sacrifice of Bert and Eva, John and Genevieve, and Dean and Linda. In addition, the whole family acknowledges and is exceedingly grateful for the constant blessings from the Lord in the day to day operations of the ranch that allow it to remain in their family. Even though life bombards us with changes, one thing remains constant: the exceptional spring! It still flows as constant, strong, cold, and pure as the day Bert discovered it. For a long time, it had a small “spring house” over it to protect it. It acted as a refrigerator for Bert and Eva and John and Genevieve. They would set food in cans in the water to keep the food fresh and cold. That spring still waters livestock. It has never dried up, including during years of severe drought. It has never varied more than two degrees in temperature from summer to winter. It is still the best tasting water that we know of (Jack and Celia haul their drinking water from that spring because it is so much better than the well water at their house). And the 4th and 5th generations of Bert Bell who are living and working on the ranch are still going strong from drinking it!*

** All credit for tying this history to the exceptional spring at the Home Place goes to Celia’s Mom, Linda Otte. She wrote a short memoir titled, The History of the Bell-Otte Ranch, around that spring. Celia liked it so much she shamelessly stole the idea for this piece!*

PHOTO DESCRIPTIONS

PHOTO 1

The Bert Bell family in front of the original homestead cabin before it burned in 1924.

Back row: Eva, Ab and Bert

Front row: Wilson and John

PHOTO 2

Albert Henry Bell, known as Bert, was born May 6, 1855 to Hannah J Shelby and Hiram C Bell. He was very light on his feet for a man of his size and weight and he rode a horse well, always sitting up with his weight in the stirrups. He hated to dismount and mount, however, so he never packed a lunch when he rode. Bert was friends with hired gunman, Tom Horn. Tom often stopped by the ranch and stayed with the Bells. Bert's middle son, John, remembered his Dad telling him that one day Tom arrived at the Bell Ranch to stay over. After supper, Tom casually mentioned that the Platte Valley Sheep Company had hired him to kill Bert. Bert had several run-ins with Platte Valley's sheep herders in the years previous to this, as they used to graze their sheep on the land that Bert now owned. After some silence, Bert asked Tom if he was going to kill him. Tom grinned and winked at him and said he would have done so, but "the cheap bastards only offered me \$500!" Bert often told his boys that Tom Horn was educated, a classy dresser and very likeable. He was an excellent horseman, liked good horses, and treated all of his horses well. Bert always felt that Tom fell into his criminal ways more through betrayal from his employers than from being innately evil. Bert always insisted that there was no way Tom shot Willy Nichols, the crime he was accused of, found guilty of, and hanged for.

PHOTO 3

Wilson, John, Eva, and Ab at the Home Place at Toltec beside the corner of the new log house built after the old one burned. Photo taken some time after Bert's death in 1928.

PHOTO 4

Genevieve and John Bell were married September 8, 1931 in Kimball, Nebraska. Because they married during the Great Depression, they only received two wedding gifts: a set of embroidered tea towels from a friend and a Dutch oven pan from John's step-sister, Freda, who was teaching school and had a small salary. They moved into the house at the Tuttle, just east of the Home Place (Toltec). They lived there for about two years and then moved to the log house at the Home Place when John's mother moved to Rock River. They started their

marriage off deep in debt due to trying to put as much of the original ranch back together as possible. Amazingly, they had it all paid back to the bank in seven years!

PHOTO 5

Vieva Jerusha Brockett Dustman Kelly Bell went by Eva J. or Eva. She was born in Ohio on October 29, 1872. Her mother died from birth-related complications so her father, unable to work and care for a newborn, gave her to a loving family by the name of Cline, who raised her. Mr. Cline died when Eva was a teenager so she began to provide for herself and her adopted mother, Grandma Cline. At age 18, Eva married John Henry Dustman and they had a daughter, Freda Mae. Dustman became abusive so Eva divorced him and supported her daughter and her Grandma Cline by running a boarding house, cooking, and making and selling candy. At the age of 21, she married George Wilson Kelly, a railroad man. She loved him very much and they had a daughter, Ida Kathleen. Five months after Ida was born, Kelly was killed in an accident and again, Eva was the sole support for her daughters and Grandma Cline. At age 32, she came west to marry Wyoming rancher, Bert Bell, a man she only knew through letters and one face to face meeting. He was 17 years her senior. Together, they had three sons. She suffered from "milk leg" (phlebitis and deep varicose veins) in both legs. They started when she was pregnant with her first child and worsened with each subsequent pregnancy. After her youngest child was born, her legs were badly bruised when a sled hauling water broke loose and hit her. They ulcerated and from that point on, her legs would not allow her to carry any weight. Even though she purposefully stayed slim, walking even a few steps around the house would cause them to bleed afresh, so she was bound to her wheelchair. Bert died unexpectedly when she was 56 years old. Eva died when she was 77 years old in Laramie, Wyoming. Eva was a tough, determined and surviving kind of lady. She was a strikingly beautiful woman. Her hair went snow white when she was in her twenties. Her white hair complimented her clear cobalt blue eyes. Those blue eyes became known as "the Bell blue eyes," and they have been passed down through most of her descendants.

PHOTO 6

J.D. Corson roping calves at the ranch's yearly branding.

PHOTO 7

Nestled next to the North Laramie River, which starts about a mile to the east, is this barn that Bert Bell had built around 1909 on his homestead. It is still in use today, although the corrals have been rebuilt by Bert's

great, great grandson, Shell Roberson.

PHOTO 8

From left to right: Jack Corson, J.D. Corson, Jake Roberson, Shawna Otte, Addie Corson, Shell Roberson, Celia Corson. This photo was taken December 24, 2012 after Linda's death in March of that same year. Celia calls it, "We Carry On" because it is the remaining descendants of Bert and Eva's who will carry on the ranch. They are honored and grateful to be recognized as a Centennial Ranch and look forward to the next hundred years!

PHOTO 9

John Bell with his beloved Hancock roan mares. He was born February 6, 1911 at Toltec. He was a handsome man and inherited his cobalt blue eyes from his mother. He loved jokes and funny stories—both hearing them and retelling them. He was known to embellish some of them a bit. It took a size 11 glove to cover his large hands but his wrists were about the size of a woman's. His slight build belied his great strength and stoutness. He liked a good cow dog but disliked training them. He was full of vision and was an expert in managing finances. John was very optimistic. He had a temper but it would flare quickly and then die just as fast. He loved the ranch with all his heart. He dearly loved Genevieve and in their golden years, tenderly cared for her daily at the nursing home. He died at his home in Laramie, with his boots on, after a full morning of working with a colt and a hot cribbage game at the donut shop on March 9, 1992. Genevieve died just over a year later on May 8, 1993 after valiantly struggling with Alzheimer's for many years.

PHOTO 10

Back in the days of pulled tails and roached manes! Dean Otte on the left riding Ace with John's dog, Rex, beside him. John Bell (on the right) is riding on Princess. Dean's dog, Fritz, is behind him.

PHOTO 11

Addie Corson castrating calves at the ranch's yearly branding.

PHOTO 12

Jack Corson was born and raised on a ranch near Baggs, Wyoming. He obtained a BA and an MA in Ag Education from the University of Wyoming. He was an Ag teacher and FFA advisor for 19 years in Laramie. After moving to the ranch, Jack had the vision to develop catch and release fly fishing and trophy elk hunting at the ranch. The ranch had always guided

hunters but he grew the business because hunting area had grown to be a trophy area. When the hunting enterprise grew, he also was wise enough to lease it to Muddy Draw Outdoors so it did not interfere with the ranching operations. He foresaw that finding yearlings to pasture would become increasingly harder and guided the ranch into owning their own cows and bulls again. He likes to invest in the infrastructure (homes, buildings, equipment, and facilities) of the ranch. Jack also helps to cowboy, guides hunters, and is the main irrigator. He is constantly reading and learning new information that helps the ranch. He attends agriculture seminars often. He and Celia try hard to maintain very good relationships with all of their neighbors.

PHOTO 13

Jake Roberson taking the cows and calves back to the pasture after sorting off the yearlings who'd come to visit.

PHOTO 14

Dean driving the 1948 Ford stock truck with a load of hay. This truck is now owned by John's grandson, Todd Wilkinson. Todd is an expert mechanic and will someday have the time to restore the old truck...including brakes that actually work! John preferred to haul his horses in this truck instead of using the stock rack in his pickup. As he grew up, Todd worked at the ranch most summers and he rode a jillion miles in this truck beside John.

PHOTO 15

Genevieve Peterson Bell was born July 8, 1910 and was the sixth child in a family of twelve! She was a very classy, beautiful lady. She loved to garden and raised a big one every summer, even though Toltec has an extremely short growing season. She was an excellent cook and also loved to read. Family was especially important to her. Living at the ranch was very lonely for her. She hated to drive an automobile. She always missed attending church but remained faithful to the Lord always. However, she did cuss on occasion. Early in their marriage, she tried to make waffles with a waffle iron they found in the junk pile. It was cracked and had a rough texture inside so the waffles stuck. John could tell Genevieve was frustrated when he walked in the door so he asked what was wrong. Flushed both with anger and heat emanating from the wood stove she snarled, "I'm digging the son-of-a-bitch's out!" Another time, John butchered a big old boar weighing over 200 pounds. He tied a rope to its hind legs and draped it up and over a cross post on the corral gate. As he lifted it, Genevieve was to pull it tight and dally it around the post so he could cool the pig out and properly scape off the bristles.

The pig was heavy and slippery and John got frustrated and yelled at Genevieve. He said she smiled politely and said quietly, “the hell with YOU.” Then she laid the rope down and walked back to the house, leaving John holding the pig. She never asked how he got it hung up!

PHOTO 16

Shawna Otte is one of the current owners of Bell-Otte Ranch, along with her sister and brother-in-law, Celia and Jack Corson. She remains proud of the legacy and trust left to them by those who came before. She grew up on the ranch and, like the rest of the family, worked very long hours there. She was a top notch rake hand as a teenager. As an adult, she moved to Utah and her career path has been a hodgepodge of different industries. She has experience in fashion retail, temporary employment services, natural pharmaceutical sales, risk management in the oil and gas commodity trading industry, bookstores, office supply and furniture sales, and currently she is a corporate trainer at a credit union. While she has never repeated an industry in 34 years, every experience has prepared her for the next corporate adventure. She put herself through night school and obtained a BS in Business Administration from the University of Utah. When her dad was diagnosed with cancer, Shawna moved back to Laramie so be closer to her parents. She is not involved in the day to day operations of the ranch but is supportive and encouraging to those who are.

PHOTO 17

Celia Corson has always loved living and working on the ranch and never had any aspiration to live or work anywhere else, even though she has. One of the hardest things for her has been the transition to being the oldest living generation to own, live, and work on the ranch, and the weight of that always rests heavily on her. Due to contracting Multiple Sclerosis in 1999, Celia’s contributions to the ranch became limited to that of “Command Central” (phone call maker, message taker, and organizer). Upon Linda’s death in 2012, she took on the job of head bookkeeper, for which she had very few skills. Her health problems continued to increase so in 2015 she hired a top notch bookkeeper, forsook western medicine, and started to focus on diet and a holistic/eastern medicine approach. In a short time, her health was greatly restored and to her complete joy, she was back to calving heifers, riding, and helping more around the ranch. Because there have been many times she couldn’t ride horseback, she never takes it for granted. She collects what she calls, “priceless family heirlooms”. That collection includes her great Grandmother Eva’s wheelchair down to old burlap water bags they used to

use when haying. She is very grateful that all four of her children were raised on the ranch and that they love it.

PHOTO 18

Bert and Eva’s third generation of descendants (the children of John and Genevieve): Barbara Zankie, John Bell, and Laura Lee Wilkinson. Their sister, Linda Otte, is not pictured because she died in 2012. They all grew up working on the ranch and each one of them has invested zillions of hours of blood, sweat, and tears there. In addition, Barbara went to college and obtained her teaching credentials. She taught high school English in Anchorage, Alaska until her retirement. She spent the better part of every summer at the ranch. Her first husband, Walt, and her second husband, Peter, both worked on the ranch in the summers. John graduated from the University of Wyoming with a degree in Ag Econ and then pursued his dream of becoming a pilot in the Air Force (including Vietnam) until he retired 30 years later. He and his wife, Carmelina, and their four children, Cheryl, Rusty, Darrell, and Deidra, visited the ranch and helped out as often as circumstances would allow. Laura Lee and her husband, Chuck, ranched in the Lander, Wyoming area and later moved to Torrington and started a custom haying business. They came every summer and helped bale and stack the hay at the ranch. Their children, Todd, Jamie, and Torry, all worked at the ranch for many summers. Presently, John, Laura Lee, and Barbara return to the ranch every summer and help support the Corson’s and the Roberson’s by sharing their knowledge and memories of the ranch. That information has proved invaluable! The cemetery (where Bert is buried) on Graveyard Hill is in the background. The Home Place (Toltec) is just outside of this photo to the left. You can see the exceptional spring from this hill.

PHOTO 19

Linda Otte and Duchess on their beloved four wheeler. Linda did not enjoy riding horseback but she loved her four wheeler. She was a hand with any and all kinds of machinery. In the hayfield, she ran the sweep and later the baler and she was expert at loading hay trucks with the Druby stacker. She milked cows, took care of the laying hens, and was always the much depended upon “go-fer” for all building and mechanic-ing projects. Her most important contribution to the ranch was singlehandedly finishing the Living Trust that she and Dean started but did not finish before his death, which insured that the ranch could be passed on to succeeding generations without heavy inheritance (death) taxes. When a trip was needed, she always drove Genevieve to Laramie and they said they should have kept a journal of those trips made in a sedan car in every imaginable

condition (including deep mud, deeper snow, ground blizzards, ice, etc.). Linda was an excellent driver and an outstanding cook, just like her mother, Genevieve. She was also the person who kept in contact with all of the family members and kept up on the happenings in their lives. She hosted many family reunions at the ranch. She loved photographs and left her family countless scrapbooks of them. She located and preserved many of the early photos used in this history. She enjoyed researching her family history. She loved technology and was excited to learn to use computers, the internet, and cell phones. She was a life-long learner. She owned and operated a church book store in Laramie for many years and she attended church every Sunday.

PHOTO 20

Shell Roberson roping a yearling in the pasture to doctor it.



Rep. Cynthia Lummis, Corson-Roberson-Otte Family, Gov. Matthew H. Mead, Sen. Mike Enzi.

The Darlington Ranch, 1914

Darlington Family, Weston County



Darlington Family, Gov. Matthew H. Mead, Rep. Cynthia Lummis, Sen. Mike Enzi.

The Davis Ranch, 1916

The Davis Family, Campbell County



Ranch buildings, 1968.

J.F. “Fred” Davis with his wife, Josephine, and their three children, Opal, Roy, and Clifford moved to Campbell County, Wyoming from Thomas, Oklahoma in June 1916. They travelled in a Model T Ford with a trailer and their destination was 40 miles north of Gillette between Whitetail Creek and Elk Creek. Fred had made the trip the year before and had made arrangements with a banker in Thomas to borrow the money he needed to begin their life on the homestead - and possibly buy some adjacent land from others who wanted to give up theirs. When they were settled, he contacted the banker to let him know that they were ready for the loan only to receive the news that the banker had died and there would be no loan. They lived in a tent that first summer and fall and Fred went to town to find work so that he could buy the supplies they would need. He had been a carpenter in Oklahoma so he began that trade again. Some friends from Oklahoma, the Frank Marvel family, had settled several miles north on what is now known as the Rock Emigh ranch and the Davis family stayed with them that first winter.

During the first years their life took on a pattern - Fred would go to town to work and bring home supplies on the weekend and Josephine and the children would work on their land. They built up a small herd of cattle and horses and things were looking good until the winter of 1919 when they lost quite a few cows. For several years outside income was needed to support the ranch and in the early 1920s Fred travelled as far as Midwest when the Salt Creek oil field was developed and built many buildings there.

Opal, Roy, and Clifford attended the Elk Creek School which was located on the Wyncoop place about two miles from their home. Many years later, Clifford’s children Norma, Richard, and Wayne would attend the same school.

Cliff was eight years old when the family moved from Oklahoma and when he was old enough he began working for neighboring ranches to help the family’s finances. He herded sheep on Ranch Creek in 1922 and later worked for Glenn Morse for \$50 per month, always giving the money to his mother



Norma, Wayne, Richard, and Grandma Josephine (in doorway), 1935.



Elma with Wayne, Richard, and Norma, 1938.

until one month when he bought a big, black horse and worked out the cost of the horse. The horse cost two months wages and his parents weren't very happy but he named the horse Dynamo and thought he was worth it. A few years later he began courting Elma Knoy who lived close to Recluse and worked for Fred and Nora Oedekoven at the Recluse Store. He rode his horse from the Morse Ranch to Recluse to visit her.

Cliff and Elma were married on March 1, 1927. He had built a one room house for them to live in and some furniture: a bed, table, and chairs. In 1926, Fred had built a house on Rockpile Boulevard in Gillette with the main floor being their residence and apartments upstairs and in the basement. He and Josephine began spending time in town while Cliff, Elma, and their children, Norma, Richard, and Wayne, lived on the ranch. Summers would find

Josephine back at the ranch raising bum lambs and turkeys. Wayne remembers her herding the turkeys to the lake bed about a half mile from the house.

Norma, Richard, and Wayne began their school years at the Elk Creek School but when Wayne (the youngest) was in second grade the teacher quit in the middle of the year and they moved to town for the rest of the school year. That continued for several years, going to school in town and back to the ranch in the summer.

In 1947, Fred and Cliff purchased the Chassell and Anderson farms five miles north of Gillette and Cliff and Elma and their family moved there with Fred and Josephine back to the ranch forty miles north. They continued their operation together until 1951 when they dissolved their partnership with Cliff, taking the place close to town and Fred the original ranch.

In 1955, when Wayne was discharged from the Army, he and his wife Sallie (Saunders) purchased the original ranch from his grandparents. They moved there in October 1955 with their two-year old daughter Carol and their son, Bob, was born a month later. Two more sons, Mike and Chuck, made the family complete. When Wayne purchased the ranch, he also bought all of the livestock which included some calves and a few sheep. That first winter he fed with a team and sled.

In the fall of 1956, Wayne bought some yearling ewes with Lester Deaver (the closest neighbor) and they decided to lamb them in the hills, staying with them from daylight till dark every day. It was a cold, rainy spring. That fall Lester and his family moved to town and Wayne was able to lease his ranch. Richard and Dorothy Jean Davis with their two children, Tom and Nancy, moved into his house for two years.

In 1939, a new house had been built by Fred and Cliff and their families and it was built in the style Fred favored: with a flat roof. In the spring of 1957 (the rainy year) water washed down through the ceiling of the upper floor and through the ceiling of the kitchen. Also, many termites were washed out. It didn't appear that there was a lot of termite

damage but a short time later Wayne was cleaning out an old coal bin next to the kitchen and found that there was no wood on the outside wall - just wire and stucco! It was time to find another place to live and in October 1959 the move was made to the Deaver house.

Wayne was the first of the Davis men to live on the ranch year-round and he did most of the work himself with the short-term help of hired men. He raised oats, wheat, and hay besides 1200 head of sheep and calves which were sold as yearlings. In 1965, he decided to change to a cow-calf operation and in 1973 the sheep were sold when it became impossible to control the predators.

As the children became old enough they began helping and learning the business of running the ranch. Wayne taught them well - how to build fence, stack hay, brand calves, dock lambs - there was quite a crew for a few years. There were also outside activities like 4-H and of course that included the whole family.

In 1957, District 11 combined two or three small schools into the Little Powder School which is located on Highway 59 between Elk and Olmsted Creeks. In 1960, another generation of Davis' began school at the Elk Creek/Little Powder School. It was nine miles from home now and parents had to drive the kids to and from school each day for several years until there were bus routes. When it was time for high school, Sallie and the family moved to town and Wayne stayed at the ranch. During this time he would plan big jobs, like wool-blinding, for the weekends when everyone would be home.

In 1981, Chuck took over the operation of the ranch. The oat and wheat fields had been grassed down but everything else would be the same. Things weren't exactly easy - there was a major spring blizzard in 1984 and a very severe drought in 1988 with grasshoppers to make it worse. Luckily for Chuck, he had married Laurie Craft in 1984 so he had a partner. They became the owners of the ranch in 1991.

Laurie began teaching school at Little Powder School in 1988. She became a Principal in 2000 and



Cliff with Dynamo, 1926.



Fred and Josephine with daughter Opal and Ray's daughter Genevive, age 2, 1928.



Wayne Davis family, 1962.



Bob, Mike, and Wayne, 1958.



Chuck with Temp, 1964.



Wayne and Cliff, 1946.



Bob, Mike, Chuck, and Carol feeding cows, 1968.



Wayne and Chuck hunting, 1982.



Fire in 2006, over 1200 acres burned.



60th Anniversary, March 1, 1987. Wayne, Norma, Cliff, Elma, and Richard.



Chuck, Grace, Laurie, and Kelly, 2016.

is teaching Kindergarten three days a week and also serves as Principal of the Virtual School in Gillette at the present time.

They became parents of two daughters: Grace and Kelly. The girls grew up on the ranch and they enjoyed feeding bum calves and sometimes there were some bum lambs. They also enjoyed playing in the creek beside the house and hiking in the hills with their mother. They attended Little Powder School being the fourth generation to do so. Later, two of Bob's grandsons would ride the bus from Gillette to attend school there making five generations.

Fires were always a threat in the summer - especially dry summers. In 2002, a fire destroyed 2400 acres on the north side of the ranch. High winds drove it one direction then another. In 2006, a fire began at the southeast corner of the ranch and moved rapidly covering more than 1300 acres in a short time. Most of the winter pastures were gone. Chuck had many miles of fence to rebuild.

Now, in 2016 with so many laws and regulations, and so much unrest in this country and around the world, ranching is still a peaceful way of life and the best way to raise a family.



Gov. Matthew H. Mead, Davis Family, Rep. Cynthia Lummis, Sen. Mike Enzi.

The Fowler Ranch, 1916

The Fowler Family, Converse County



Fowler Ranch scenery.

Lee Fowler arrived in Converse County on November 11, 1916, from Hope, Kansas with his mother Catherine, father Edwin, two brothers (Eugene and Dennis), and sister Nettie with her husband John Cowger. The three families filed as near as possible on adjoining homesteads approximately 22 miles north and slightly west of Douglas between Box Creek and Skunk Creek in the community which was later called Hyland.

On one of the first mornings after arrival, Lee and John Cowger walked to his brother Gene's homestead, built the house, and put up the stove in time to make biscuits for lunch. In the afternoon, they started digging a well. The hand-dug well is an example of the optimism Lee and his brothers shared. The site was chosen because it was on a

corner which would serve three families. In an area where water is inadequate, deep, or non-existent, they were lucky and actually found a good well at 40 feet. This well with its rock foundation is still a prevalent site on the ranch 100 years later.

With a number of other men from the area, Lee went into the army in 1918. While overseas Lee served as an Assistant Farrier in the Veterinarian Corps. He was separated on July 4, 1919 in Cheyenne.

Rachel Furman came to Converse County in 1923 with her twin sister, Ruth, from Marsland, Nebraska to accept positions as teachers in the rural school system. Rachel was assigned to the Sunnyside School, which at the time was located less than a



Rachel Fowler, 1943, age 40.

mile from Lee's homestead and she boarded with his parents. Lee and Rachel married March 29, 1924. Soon after their marriage, both his brothers left and his sister moved to Douglas. In 1928, Edwin Fowler died and Lee's mother moved to Douglas where she lived until her death in 1946.

The early days of homesteading through the drought and depression of the 1930s were years of hard work and hard times. The Fowlers sold eggs and cream for grocery money. There was always a big garden with the surplus canned for winter, all the meat and dairy from livestock, store-bought candy from town, and cod liver oil all winter long. Most money went for land, livestock, or equipment. The ranch land was never large enough for Rachel because she thought they were ranchers but Lee

wanted only enough to farm because he came from farming.

Lee raised cattle until 1938 when he decided sheep were more suitable for the high prairie of the ranch. Lee was one of the first to use docking rings from Australia. Lee was very progressive being one of the first in the area to have an electric fence and a 12-volt wind charger—enough for a radio. The Fowler family was one of the first in the area to have electricity. Lee also tried crested wheat grass to reclaim fields which later he rejected. Lee built the sandstone rock barn and corral from rocks found on the ranch. The men took wagon trips to the mountains to harvest lumber for the outbuildings.

Rachel not only cooked for the family and ranch hands, but also sewed new dresses for their daughters, Ruth, Leona, and Mary, before any event. Rachel herded sheep and cattle and worked in the fields too. Rachel was a prominent member of the community and was a founding member of Converse County Cow-Belles. She was also active in politics and, in fact, the Fowler Ranch was the polling place for the area ranches. Rachel always served light meals including pies and cakes for these occasions.

The daughters helped with cattle drives, lamb docking, and watched over the sheep while also reading books from horseback. After attending high school in Douglas, Ruth and Leona went to Seattle to work for Boeing aircraft during World War II.

The old rock house was built by Lee Fowler and his dad with the help of John Cowger. Edwin and Kate Fowler lived there until he died and the Cowgers moved to town. Part of the house was frame and added later. The rock part was flat rocks, more or less, that were picked up off the prairie, laid on top of each other like bricks, and then mud was used to cement them together. The mud was "gumbo" and like the rocks came with the place. It was pretty rough construction. The oldest part was built in 1917 and it stood until 1949/1950 when Rachel insisted the rocks had to go and the house be remodeled.

A bedtime story that was fond of telling (because it



Lee Fowler, 1943, age 51.



Front row: Nettie, Edwin, Catherine Fowler. Back row: Eugene, Dennis, Lee, Weston Fowler.



Rachel, Mary, Lee Fowler; Ed, Maxine, Velma Cowger, 1947.

was true) was in the winter when the wind blew, the gumbo-mud didn't fit the window sills and the snow drifted over the bed.

After World War II, building materials were available and Lee remodeled the house himself. Although Lee Fowler semi-retired in the early 1960s, the land continued to be ranched with cattle and sheep owned by his descendants. Jim Hageman worked for Lee during this time before he acquired his own ranch and became a Wyoming state senator.

All three daughters of Lee and Rachel, Ruth, Leona, and Mary, graduated from Converse County High School. Each married and moved away from Wyoming but always came home each summer to spend two to three months at the ranch.



Mary Fowler with lamb, 1944.



Mary and Leona Fowler, 1944.



Leona with original windmill.



Ruth, Mary, Leona docking, 1944.



Leona, Rachel, Ruth, Mary Fowler, Janis and Barbara, 1952.



Ranch before the fire, 1968.



Leona, Ruth, and Mary with the rock wall they built, 1971.



Back row: Debra, Lee, Rachel, Ruth. Front row: Karen, Mary, Janis, Scott, 1980.



Rachel Fowler and her flowers, 1977.



Leona, Ruth, and Mary in front of the homestead house.



Rachel and Lee, 60th anniversary.



Old Sunnyside school house now residing on Fowler Ranch.

In 1969, ExxonMobil (then Humble Oil) found uranium and established its first uranium mine called Highland Uranium Mine on Fowler Ranch property. Although Lee and Rachel felt all the added activity had its problems, the Fowler Ranch did gain two additional water wells and a graveled road.

The original hand-built homestead house burned in 1969. An outstanding structure remaining is the golden, sandstone windmill well that was dug on the first day of the homestead. The original Sunnyside School house is located on the Fowler Ranch property. Also, a rock wall two feet thick and 30 feet long was built in the 1970s by Rachel and her daughters without the help of any men. The rocks were from the rock barn that Lee built in the early days and is a distinct feature today.

The present generation of four granddaughters, Barbara Warner, Janis Carrigan, Karen Wolstenholme, and Debra LaVance, spends as much time at the Fowler Ranch as possible and the land is dear to their hearts.



Rachel and Lee Fowler, 1974.



Gov. Matthew H. Mead, Fowler Family, Rep. Cynthia Lummis, Sen. Mike Enzi.

The McBeth Ranch, 1916

James Hall Family, Campbell County



Gov. Matthew H. Mead, James Hall Family, Rep. Cynthia Lummis, Sen. Mike Enzi.

Mosquito Creek Ranch, LLC, 1898

Steve & Susan Hoffman Family, Sublette County



William J. and Mary McGinnis who originally homesteaded Midway Ranch. Their son Frank is also pictured.

Written by Susan Yose Hoffman

Mosquito Creek Ranch was originally known as Midway and was homesteaded by my great grandfather William John McGinnis and his wife Mary. In 1898, they moved their seven children and a large herd of cattle from LaBarge Creek to the Green River Valley. Grandpa had previously worked in the silver mines near Park City, Utah. The family moved into the first two-story log home built in the area. The logs were hauled by teams from the mountains at the head of Dry Piney Creek. They grubbed every acre of land with a grubbing hoe and built the first diversion dam on the Green River. Midway received its name because it lays halfway between the Union Pacific railroad station at Opal and the little settlements of Merna and Cora. It is

recorded that my great grandmother served as the postmaster “most efficiently since December 23, 1898” and filled the position for 25 years.

Shortly after arriving at Midway, the family began running a road house at the request of the stage lines carrying visitors along this route. It was also a stop for the beef herds from the upper country who took their cattle to ship at the stockyards in Opal. My grandmother Miranda, who was the third child, enjoyed telling stories of the many people who spent the night. She and her sister Lulu wrote: “It meant lots of hard work and we sometimes wondered where everyone would sleep. Mother charged 25 cents a meal and 50 cents per bed. We didn’t make much money I guess but it kept us at home with plenty of work and we met many nice people. There was always a table full of kerosene lamps to fill and chimneys to clean, and what a job that was every day. Also we washed the sheets each day on a scrubbing board and always used linen table clothes.”

My grandmother married Walter C. Yose on December 12, 1917, and they settled at Midway where they raised a family of three: Walter Jr., Louise, and Frank. My father Walter and my mother Maurine Watson were married on May 29, 1941, and lived with my grandparents for ten years. Although Midway was no longer a road house at this time, the ranchers with their beef herds still stopped overnight and were fed breakfast and supper. Times were hard and since my dad didn’t make a wage on the ranch, he trapped beaver and my mother sold cream to save enough money to build a log home next door. They moved into their new home in May of 1951, one month before I was born. My siblings are Connie, Carol, and Stephen.

I married Steve Hoffman on November 6, 1970, and we moved to the ranch in the spring of 1973 to work for my dad. In 1989, we began operating the ranch under the name “Mosquito Creek Ranch” in honor of the swarms of mosquitos that love our



Three generations in front of the original Midway home. From the right are Walter C. Yose Sr. and Miranda, Maurine and Walter Yose, their daughters Connie, Carol and Susan, front (ca. 1958).



Sixth generation grandsons, Bridger and Stetson, watching their fathers, Dusty and Toby, work cattle on the ranch this fall.



Home built by Walter and Maurine Yose next to the original two-story house.



Three Generations of the Hoffman Family on Mosquito Creek Ranch with the Green River in the background. From left: Lori and Toby Hoffman and their children Rhet, Oakley, Whitley, and Bridger; Katie and Dusty Hoffman and their children Paisley, Lexy, and Stetson; Susan and Steve Hoffman; and Darby and Tonia Hoffman and their daughters Brynne and Haylee. Photo by Cynde Guio Photography.



Two car garage built by Walter C. Yose Sr. in the 1920s.

hay meadows along the Green River. My Grandpa Yose always said, “the thicker the mosquitos, the better the hay crop.” Our sons Darby and his wife Tonia, Dusty and his wife Katie, Toby and his wife Lori, help us run the ranch along with our nine grandchildren. Six generations spanning 118 years have had the privilege of raising cattle and horses along this beautiful stretch of land also known as Midway. We’ve been so blessed!

The Krakow Ranch, 1910

Krakov Families, Laramie County



Gov. Matthew H. Mead, Krakow Families, Rep. Cynthia Lummis, Sen. Mike Enzi.

The McAnulty Ranch, 1916

Carolyn L. (McAnulty) Hurley, Niobrara County



Written by Carolyn L. (McAnulty) Hurley



The original homestead house with my grandfather John McAnulty, grandmother Grace, and my father Keith W. McAnulty (age 7) in 1919.



My uncle Marion Rasmusen (married to my great-aunt Louise McAnulty Moore) taken in 1938. He ranched and farmed our ranch for my great-uncle Dr. Milan (Myles) Standish Moore (direct descendant of the Myles Standish of the Mayflower) who willed the ranch to my father Keith W. McAnulty, with Uncle Marion having the right to ranch. Uncle Marion relinquished the full control to my father in about 1970. Lloyd Tschacher farmed and ranched for my father for several years before Dan and Kenneth Gaukel.



McAnulty Ranch, 1961.



In 2008, Carolyn had a house built on the homestead and moved from the Seattle area. In 2010 Dan Gaukel left the partnership and Ken's sons Kurt and Kevin joined him to farm and ranch for John and Carolyn.



In 2013, John sold his half of the McAnulty ranch to Dan Gaukel. This left the sole ownership of the remaining 680 acres to Carolyn. Pasture is rented to Dan Gaukel and Kurt and Kevin Gaukel farm. Presently, Carolyn farms wheat and alfalfa/hay grass.



Father Keith W. McAnulty (McAnulty Family Living Trust now owner) passed away in 2002. Children John F. McAnulty and Carolyn L. McAnulty Hurley inherited the 1380 acres. The Gaukels farmed and ranched.



Gov. Matthew H. Mead, Carolyn (McAnulty) Hurley, Rep. Cynthia Lummis, Sen. Mike Enzi.

The Preston-Likins-Haas Ranch, 1915

The Likins Family, Goshen County



The home place taken by drone in 2016.

Written by Preston-Likins-Haas

After scouting the area a year earlier, the family left Halltown, Missouri in March 1915 to settle on their homestead in Goshen Hole, Wyoming. They came west in an immigrant car and got off the train in Chugwater, Wyoming. The family consisted of James Squidd and Rosa Compton Likins and their six children, two son-in-laws, and two grandchildren.

Rosa and her married daughters, Hannah Maude Likins and Laura Mae Small, each took up homesteads. The sons-in-law Tilt Parnell and Waldo Johnson also filed on homesteads. All of these

homesteads were adjoining. The shacks were built and wells drilled for water using a hand drill, much like a post hole digger today with an extension attached. The mail at that time came through the Stewart post office, five miles southwest of their homesteads.

William Langston and Loren E. Likins each filed on homesteads in the Red Bill Hill area in 1917 after Loren turned 21. All but one of the homesteads were proved up on. Tilt Parnell became so homesick for Missouri that he and his wife, Flora, and son, Wayne, returned to Halltown. When the homestead size was increased, each got the 320 acres. Laura Mae Small, being a full sister of Flora Parnell,



The house in 1958.



Some of the original homesteaders: Mrs. Mason (a neighbor), Rosa Compton Likins, Loren Likins, Maude Likins, William Likins, and James Likins.

incorporated the Parnell homestead into hers.

The family struggled through the 1920s, farming wheat, raising shorthorn cattle, and buying land when neighbors left, thereby increasing their holdings. Bill (William) would leave for periods of time and worked as a cook in logging camps in Montana, a farm hand on the Y-Cross ranch west of Cheyenne, and as a steam fitter with the railroad in Cheyenne.

After getting the winter wheat in the ground in the fall, the family would all go the Scottsbluff and rent a shack for the family. The men all worked in the sugar factory and all the women but Rosa worked as maids and cooks in the Lincoln Hotel.

Another means of income was putting up hay with horses. Bill remembered putting up hay where the town of Yoder now stands. In 1925 James Likins died and was buried in the church yard of Grand View Presbyterian Church, where the families were members.

Later, the Union Pacific put their rail line through Yoder with a depot at the north end of Main Street. Twenty-one businesses advertised in the Woman's Club cookbook in 1927. The Likins Brothers had a tractor parts business and sold John Deere parts out of their shop. During the construction on the railroad, Mae and Maude raised poultry and sold poultry and eggs to the construction workers. They had a sliding poultry house that they pulled into the fields during the depression so the poultry could eat the grasshoppers invading the fields.

A high school was built in Yoder, but grade schools were dotted throughout the countryside on the school sections. Some of the country schools were built on skids so they could be moved around as the school population changed. The Likins Brothers had a school section on the north side of their homesteads. In 1929 one of the neighbor boys talked Loren and Bill into using their cars to take the local students on a last day of school picnic to Lone Tree Canyon; they complied. Bill met his future wife that day, the local school teacher. Florence Campbell had been raised on a homestead south of Torrington and had been teaching several years in, by then, Goshen County schools. They married 6 years later.

The Johnson family returned to Missouri in the 1930s, selling their land to Loren and Bill. More land was acquired from other people giving up homesteads. Bill and Loren continued farming the wheat and raising cattle. Bill married Florence in 1935, at the time the drought was breaking in this area. Loren married Oletha Coombs, a homesteader's daughter and teacher from Hawk Springs. The two brothers then sat down at the table and divided up their holdings. Bill took the pasture land and some wheat and Loren took only wheat. Bill also took over farming for Maude and Mae; the sisters and their mother, Rosa, moved into Yoder and later into Torrington. Rosa died in 1951, Maude



Homesteaders in 1947. Front row: Flora Parnell, Rosa Compton Likins, Mae Small. Back row: William Likins, Maude Likins, Ida Johnson, and Loren Likins.

in 1962, and Mae in 1965.

William had two daughters: Ellen Lou and Alberta Kay. They were raised on the home place 7 ½ miles southwest of Yoder, which was remodeled in 1951. Loren and Oletha moved from the farm in 1951 and built a home in Torrington.

Ellen and Alberta both graduated from Yoder High School and the University of Wyoming College of Education. Ellen was teaching in Chandler, Arizona when she met Richard Preston, raised on a ranch near Rozet, Wyoming. They later taught in Chugwater, Casper, and Rock River before returning to Yoder to run the ranch when Bill retired.

Alberta taught in Casper where she met Donald Haas. They moved to Shirley Basin where he was a mining engineer and she taught school. They traveled where his mining jobs took him. They have four children: William, Jonathan, Daniel, and Heather, all living in the Denver area. Alberta died in 2012. They have three grandchildren: Zac, Hunter, and Addison Alberta.

William Likins died in 1980 and his holdings were divided between the daughters. Ellen and Dick chose the ranch land and with their three children continued to ranch on the home place. The wheat land was chosen by Alberta and Don so they could manage it from afar with the help of renting it out.



Ellen Lou and Alberta Kay Likins, about 1942.



William Likins Family about 1942. Florence and William.

Ellen and Dick raised their three children on the ranch. Eric, Theodore, and Victoria attended Southeast Schools. Eric graduated from Southeast and Theodore and Victoria from Torrington High School. All three attended University of Wyoming where Ted received a BA and Law Degree and Eric received a MBA. Ellen taught second grade in Yoder for twenty five years until her retirement. The Preston children live in the Denver area. There are three grandchildren: Thomas Preston, Sofia Preston, and Aubrey Atkinson.



Homesteaders children: Morris Johnson, Ellen Likins Preston, Virginia Johnson Starkey, Alma Johnson Anker, Dan Johnson, and Alberta Likins Haas.



The homestead in 1925.



Heather Haas.



Penny and Jonathan in back, Alberta and Don Haas seated.



Dan, Bill, Zac, Don, and Jonathan Haas.



The Preston Family Thanksgiving, 2014 Theodore Preston, Kristi Radosevich Preston, Richard Preston, Ellen Likins Preston, Sofia Preston, Victoria Preston, Aubrey Atkinson, Thomas Preston, and Eric Preston.



Gov. Matthew H. Mead, Rep. Cynthia Lummis, Likins Family, Sen. Mike Enzi.

Loetscher Farm & Ranch, 1916

The Loetscher Family, Laramie County



Aerial view Loetscher Farm and Ranch buildings taken in the summer of 1995.

Written by Cathy Loetscher as told to her by Richard Loetscher, David Loetscher, and Shirley Loetscher (Sorick)

In May of 1916, brothers Herman and Calvin Loetscher, along with their father Christian, came from Sibley, Iowa to find a new place to start fresh. Christian helped his two sons purchase a section of ground about eight miles north, and a bit west of Burns, Wyoming. Returning home, Herman and Calvin put supplies on the wagon, tied the cow behind, hitched the team, and drove them to the railroad where they loaded all in a box car for the trip west to Wyoming. The adventure of creating a home far from their Swiss roots was just beginning. Herman, a 25 year old school teacher, and Calvin, a bit younger, worked to create a homestead to be

proud of. The first building erected was the horse barn which served as quarters for the animals and men alike. A snug little home and a hen house that would house 75 hens was added. They drilled a well, then put up a Dempster wooden windmill on that well. The original wooden tower still stands today. "Mr. Spatz", a neighbor, broke the south quarter section up for them and they planted wheat. These were busy years.

During WW1 both men served in the Army. Herman served at Fort Riley, Kansas and Calvin served his time out at the front lines near Germany from 1918 to 1919. They leased the place out until the war was over and they could return home and get back to work.

Early in 1920, they built the granary, shop, cow barn, and planted a tree shelter belt as a windbreak. Herman also married Miss Lucinda Steege in March at the nearly completed Lutheran Church in Burns that year. Neighbors like Mr. Philip Weber and sons helped the men harvest their wheat with a horse drawn header and hay racks. They put the wheat into stacks, which later went into the threshing machine when it came through. Sharing labor with a neighbor like Mr. Weber was how men got ahead, because no one had money to hire help. Trading day work was the common practice of the day as it is today. Later the brothers added another quarter section of ground as it came available. This quarter section adjoined their land and was ready to be planted, allowing the farm to grow a bit more.

Herman and Calvin grew wheat, corn, oats for the horses, chickens, pigs, a small herd of Hereford cows, and a bull, allowing the family to always have two or three cows for fresh milk. Most of the calves were sold as yearlings, but each year a steer was held back and fed grain to supply meat for the family.

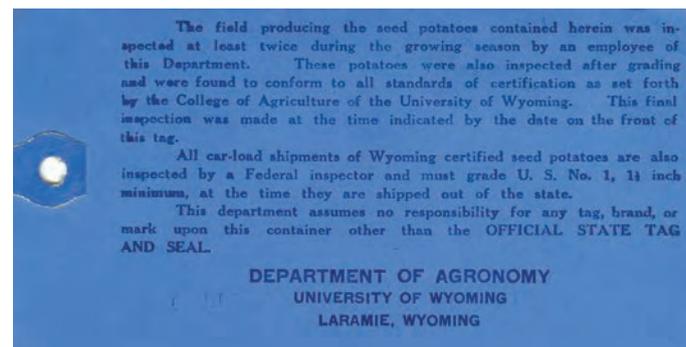
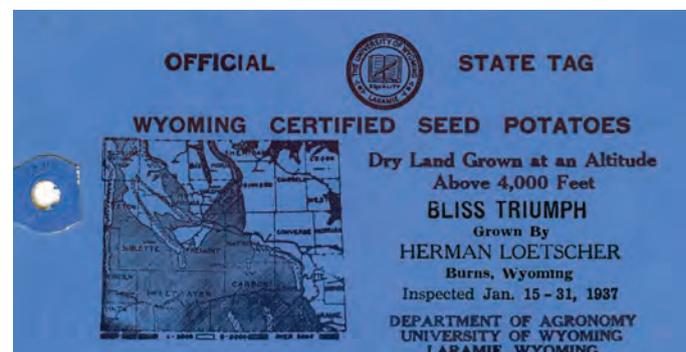
Herman grew Wyoming Certified Seed Potatoes (Bliss Triumph) from 1932 until 1937 on 160 acres. The tag states, "Wyoming Certified Seed Potatoes. Dry Land Grown at an altitude above 4,000 feet, Bliss Triumph. Grown by Herman Loetscher, Burns Wyoming Inspected Jan 15-31, 1937, Department of Agronomy University of Wyoming." Herman would use horse drawn equipment when he planted and cultivated the potatoes.

In 1932, they dug a huge potato cellar with several horse drawn Fresno scrapers to store the potatoes. Herman used his tractor to dig potatoes by pulling the potato digger behind him. Hired help would gather the potatoes by putting a sack between their legs and walking down the rows filling the bags to one third full and then putting the potatoes on the wagon. The wagon would take them to the cellar where they would be stored, and later sorted and

bagged. They had a 32-volt gas powered generator in the shop which powered the sorting table and lights. Eventually the potatoes would be hauled to the railroad and loaded on the box car to be shipped in 100 pound burlap sacks, which had tops hand sewed by needle and string with a certified tag attached.

1937 saw the last of the potatoes; the land shifted back to wheat, oats, corn, barley, and alfalfa for hay. They had a binder replacing the header as a harvesting machine. The farming processes changed as new machines came in.

Burns was a two and half hour trip by horse, buggy, or wagon in the early days. Later it would be less but still 30-40 minutes as the roads were rutted and hard to travel. Not until 1937-38 did they buy a car, all the family was now able to go all the way to Cheyenne. There they sold eggs to the store to help offset the grocery bill.



Front and back sides of Certified Seed Potato tag from 1937 that was attached to 100 lbs bags of potatoes before sold.

In the mid-1930s, Herman and Lucinda (Lucy) bought out Calvin, letting their young family of four kids spread out in the house. They were blessed with Ruth, Shirley, Richard, David, and later Kenneth. In 1935, Calvin moved three miles to the east and rented a home on a 320-acre farm. He got married and started his family in 1936. Herman and Calvin still helped each other at harvest, beef, and hog butchering times. Together they purchased a Baldwin combine and together worked their wheat harvests. The older children of Herman were put to work pushing wheat off trucks with the shovel into the elevator pit or into Calvin's gas powered elevator hopper. As they grew, the older children would help by driving the tractors and trucks part time during harvest season.

Lucy always baked homemade bread, cookies, pies, and cakes in a coal stove oven in the kitchen. Like many farm women, she still found time for making good meals; keeping the clothes clean, ironed, and mended; and sewing dresses for her two young daughters. She was famous community-wide for her tasty 4-6" x 1" maple flavored frosted "Rubber Necks" doughnuts. Lucy always cooked the noon meal for the threshing crews and later the combine harvest crews. She enjoyed embroidering fancies on dish towels. She always kept lots of goodies on hand for visitors, just ask any of the grandchildren about the amount of and great taste of them. Lucy's life was made a lot easier when the propane stove showed up, but the baking stayed the same. Delicious! For many years, Lucy wrote the North Burns column in the Pine Bluffs post. She was also a member of the Ladies Aid club.

Herman was on the school board, as well as a major member of the Coop. He was well known for his smoked beef and wild meat. All five of their children went to school in and graduated from Burns. Herman passed in 1971, leaving his wife Lucy and their son David to continue on the farm. Lucy passed in 1986 and David took over the farm and has seen it through to today's 100-year mark. We hope he will continue for many more years.



Herman and Lucy Loetscher celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary in March at the home where they spent all of their married life.



House built in 1917, with porch added in 1925, and bathroom in 1946.



Chicken house was built in 1923 that held 75 hens.



Horse barn was first building to be built in 1916 and was converted to a chicken house in 1940.



David Loetscher with his pet coon, winter of 1953.



32V wind charger was erected in 1940 to help keep batteries charged and took a big load off the gas generator.



Dempster windmill with a wooden wheel. The wooden wheel was taken down in the 1950s and replaced with electric pump.



Granary was built in 1920 and has a drive-thru in the center with a pit to dump grain into and vertical elevator to distribute grain to all six large bins.



John Deere model D 1926 tractor with all steel wheels. Rough riding and hard steering but better than horses.



Rep. Cynthia Lummis, Loetscher Family, Gov. Matthew H. Mead, Sen. Mike Enzi.

The Malli Ranch, 1916

Riley & MaryLou Malli, Sheridan County



Riley & MaryLou Malli.



Skye Malli.

John Malli (Granddad) came to the United States in 1906 from Austria. He settled in Arvada, Wyoming in 1916. He married Theresia Kostenbaur in 1906 in Gerard, Kansas. They had three children: Cecilia (1905), John Herman (1908), and Gusti (1910). Granddad dug the coal mine on his homestead by hand and shored and timbered it himself. Most of the people in Arvada and the surrounding areas purchased their coal from him. Sometime in the 1950s, the mine was closed because it developed bad air. Granddad also raised cattle on the ranch and farmed it. He was a talented musician playing the violin for many dances and weddings.

Granddad owned and operated the homestead until 1947, when he sold it to his son Gusti. Gusti married Evelyn Collins in 1936. Gusti and Evelyn had four children: Norma (1938), Buz (1940), Riley (1944), and Donna (1945). Gusti added several parcels to increase the size of the homestead. Gusti farmed and raised cattle on the ranch. He was also a bus driver for eleven years.

Riley and Mary Lou purchased the homestead in

1973 from Gusti and Evelyn. They were married in 1967. A new house was built on the homestead that summer. Prior to purchasing the Malli Homestead, Riley and Mary Lou leased land to raise hay, sheep, and cattle.

Riley raised cattle, sheep, and hogs on the ranch. He also became a bigger farmer raising wheat. He sold 1000 bushel of wheat for \$5.00 a bushel. Riley had a two bottom plow and a 1951 Ford Tractor he borrowed from his Dad. Breaking up more ground, he purchased a used XT190 and bigger equipment. Trouble was expected with the XT190 and everyday something would go wrong. Answers came when Riley hauled it to town and a new 7020 Allis Chalmer came home. Larger equipment came along after the new big tractor. Granaries were added to store the abundant wheat and oat crops.

In 1984, a big steel shed was added making lambing and calving much easier. We were able to keep new livestock safe and warm. Later, a smaller red shed came for older lambs and calves, shielding them from the weather. 2009 saw a Massey Ferguson

tractor added to the operation. There were three blizzards that spring. We managed to save several calves with the new loader. The new tractor went right through the snow banks and the cab held both of us!

The fourth generation of Malli's started to arrive in 1968 with the birth of Riley LeRoy. Steven arrived in 1970, Michelle in 1973, and Brandon in 1978. The year 2000 saw the fifth generation of Malli's arrive to LeRoy and Kris (Loomis) Malli. Riley Wendall was born May 10th, 2000. Colin arrived September 17th, 2001, and twin girls, Krista and Kerri, on June 6th, 2013. Our second fifth generation arrived to Steve and Jonela (Gribble) Malli on August 8th, 2001 with John. Sheldon was born December 23rd, 2013 and Skye, November 8th, 2007. Our two oldest sons and families also live on the ranch. LeRoy and Kris raise cattle and sheep along with owning and operating the Arvada Bar & Grill. Steve and Jonela raise cattle, sheep, and goats along with owning and operating Malli Excavation & Trucking.



Gusti, John, Riley, and Evelyn Malli.



John and Teresia Malli.



LeRoy, Kris, Riley, Colin, Kristi, and Kerri Malli.



Riley & MaryLou Malli.

Michelle lives in Sheridan, where she has worked since graduating from the University of Wyoming. She married Arthur Dodds Jr. Brandon graduated from DeVry University in Phoenix, Arizona. He currently is working and living in Austria. Our youngest son returned to the country that his Great Grandad John left one hundred years ago. Life has come full circle.



Riley, Mary Lou, LeRoy, Steve, Michelle, and Brandon Malli.



Arthur Dodds, Michelle (Malli) Dodds, Brandon Malli.



Steve and Jonela Malli.



Sheldon and John Malli.



Riley and Mary Lou Malli.



Gov. Matthew H. Mead, Malli Family, Rep. Cynthia Lummis, Sen. Mike Enzi.

JF Ranch, Inc., 1916

The Jay & Sandy McGinnis Family, Sublette County



Left: William J. McGinnis and Mary Hawk Moore on their wedding day, July 2, 1876. Right: Vic and William J. II on stacker.

When you are asked to give a little history about a piece of land you have owned for a hundred years, it is a little easier if you start at the beginning of it all. Then you know that it went full circle to his second great grandson.

William John McGinnis was born May 5, 1848 in Adair County, Kentucky. He was the fourth child and eldest boy. He joined the Union Army at the age of 14 on December 26, 1862, 13th Cavalry, Company C and mustered out March 10, 1865 during the Civil War. After the war they moved to Missouri and he later came to Utah and Nevada, where he worked in the silver mines in Park City. On July 2, 1876 William J. McGinnis married Mary Hawk Moore in Salt Lake City, Utah. While in Utah they had four children: Carolyn Mary (Carrie), Anderson, Miranda, and Lucilla (Lulu). There were also two half siblings from William's earlier marriage: Amantha, and Joseph.

In 1886 William was having problems with his lungs from working in the Park City, Utah silver mine so he decided to try and get on with a wagon train to Names Hill on the Green River and maybe go to Oregon. On the trip, Carrie and Anderson were the cowboys. They drove the cattle and the wagon along the trail. William bought 50

head of cattle from different ranchers in Parleys Canyon. They were mostly milk cows with one calf. They traveled for three weeks and came to Roney Pomeroy's home on Fontenelle Creek. The Pomeroy's took them in and gave them food and a place to sleep. Mr. Pomeroy told the McGinnis family there would not be any more wagon trains until spring. Mr. Pomeroy said that there was a settler on La Barge Creek that had moved out and left a cabin that could be fixed up for the winter. It was the end of October in 1886. The cabin had a dirt roof, dirt floor, and no more than deerskins for the windows and doors. William headed back to Evanston, the closest settlement, to get supplies and the necessary things to make the cabin livable for the winter. Their fifth child, William John II, was born on February 18, 1887. The McGinnises decided to stay and not go to Oregon. They had a house, a place for cattle, and good neighbors. Mr. Tilford Kutches, his Indian wife, and several children were living there. The one fence in the whole area was a buck fence surrounding 100 acres that Tilford Kutches had built. The only two white families living in the La Barge area were the Hedevig Miller family and the Robert McIlvains family. Mr. Tilford Kutches, Mr. John McNish, and Robert McIlvains helped William cut logs on Miller Mountain so he could build two more rooms onto the cabin. It was completed for the winter of 1887-88.

Mr. Alexander Reel of the Spur Ranch had assured William if he branded his cattle they would be cared for along with the other cattle on the range. The cattle ran on the open range from the City of Green River to the head of the Green River. Some of the cattle of William McGinnis bought on the trail to Wyoming had a lazy P-L on the left rib, so he decided to add the lazy J and H. Mr. Reel helped put the brand on and laughed that no one could work that brand over. William McGinnis took up a preemption claim of 160 acres and a desert claim of 240 acres where he was living. In the spring of 1888, a Bannock Indian who said he was Chief



William J. McGinnis II and Mamie Hanson wedding day, September 20, 1908.



Marjorie, about 5 years old in 1921, headed to the one room school up Dry Piney Creek with her horse and lunch can.



Bill on Farmall.

Powagie traded the McGinnis family two horses for two sacks of flour to feed his people. Other Indians would stop by and brought the girls beads which they loved. The sixth child, Asa Edwin, was born in 1889. Asa drowned in La Barge Creek on November 15, 1890.

In February 1890, there was rain, sleet, and then snow that put a layer of ice on the ground. March was worse than February. They had a blizzard for several days and it was very cold. This was called “The Equalizer Winter” because no one had any cattle left when spring came. William and Robert McIlivian spent two days hauling dead cows out of Spring Creek, which was their water supply. Some riders came by and said, “A person could walk from Big Piney to Green River City by skipping from one carcass to another.” William had 25 head of steers on the desert that he lost but the bulk of his herd he had at the ranch and was feeding them hay. If he would not have shoveled snow from the grass on the creek bottom for additional feed, he would have lost his entire herd. William came home and gathered all of the family together. He said, “I got nothing left but my family and my horse, but by golly, we’ll show this old world we’re never licked yet. I’ll go back to the mines and work ‘till I get enough money to stock up again.” This winter was the starting of much sagebrush grubbing and hay raising.

In 1898, they finally moved from the cabin on La Barge Creek into their new home on the Green River: a large, two-story house built with logs hauled by teams miles away in the mountains at the head of Dry Piney Creek. The new McGinnis home lay about half way between the Union Pacific railroad stations at Opal and Pinedale, and so it became known as Midway. Midway was appointed by the attorney general as a post office in 1906, and Mary McGinnis served as postmaster for the northbound mail for 26 years. By now there were two more children, a daughter Olive Irwin born in 1893 and a son, Frank Roy, born in 1900. The older children were soon branching off with families of their own. The oldest, Carrie, was married at Midway and moved to Nebraska with her husband. Lucilla married John Budd on May 21, 1905 and moved to his Meadow Canyon ranch north of Big Piney. Anderson married Delia Whitman on July

8, 1906. William John married Mamie Hanson on September 20, 1908.

Meanwhile, with the flats (“Starvation Flats”) homesteaded in 1898 now producing hay, William bought six hundred head of Durham cattle from southern Utah. At last the lazy JHPL was “off the ground” and began to prosper. William was to buy the homesteads of Bob Anderson and James Bess on La Barge Creek and the George Whitman homestead below them. In 1911, he incorporated his holdings under the name McGinnis Land & Cattle Company.

Rody Thornton had begun ranching in the early 1880s on Dry Piney Creek just over the hills west of Midway. After the winter of ‘89 left so much rangeland vacated, Mr. Thornton had brought about a thousand head of cattle up from Texas. Rody Thornton had bought the John Knowlen and William Vickery homestead along the river shortly after William and Mary Hawk Moore moved to Midway. Rody Thornton died in 1912, and in 1916 the McGinnis Land & Cattle Co. bought his estate from his heirs. Anderson and Delia then moved onto the Thornton lands on the Green River below Midway. Anderson used the Thornton Figure Four brand to start his own herd of cattle. William John II took the Bar UF for his brand. William John II was married to Mamie Hanson and living at the George Whitman homestead on La Barge Creek.

William John McGinnis had suffered from “miners’ consumption” for several years, and when he developed pneumonia in 1919, it was to prove too much. He died in Salt Lake City on April 28, 1919, at the age of 71 years. After his death the McGinnis Land & Cattle was dissolved and his estate divided. Anderson got the land below Midway where he and Delia had built their home. He took the Lazy JHPL brand. Miranda married Walter C. Yose on December 12, 1917 and they got Midway when the property was divided. William John II and Mamie got the Anderson-Bess place on La Barge Creek. Frank married Isabella Stacy in 1920 and they built their home on the east bench overlooking La Barge Creek. Isabella passed away just five years later and in 1928 Frank married her sister Viola. Frank and Viola never had any children. He would



William J. McGinnis III in 1938 at Dry Piney.

lease Mamie’s acreage, also known as the Grandma McGinnis place. Mary Hawk Moore passed away, at the age of 94 years old, in Salt Lake City on December 31, 1949.

William John II and Mamie McGinnis were at Midway when their first son, Aaron Hanson, was born on July 6, 1909. A few years later they moved to Olathe, Colorado and purchased a farm on eighty acres where two more sons were born: William John III (Bill) on February 29, 1912 and Victor Samuel on November 12, 1913. William John II was homesick for the wide expanses and the cowboy life of his childhood, and being urged to return because his father’s health was failing. He brought his family back to Wyoming in 1915. When they moved into the Rody Thornton home ranch on Dry Piney, a daughter, Marjorie, was born on August 16, 1916. The last child, a daughter named Mary Nell, was born on August 5, 1920 in Salt Lake City, the first child to be born in a hospital.

William John II spent most of his life accumulating more land. Along with the home ranch, he got the old Horse Ranch, patented to Daniel C. Nowlin in 1895 and by him to R. Thornton in 1898, then sold to McGinnises in 1916. He then added the homestead of two brothers, Charles and Jay Allen; their land adjoined the Horse Ranch. Still later, when sheep were threatening to take the surrounding range, he used his homestead rights to file a homestead where Black Canyon and South Sawmill Creeks run in Dry Piney Creek; Mamie filed a desert claim below that and they bought another piece of land that belonged to Mrs.



Mary Nell on sweep.

Haddenham. After the patents on his homestead and the desert came through he bought the Herman Whitman homestead alongside them, thus uniting most of the upper Dry Piney basin into one holding. Meanwhile, the Bar UF was outgrowing the feed that Dry Piney could provide for winter so William John II bought the Millison Homestead on the east bank of the Green River in 1929. They ran their stock under the Lazy JF brand.

William John III married Jane Emma McGee of Whittier, California on September 18, 1947 at his parents' home on the Spur Ranch. When Bill started making a herd of his own, he took the lazy JF brand and it is still in use today.

After Alexander Reel had died many years before, his wife had sold it to the Metcalf Land Company of Iowa. They had then bought the ranches of Ralph M. Friend and Hyrum Smith (the lower spur), all of which had belonged to the Territorial Spur Ranch. In 1922 Metcalf land had leased these lands to James (Doc) Sims who used them as the headquarters for his sheep operation. William John II could only raise enough money to buy the Hyrum Smith place at this time. A rancher at Opal, Algot Larson, bought the lower Spur and "Doc" continued to lease it from Larson. William John II moved from the Home Ranch after school was out in 1934.

In 1940 William John II bought the Frank McGinnis spread. When "Doc" Sims, in failing health, retired in 1944, William John II bought the Old Reel lower Spur from Algot Larson. To clear financial



Bill McGinnis building a walking bridge over Green River.

obligations William John II sold the Frank Roy McGinnis place to the Chrismans and the upper spur La Barge rangeland to Rube Fox and Doyle Twitchel. Victor received the Hyrum Smith Place. Victor and Dorothy retired from ranching and bought the Mercantile in La Barge from Dorothy's father and sold the Hyrum place to Jack and Lynda Sims in 1972. Bill had added the Home Ranch and the Wash Whitman places to his JF spread and a homestead on the west side of the Green River adjoining the Millison place and including the range on Pine Grove Ridge.

Marjorie McGinnis married Clarence Brawley and lived in La Barge. In 1940 they bought the lower Spur from her dad, William John II, and he threw in the lands he had above the old Horse Ranch, known as the Allen place. Later, they purchased the Horse Ranch. Mary Nell went to high school in Laramie, then on to Chicago's Art Institute. When the war broke out her parents felt that she was not safe in Chicago and moved her to Colorado Springs. She attended the Art Institute there and met and married her husband James Snobble in Cripple Creek on June 4, 1949. Mary Nell has one daughter, Heidi, born March 1, 1950, and they both live in Sequim, Washington.

In 1965 William John II moved to Banning, California and on August 26, 1968, Mamie Hanson McGinnis died. William John McGinnis II died May 19, 1970 in Riverside California.

When Newt Sims died, Clarence and Marjorie



Victor McGinnis in 1938 at Dry Piney.

bought that part of the Spur Ranch from his heirs; with it they got his sheep grazing rights and to that they soon added the Minton, Jory, and Bertot acreages along the foot of the Hogsback. To supplement their income Clarence became involved with heavy equipment and a trucking business. They then sold their holdings and cattle to Bill in 1974 when he was incorporating his property with his daughter Laurie and son William John IV (Jay). So that he would not have to rebrand the cattle, Marjorie let the F Bench brand go with that transaction. The F Bench is used on the cattle of the JF Ranch Inc. still to this day. Marjorie died of an automobile accident on December 16, 2003 at the age of 87 years old.

William John McGinnis III (Bill) lived on the east side of the Green River five miles south of Big Piney with his wife Jane and two children. In 1978 Bill suffered a stroke and his son William John IV



William J. McGinnis III and Jane Emma McGee.

(Jay) had to come home and take over the duties of running the ranch. At that time Jay was only 22 years old. Some small changes have taken place. One is replacing the herd of Herefords with Black Angus. Another is purchasing the Lewis place on Beaver Creek in 1992, which was owned by Alice McGinnis Schaffer. In 1988, Jay purchased the Grandma McGinnis place on La Barge Creek.

Jay married Sandra Lange on September 28 1996 on the Green River below the ranch. To this union two children were born: Elizabeth on October 18, 1997, and Maxwell on July 19, 1999. On October 29, 1998 Bill died in Pinedale Wyoming. Jane and Jay continued to operate the JF Ranch Inc. together until her death in January 16, 2000. JF Ranch is now solely owned by William John McGinnis IV and encompasses about 10,000 acres. Jay, his wife Sandy, and their two children keep the ranch going by being a family that lives together and works



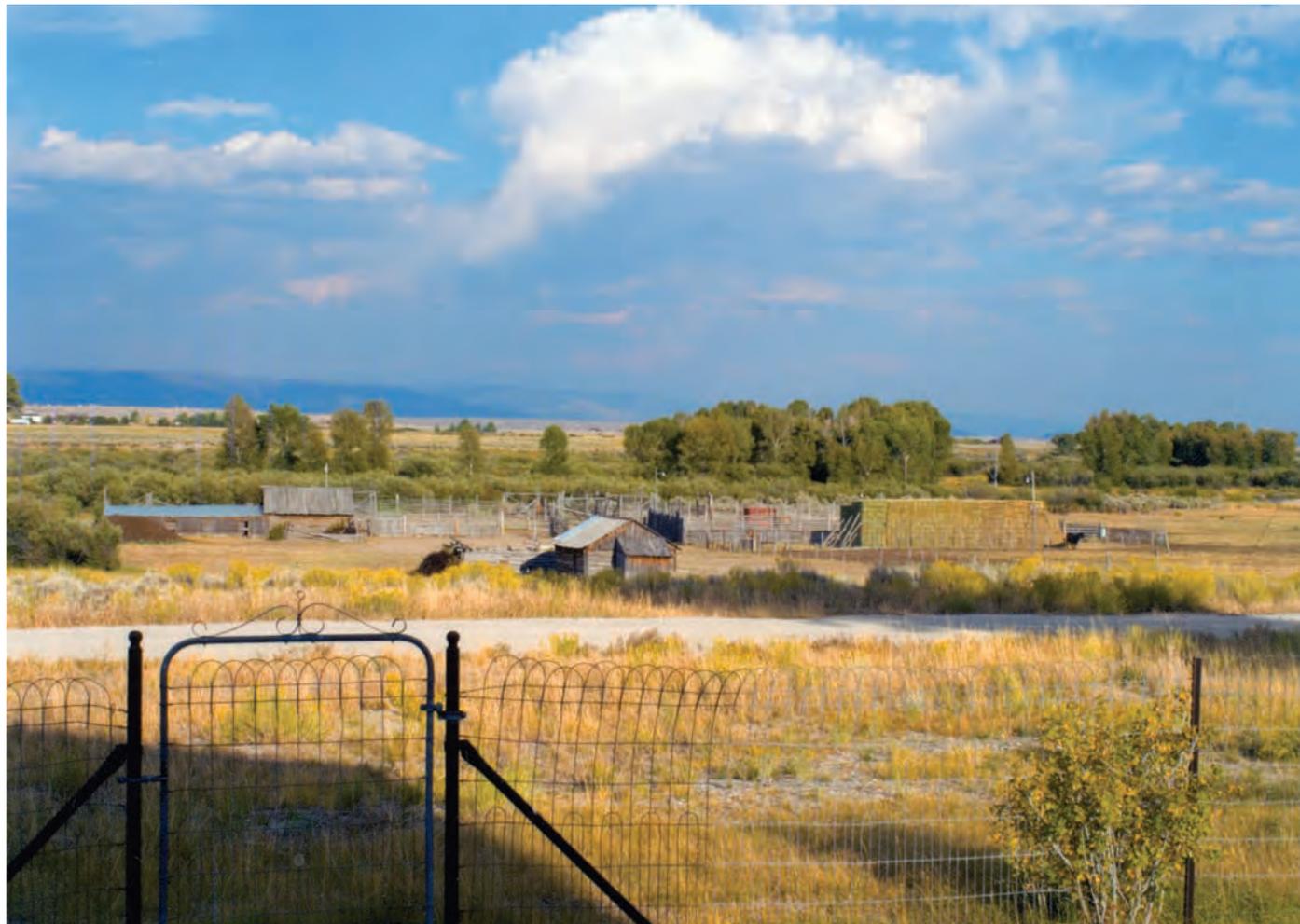
William J. McGinnis IV (Jay) Family: Sandy, Jay, Maxwell, and Elizabeth.

together. We all do our part; Jay and Max are the machine people, Sandy and Elizabeth are the animal people, except for haying then we do it all.

Most of this information was from stories written by Marjorie McGinnis Brawley, the remainder came from Jay McGinnis.

Mocroft Ranch, 1912

The Mocroft Family, Sublette County



Ranch, corrals, and hay.

Arthur Mocroft and Effie Jane Bowen Mocroft owned a ranch in the Sandhills of Nebraska. They had five children: Dwight, Inez, Lester, Willard, and Harley.

In 1910 or 1911 Arthur went hunting with his brother-in-law in Yellowstone National Park (hunting in Yellowstone was allowed then). Arthur liked the western part of Wyoming and he decided to buy a ranch there. In 1912 he bought property on the New Fork River, south of the newly formed town of Pinedale. He purchased the land from the Bloom family, who had put together several homesteads.

When the Mocroft family moved to Wyoming they lived in homestead cabins that had been left on the Bloom ranch. There was no bridge and they had to ford the river. The winters were very cold and filled with snow but the landscape, including the view of the Wind River Mountains, was beautiful.

The ranch in the Sandhills had been productive and Effie never really liked Wyoming as much as Nebraska, but to feel more at home, she ordered a “prairie style” house from the Sears and Roebuck catalog. This house is much like houses that can still be seen in Nebraska. Arthur and all of his sons put the house together, with the help of neighbors.

A bridge was built and new meadows were planted. Not long after the home ranch was established, Arthur and his sons ran cattle on communal grazing land in the Upper Green near Cora, Wyoming. Later, Arthur purchased the O Bar Y. Arthur's son Lester took over that ranch and raised cattle and hay there, but the snowbound winters became too difficult for his wife and daughter. He sold the ranch in the 1940s and he and his family moved to Colorado. Lester was an excellent carpenter. He worked as a building contractor in Colorado, though he never stopped missing Wyoming and ranching.

Dwight, Arthur's and Effie's oldest son, was very skilled with photography, film-making, and electronics. He owned a garage and, eventually, the first power plant in Pinedale. In these businesses he had a partner named Mollring. Also, at one time, Dwight was the mayor of Pinedale. Inez, the only daughter of Arthur and Effie, went to nursing school in Nebraska; she became a nurse and married a doctor. They lived in Falls City, Nebraska. Willard Mocroft died when he was only nineteen.

Harley Mocroft, the youngest son, continued to work on the home ranch and also homesteaded in the Upper Green. Around the time of homesteading he met and married Margaret Kinniburgh from Green River. She was a grade school teacher in Green River, but they met at a dance in a town called New Fork. This area no longer exists as a town, but the original store and dance hall are still standing. About four years after Harley and Margaret married, Arthur and Effie moved to Pinedale, where Arthur was one of the first county commissioners and Effie continued to create oil paintings. She had always painted, but had more time for painting while living in town.

Harley and Margaret became the sole owners of the main ranch. They raised sheep for a while, but later went back to cattle. Aside from ranching, Harley had always been interested in machines. He built an aluminum snowplane with four skis and an airplane engine. He and snowmobiling friends made one of the first trips into Yellowstone Park in the winter. Harley and Margaret had two daughters who are now the General Partners of the Mocroft Ranch: Sylvia Sandoval and Harlene Maloney.



Arthur and Effie Mocroft.



Margaret Kinniburgh Mocroft (1932).



Before TV – Friend and Arthur Mocroft playing marbles.

Dwight Mocroft Jr., the son of Harley's brother Dwight, lived on the Mocroft Ranch after his father and mother, Margery, both died in 1937. Dwight Jr. helped with ranch work until he went to college, then joined the Air Force, and later became an accountant in Idaho.

Harlene's three children, who lived in California, were always happy when they visited the ranch, and they became Limited Partners: David Maloney, Matthew Maloney, and Sylvia Wagner. Today Harlene's six grandchildren and one great grandchild continue to make trips to the ranch whenever possible and the ranch stays in the family.

The ranch all began with Arthur's interest in hunting and it has become a wonderful refuge for wildlife.



Sylvia and Harlene Mocroft on wood house steps (1930s).



Chuck wagon in Upper Green - Lester Mocroft on the right.



Bridge across the New Fork.



Dwight Mocroft.



Willard Mocroft.



Harley and abandoned wildlife calf (1930s).



Lester Mocroft, unidentified friend, and Inez Mocroft, on the right.



Harley Mocroft with sunflower.



David Maloney, Matthew Maloney, and Harley Mocroft on motorcycle (late 1960s).



Sylvia Mocroft, Dwight Mocroft, and Harlene Mocroft on the way to school (1940s).



Harley's snowplane.



Sears & Roebuck House (just built).



House in 1977 (currently looks much the same).



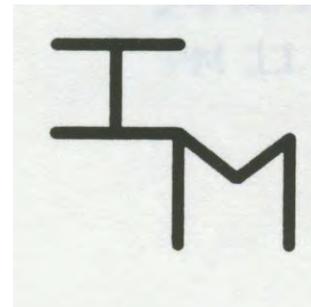
Haying before any motorized machinery was used.



Sylvia Maloney and hummingbird (early 1970s).



Harley Mcroft (1932).



The Moore Ranch, 1916

The Moore Family, Campbell County



William "Will" Grant Moore and Laura Ann Stuteville wedding picture. December 25, 1895.



One of the earliest pictures taken of Moore Ranch. Freighting goods and materials to the homestead, 1916.

William Grant Moore was born in Missouri on February 2, 1864. As a young man he worked around livestock, running cattle of his own at an early age on Indian land in "the Nations" which is now Oklahoma. He also trained harness horses for the track, mostly working with or for some cousins at Monmouth, Illinois by the name of Morris. His parents had moved to Missouri in 1852 from London, Ohio. They were descendants of the earliest pioneers in that region, some of them dating back to Revolutionary War times.

In 1889, about the time the Burlington and Missouri Railroad decided to build a line through Northeast Wyoming, the horse and mule market tanked. Will Moore and his partner found themselves stuck with a large string of broke mules. In early 1891 he subcontracted to the B&M Railroad to build a large part of grade up Donkey Creek. Some of the grade built west of Gillette was to extend to Buffalo, but tracks were never laid on that part of the grade. An engineer named Edward Gillette chose a shorter easier route to the north by Burlington Lake to extend to Sheridan. Because of the troubles and unrest of the Johnson County War, tracks were never laid into Buffalo.

In the spring of 1892 Will sold out to his partner and returned to Missouri. He married Laura Ann Stuteville, daughter of Bozwell and Abigail Stuteville, on December 25, 1895 in Lineville, Iowa. Laura was born December 2, 1869. Will and Laura farmed, ranched and trained horses near Powersville, Missouri. They also had a restaurant in Powersville.

David "Boz" Bozwell was born September 23, 1896 and on February 18, 1898 the couple's only other child to live to adulthood was born and was named Lancelot "Lance" Paul Moore. Having worked in and seen the potential of Wyoming for grazing livestock in the early 1890s, and feeling overcrowded by the populations in Missouri, Will and Laura with Lance returned to Wyoming

in 1916.

In the spring of 1916, Will Moore filed on a 640 acre homestead on Four Mile Creek east of the Pumpkin Buttes in Southern Campbell County. There is a rock on 4 Mile Creek, east of the current ranch buildings that reads L.P. Moore June 10, 1916. They had a camp near the Rockpile in Gillette during the winter of 1916-1917. The camp was used as a base for assembling loads of goods brought from Missouri and lumber and building materials to be moved to the homestead.

Will returned to Missouri in early 1917 to conclude business and sent Boz out in March 1917 to finish freighting goods from Gillette to the homestead. This was the first time Boz had seen the Pumpkin Buttes area.

Lance and Boz both served in World War I. After their return from the service, Will and the boys began raising, training, and trading draft horses, as well as, farming, freighting, and raising livestock. Will Moore died of a heart condition on July 18, 1923. Laura continued to live on the ranch for many years. On December 24, 1930 she married Charles M. Fordyce a widowed neighbor two miles to the south, whose homestead Robert Roush currently owns. Laura was an accomplished poet, songwriter, and carpenter. Charles Fordyce passed away in March 1961 and Laura in May 1964.

Lance and Maybell were married in 1923. In the 1920s and 30s Lance was a well-known hunter and trapper of coyotes in the Pumpkin Butte area. Lance and Maybell ran sheep until 1941 when they sold out to his mother and moved to Chandler, Arizona because of health reasons. He was employed as the foreman of a civilian welding crew at Williams Field (Williams AFB), now Mesa Airport, during World War II. He later fabricated steel tanks with a partner named Kelley from Douglas, Wyoming. He also had cattle in a feedlot and owned a Dairy Queen restaurant. He drove school bus in his later years. Lance passed away in Mesa, Arizona in July of 1956.

Until 1920, Boz freighted for himself and his father and worked for Earl Camblin and Fred Christensen



Boz Moore on a well broke horse at ranch in 1919.

doing general ranch work, freighting being the largest share of his work. Usually all of his horses except a lead team and a wheel team belonged to someone else, for whom he broke them for the use of them. His outfit usually consisted of 8 or 10 head of horses and two wagons. After about 1920 he freighted on his own hauling wool, grain, lumber, cottonseed cake, and general ranch supplies until about 1925. About 1921, Boz hauled oats to the Salt Creek Oil Field and sold them there. There was good money in buying oats here and selling them on "the other side of Pine Ridge" where things were booming. The life of a freighter was kind of rough. Once when relating a story about bad roads and cold weather, Boz was asked "Why would you want to do that?" He never stuttered in answering, "Easy! I owned some wagons, some harnesses, a lead team, a wheel team, and a couple of extra horses. If I loaded both ways from Pumpkin Buttes to Gillette, I could gross one hundred eighty dollars a week and expenses weren't too bad. Top cowboy wages were around forty-five dollars a month and that was no bed of roses either."

About this time he was hired as a teamster and later promoted to grade boss by Smokey Rowan who was in charge of the grade operations for the North and South railroad, a branch of the Chicago & Northwestern, which was completed from Casper to Salt Creek in 1923. Boz was a good hand with draft horses and always said that if you fit your collars right and adjusted your harness right there was no excuse for sore shoulders. He continued to work horses for many years.

Once when he was hauling oats to Salt Creek he stopped overnight at Bill Taylor's. It was snowing hard and Bill wanted to buy oats. Boz said he was too close to the oilfield to take less than oilfield price. Bill's offer was less. Boz pulled his wagons into the round corral to keep the loose stock away from them and fed his horses in the barn. In the morning it was still snowing. Bill didn't think Boz could get his wagons out of the corral without coupling them. Boz said "Bill, if I can't pull these wagons out the same way they came in I'll unload them here at your price. If I can I'll take oilfield price or go on down the road." Bill got his oats but he paid Salt Creek price.

About 1925, trucks were replacing teamsters; Boz went into the sheep business with his mother and brother running up to 3500 head. The first sheep were acquired from Ted Marquiss in 1924. The following year he purchased yearling ewes from Alex Archibald.

During the tough winter of 1935-1936, Boz hauled hay on a huge bob sled behind six head from All Night Creek to a point near the ranch where he had well water for the stock. Once, snow was drifted particularly badly making it necessary to load from the opposite side of the stack. Boz's step brother, Pearl Fordyce, didn't think Boz could get the sled in there without tearing off some fence, which wasn't going to be easy. Boz just picked up the lines, whistled to his lead team and a few seconds later Pearl said "You made that look easy!" The sled stilt sits in front of the house at the ranch.

On April 22, 1925 he married a school teacher named Elsie Anderson. She was born June 3, 1905 in Otoe County, Nebraska. They were parents of



Aerial view of Moore Ranch taken in June 2010. Looking up Fourmile Creek towards the Pumpkin Buttes. Photograph by Gary Marquiss.



Boz Moore with an eight horse string at ranch in 1919. Wagons probably loaded with cake.



Lance Moore returning from coyote hunt at Moore Ranch about 1926.



Baz Moore on bronc at East Camblens in about 1920. North Middle Butte in background.



Threshing grain on Moore Ranch in 1923. Boz Moore on separator.

two children: Laurent “Wayne” born November 22, 1928 and Norma Jean born July 27, 1941. Boz and Elsie later divorced.

Growing up, Wayne and Norma Jean were active in 4-H and Boz was a 4-H leader. Wayne was also active in the Gillette FFA Chapter. Norma Jean is a retired Librarian and teacher. She is also an accomplished author, living with her husband Don Abraham east of Pueblo, Colorado. She has a daughter, Jacqueline, who lives with her husband, Ely Sixby, and son, Parker in Lander, Wyoming. Jackie and Ely both work in the Lander school system.

Throughout and after his high school years Wayne helped his father on the ranch and raised registered Herefords. During this time the Ranch was known as the Mile High Hereford Ranch. Wayne attended the University of Wyoming, graduating with a degree in Agriculture. While attending

the University he met and married Patricia Jean Hubbard, daughter of Don and Lillian Hubbard. She was born November 4, 1927. Don Hubbard was recruited to play Cowboy football in 1924 and for years was the minority leader in the Wyoming legislature. Wayne and Patricia were married December 19, 1948. Patricia graduated with a Geology degree from the University of Wyoming. Wayne and Patricia returned to the ranch in 1951.

Wayne enjoyed a healthy competition. Endurance races were held from Douglas to Gillette and from Upton to Spotted Horse in the early 50’s. Wayne had a big brown horse named “Pacer” that he raced from Douglas to Gillette. The race was usually won by Halbert Matheson on his blazed faced bay “Cheyenne”. Like his Grandmother, Wayne was a poet. From the ranch he wrote cowboy-dedicated stanzas such as the following: “When the land of the dusty rider, Was young and in her prime, I wouldn’t have given you 14 cents, To have lived in another time.”

In 1961 Wayne overcame a crash in a small plane which occurred a mile east of the house. Despite the prognosis that he would never walk again he overcame the odds and by summer 1962 was walking and working on the ranch again. Boz and Wayne continued running Herefords until 1965 when Wayne and Pat took the ranch over from Boz. Boz moved to Casper and was a Brand Inspector there well into his late 80s. Boz died in October 1990.

After taking over the ranch, Wayne and Patricia began to crossbreed Herefords with Angus cattle. They also continued to run sheep. Wayne and Patricia had three children: Timothy Michael “Mike” born November 4, 1951; Sharon Lynn and Sheryl Lee born October 14, 1954. As with Wayne and Norma Jean, all three kids were very active in 4-H and FFA and ranch activities in their youth. All three children attended college and pursued a degree in an agricultural field.

Sheryl married Jon Boroff July 5, 1980 in Pinedale. They run the Boroff Ranch in Daniel. They are the parents of two daughters: Kristen Ann, born August 23, 1983 and Kari Lynn, born August 19, 1985.



Lance and Boz Moore at ranch with a bronc about 1920.



Threshing grain on Moore Ranch in 1923. Boz Moore on separator.



Lambing season at the Moore Ranch in the late 1920s.

Kristen is married to Barnett Sporkin-Morrison who works for an agricultural input company; she is a veterinarian. They live in Shoteau, Montana with their children Adlai, 2, and newborn Esther. Kari is married to Adam Von Valkenburg and they are involved in his family's ranch operations in Walden, Colorado.

Sharon married Roger Porter a building contractor from North Carolina on August 1, 1981. Sharon is a librarian and they own a hay farm near Ranchester. They are parents to two boys: Russell Edward, born October 7, 1984 and Seth Michael, born in May 10, 1986. Russell, a civil engineer, is married to Katie Turner. They live in Anchorage, Alaska with their newborn son Riley. Seth is on the faculty at Georgia Tech University and lives in Atlanta, Georgia. He is engaged to Brittany Halseide.

Before coming back to the ranch Mike attended Casper College graduating in 1972 with a degree in Animal Science Technology. He then joined the Army National Guard in December 1971 and received an honorable discharge in December 1977. He worked for Halbert Matheson in 1973 moving back to the home ranch that same year. Mike married Dalene Elizabeth Clements, daughter of Bud and Janet Clements and granddaughter of one time Campbell County Sheriff Ted Holdeman, on December 6, 1974. They have four children: James David "J.D." born May 19, 1975; Stephanie Jan born June 1, 1979; Jennifer Diane born June 14, 1984; and Mathew "Todd" born January 27, 1986. Like generations before these children were very active in 4-H, FFA, and other youth organizations. Stephanie received her State FFA Degree and American FFA Degree. Todd received his State FFA Degree.

Mike and Dalene leased the place in 1988 continuing to raise cattle and sheep. Wayne passed away on August 3, 1996. Mike and Dalene sold the sheep in 2010. At the present time, the Moore family runs between 300 and 400 Black Angus cows. Patricia lived on the ranch until 2011; she now lives in the Primrose Retirement Home in Gillette.

Many of Mike and Dalene's children are still very

active in agriculture, raising cattle and working on the Moore Ranch.

J.D. received a certificate of Diesel Technology from Northern Wyoming Community College in 1995. He lives at the Dry Creek Ranch and works in the oilfield. He keeps busy raising his 3 year old son Bronson Michael. J.D. owns some livestock and helps on the ranch when he can.

Stephanie attended Casper College and Oklahoma Panhandle State University where she judged livestock and received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Agribusiness. Stephanie married Casey Styvar whom she met while attending Casper College. Stephanie and Casey were married May 27, 2006. Stephanie received her Master's degree in Animal and Veterinary Science from the University of Wyoming in 2009. She works for the Wyoming Department of Agriculture as an Inspection Supervisor. Casey is the Agriculture Education Instructor and FFA Advisor at Riverton High School. They have two children: Brylee Shannon, 8 and Korbin Lane, 6. Casey and Stephanie raise cattle on the Moore Ranch.

Jennifer received her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Wyoming in 2007. She then served in the Peace Corps from 2007 to 2009. Jennifer attended Arizona State University and received her Master's degree in Education in 2012. She married Rashid Khan, whom she met in the Peace Corps, on November 15, 2014. Jennifer



Laurent "Wayne" Moore and Patricia Jean Heeltard wedding December 19, 1948.



Wayne Moore on Pacer in 1944.



Wayne Moore at ranch in the fall of 1965.

works in Phoenix, Arizona as an English teacher. Rashid is a computer programmer and technician. Todd is involved in ranching with his parents and raising his own livestock. Todd lives in the ranch house that Wayne and Pat built. Todd received a Welding Certificate from Sheridan College in 2005. He is engaged to Wendy Hudson, a teacher from Laurel, Montana.

The original Moore Ranch that was homesteaded as 640 acres now consists of 9,000 acres owned by Mike and Dalene Moore and 3,000 acres owned by Patricia Moore totaling 12,000 acres. Over the years the Moore family has been fortunate from time to time to add to the ranch. In 2014, Mike and Dalene bought the Dry Creek Ranch from the Deaver Family expanding the ranching operation to 25,000 acres of deeded and leased land.

Over the last 100 years the Moore Ranch and the Moore Family have experienced hardships and successes but have continued to prosper. On the mantel of Mike and Dalene's home, sits a clock purchased in 1882 by Will Moore in Missouri. The TV rests on the icebox Will and Laura brought with them in 1916. Mike still rides Boz's 1929 Visalia saddle and they still brand their cattle with the family's 100 year old Lazy M M brand. We hope the future generations will continue the legacy of the Moore Ranch for at least another 100 years.



Four generation picture taken on Boz Moore's birthday September 23, 1986. Left to right: Boz Moore, Wayne Moore, James D. Moore, Todd Moore, and Mike Moore.



Norma Jean Moore and Pat in 1960.



Branding at Moore Ranch in June 1968. Left to right: Sheryl Moore, Bill Camblin (castrating), Cindy Camblin, LeRoy VanBuggerum (wrestling), Mike Moore (roper), J.T. Streusser, Wayne Moore, and Jack Wright.



Mike Moore, Sharon Moore, Wayne Moore, and Sheryl Moore ready to gather cattle in the fall of 1968.



Mike Moore on Yellow in October 2005 at Moore Ranch.



Timothy Michael "Mike" Moore and Dalene Elizabeth Clements wedding, December 6, 1974.



Baz Moore with registered Hereford bull at show and sale. Mid 1940s.



Branding at Moore Ranch in May 2007. Left to right: Darrell Roush (roper), Laura Roush, Logan Diff, Mike Moore (branding), Dalene Moore, Casey Styvar (wrestling), Stephanie Styvar, and Todd Moore (wrestling).

A LONG TRAIL
DEDICATED TO "BOZ" MOORE
By Wayne Moore

I hit the road back in '96,
She wasn't very wide.
It's surveyed now & graded up,
A whole lot easier to ride.
The country west of Council Bluffs,
Had come into its own.
The shaggy herds of buffalo,
Were gone; just piles of bone.
I pulled my freight in '17,
And lit on Four Mile Crick.
It took a little sand at first,
But I had come to stick.
I pulled big loads from Pumpkin Buttes,
To the railroad miles away.
If the road was bad or the weather cold,
It was just another day.
If I loaded back from Donkey Crick,
and I surely always tried.
She was one tough pull up Smelser Hill
and on to the divide.
We freighted oats to Smokey Rowan,
and built some railroad grade.
The oil patch was rough those days,
But a man got dam well paid.
And livestock grazin' on the plains;
I guess I've seen a few.
Cows and sheep and horses;
Well I've owned one or two.
I saw the steamers plow the land.
and thrash the golden grain;
But the way they tried to farm back then,
They needed lots more rain.
The trail I ride is gettin' steep,
And my horses, they are tired.
I've tried to make the boss a hand,
Since the day that I got hired.
The top can't be too far away,
I can see the pass from here.
Don't think I'll have no trouble now,
Looks like the road is clear.
So, I think I'll tum my horses loose,
And let 'em graze on back.
And walk on up and cross the ridge,
I won't need no pack.



Wayne and Patricia Moore at Wyoming Centennial Celebration in 1990.



Docking at Moore Ranch in June 2007. Left to right: James D. Moore, Todd Moore, Stephanie Styvar, Ty Roush, Mike Moore, Casey Styvar, Jo Ann Shodes, and Lane Edwards.



The Mike Moore Family in 2014. Left to right: Stephanie Styvar, Casey Styvar, Todd Moore, Mike Moore, Dalene Moore, Bronson Moore, James D. Moore, Jennifer Moore, Rashid Khan, Brylee Styvar, and Korbin Styvar.



Rep. Cynthia Lummis, Moore Family, Gov. Matthew H. Mead, Sen. Mike Enzi.

The Peterson Ranch, 1916

The Peterson Family, Weston County



Rich & Jani's children. Front: Brynlee & Adalyn Swaby; Back: Craig & Tami (Peterson) Swaby, Jani, Myra Swaby, Rich, Rylin Swaby, Cory.

Walter and Marie left Omaha, Nebraska in July of 1916 and homesteaded southwest of Upton on the Buffalo Creek Divide, more commonly known as the "Peterson Divide". They started out in a tar paper shack which is part of the house that is still there today. Walter farmed and hayed, growing small grains, corn, and some alfalfa. Livestock around the ranch was quite diverse in the early years. Turkeys, Holstein milk cows, and horses lead the way, slowly moving into sheep and beef cattle. In the late 50s to early 60s the lambs were shipped by rail to Sioux City, Iowa where they topped the market several different years. Walter and Marie raised three children on the ranch: Walter Jr. and Lorraine (twins), and Wayne.

Walter's son, Wayne, married Millie after returning from serving in the Navy during WWII and worked on the ranch. Wayne and Millie kept on with the dryland farming and haying along with raising sheep and cattle. In the early 80s, the farming was

phased out. Hogs were also raised on the ranch for many years being sold to neighbors and others for pork. Wayne and Millie raised five children on the ranch: Lynne, Rich, Mike, Chris, and Jon. Mike, Chris, and Jon bought a neighboring place which is now leased by Rich for summer and fall pasture.

Wayne's son Rich married Jani and they have run the operation for many years. Sheep were the main staple for several years until it finally turned into a cow/calf operation. There isn't any farming done anymore, but if there is a good year and the crested wheat grows we still put up a few round bales. Rich's son, Cory, is back on the ranch helping with the day to day routine and getting ready to take his step into the history of the Peterson Ranch as the fourth generation. Rich and Jani have two children: Cory and Tami.



Walter & Marie.



Wayne & Millie.



Wayne & Millie's children. Front: Lynne & Rich; Back: Jon, Chris, Mike.

Below: Rep. Cynthia Lummis, Peterson Family, Gov. Matthew H. Mead, Sen. Mike Enzi.



Rathbun Lone Pine Ranch, 1916

The Rathbun Family, Crook County



Rathbun Family.

Written by Mr and Mrs. Arthur Rathbun

In the early summer of 1898, Mr. and Mrs. Lorenzo Dow Rathbun and their seven children Fred, Carl, Effie, Florence, Barbara, Bert, and Arthur ranging from fifteen years to seven months moved to Crook County, Wyoming by wagon train from the drought stricken disaster area of northwestern Kansas. There were three families and seven wagons in the group. Dow, as Mr. Rathbun was known, and Carl drove the Rathbun's two wagons and Fred helped some of the older boys drive the extra horses and the cows up the trail. Each evening after camp was made the two pigs that were carried in a crate in the back of one wagon were set free so they could eat, drink, and exercise. The old hen and her twelve chicks in another crate were freed too, after the hen had been nicely staked out with a stout string fastened to one of her legs.

Usually, the days were very much alike- the slow movement of the wagons along the dusty road, the squeak of the wagons as they lurched over the hills. Fording the swollen rivers and streams was dangerous and frightening and was dreaded by everyone. There was a high bridge with no side railing at the North Platte River crossing, however. One wagon at a time was allowed to cross. Dogs could not cross on the bridge as the dogs trotting would cause dangerous swaying and vibrations. This was a scary crossing. Always the goal was to reach northeastern Wyoming where timber was plentiful for lumber and fuel and where there was sufficient rainfall to raise gardens, crops, and pasture. The first sight of the Black Hills was truly magnificent.

L.D. Rathbun's first home in Wyoming was in the Bear Lodge in the Black Tail Creek area. Before the winter of 1898-99 a snug log cabin was built, jobs were found, and arrangements were made for a school. Effie, Florence, and Barbara Rathbun; Minnie Wright; and Labe, Denver, Oscar, and Cordelia Woods went to this school, which was taught by Miss Barbara Curry. The school house was a frame building which was very unusual as most buildings in this area were log. The Rathbun children went to this school two terms.

The family then moved to the Barlow place in Barlow Canyon, which is west of Hulett. Here their daughter Goldie was born. While they were living in Barlow Canyon, Charlie Rathbun, a sixteen year old cousin of Dow's, came from Kansas. For the rest of his life Wyoming was Charlie's home. He was a good horseman and worked on several schools so they either rode horseback or drove to school in a one-horse buggy. Deep snow and bitter cold weather were dangerous and the creek flooding in the spring was a definite hazard. Other pupils attending this school were Joe, Bud, and Ella Durfee; Willard, Millard, and George Ripley; Pearl, Sarah, Mel, and Jess Storm; Tucker Proctor;

Georgia Loy; and Isabelle Moore, who was staying with her sister Goldie Hardy. While the Rathbun children attended this school their teachers' names were Julia Lytle and Mrs. Mullinger.

In the early spring of 1903 the Rathbun family moved again. This time to the Wert McCoy homestead now called the Glassboro place. They also farmed the fields that belonged to Wert's brother Charlie. The first year the Rathbuns attended the Rocky-Crossing school, Mrs. Ray Frisbee was the teacher at the beginning of the term. Miss Effie Rathbun finished the term for her.

In 1906, the Rathbun family moved to Carl's homestead, which was about five miles southeast of New Haven. Later, Mr. and Mrs. Rathbun bought the property and made this their permanent home. Their youngest child Edna was born here.

Mr. Rathbun raised, worked, and sold many fine horses. The fall of 1910 he rode horseback to the Gammon Ranch near Buffalo and purchased a big

brown eighteen months old Percheron stud which he led home. This was a fine beautiful animal. He was never broke to work as there was never another animal large enough to work with him to be found.

Mrs. Rathbun always raised a large garden which included both vegetables and flowers. She especially liked sweet peas and poppies. Apples from their own orchard were made into sweet, thick, delicious apple butter but she did not put spices in it as Dow liked it better without. She took great pride and enjoyed the new house that was built for her in 1928.

Dow Rathbun died at home of a stroke on May 13, 1934 and Mrs. Rathbun (Belle) passed away after a lengthy illness June 18, 1946. They were buried at Moore Hill Cemetery close to relatives, friends, and neighbors.

The ranch is now owned by fourth and fifth generation Rathbuns.



Rep. Cynthia Lummis, Rathbun Family, Gov. Matthew H. Mead, Sen. Mike Enzi.

Pride of the Prairie Ranch, 1916

The Smith Family, Weston County



100 year party.

Peter Lauridsen Smith (Peter Smidt, the Danish spelling on the deed) purchased the property on April 11, 1916 from Anders Peter Olsen for \$12,000. Olsen had purchased it from Nels Gallinger on April 18, 1902. The Gallinger family (Ellen and James, Clara and Elwood, John, Edward, and Nels) had obtained the land through the Timber Culture and Homestead Acts starting December 21, 1896 and April 9, 1900.

Peter (12/14/1840 – 5/16/18) was born in Denmark. He came to the United States in 1874 to work in the gold fields of California and at Virginia City, Nevada. He returned to Denmark and married Margreta Larsen (11/9/1850 – 6/28/27) in 1878, returning to the U.S. in 1879 and settling in the Dakota Territory – Gayville, South Dakota. They had four children: Louis, Nels, Bena, and Knut. His son, Nels (8/27/1884 – 7/5/76) arrived in Crook County, Wyoming in August 1907 where Nels and his brother, Louis, raised cattle, wheat, and a few horses. December 20, 1911 Nels married Marie

Christensen (10/3/1892 – 10/15/85). Nels took possession of the “Home Place” in 1916.

As was his custom, Peter gave the land for the Green Mountain Cemetery in Weston County. He had donated the land in Gayville, South Dakota for the Trinity Lutheran Church and Cemetery. Today, the church has been sold and moved off site but the cemetery remains. In 1918 he was the first person buried in the Green Mountain Cemetery.

Marie and Nels had two sons: Peter Franklin (11/28/14 – 2/22/2012) and Christy Knut (11/27/16 – 4/18/2006). They took part in many community affairs. Marie helped organize the Harmony Club (a home extension club) that successfully raised funds for the Red Cross during World War I. Marie was also interested in politics; she clerked at elections in her precinct and attended Republican meetings on the local, state, and national level. She became Wyoming’s first native born First Lady. Nels Hansen Smith served on the first Crook County



Aerial photo.



Old ranch house.



Peter L. and Margrethe.



Peter L. Smith Family: Peter, Margarethe, Nels, Louis, Knut, and Bena.

High School board, was in the State legislature from 1919 to 1921, was a county commissioner from 1921 to 1923, served on the state Highway commission from 1929 to 1933, was Governor of Wyoming from 1939 to 1943, and was President of the Game and Fish Commission from 1953 to 1957. The boys, Peter and Christy, had no school nearby so often classes were held at the Smith ranch with the teachers living with the family. The classroom was often Grandma Margreta's kitchen. Christy attended Horton School in eighth grade and broke two broncs riding them to school. For first and second grade he attended Green Mountain School. The Green Mountain School has been moved to Newcastle and is on display on the grounds of the Anna Miller Museum. Peter attended high school in Sundance and college at the University of Nebraska. Peter eloped with Helen Jensen from Greenwich, Connecticut on December 6, 1936.

They were married in a formal ceremony at a later date that observed the high expectations of their families and society. They had two children: Nels Jensen born January 1, 1939 and Connie born July 11, 1942. Nels Jensen married Jeanette Keener (born January 20, 1938) on December 20, 1968. Nels and Jeanette had a son Garrett (born May 21, 1972) and Jeanette's son Doug (born September 10, 1958). Connie disappeared from a summer camp in Connecticut on July 16, 1952. In 1950, Peter married Oydis Butler Horton Smith (3/23/02 – 10/15/85). This brought the happy addition of Oydis' daughters Ellen, who married Jesse Driskill, and Dorothy, who married Rondy Dike, to the family.

Christy attended his freshman year of high school in Sundance and then attended Newcastle High School where he graduated. He was an outstanding athlete,

captain of the basketball team and all state football tackle his senior year. He attended the University of Wyoming in 1935. He soon returned to the Prairie Ranch. He operated the ranch with his father and brother until Nels was elected governor in 1939. The brothers took over the operation of the ranch. They participated in wild cow milking contests and Christy would rope at the local rodeos. The Smiths were avid hunters and fishermen. All three men had trophy rooms to be proud of. Nels hunted Wyoming, South Dakota, and Alaska. Peter hunted Wyoming, South Dakota, Alaska, Canada, Mexico, South America, and many safaris to Africa. Christy hunted Wyoming, South Dakota, Canada, Alaska, and Africa. Nels, Marie, and the boys had a favorite place to camp on Cold Creek. They went as often as they were able for Nels to fish and the boys to play in the creek. Marie called it Kamp Kill Kare where the family would go to kill their cares.

In the 1950s, the Smiths, their Christensen cousins, and family friends had the Fourth of July at Kamp Kill Kare. The watermelon and beverages were chilled in the creek, the ladies brought fried chicken and delicious cakes, and the kids played baseball and waded in Cold Creek. A grand time was had by all. Over the years the brothers' partnership dissolved with Peter purchasing the Duff Gray Place and moving his family into Crook County. Christy became the owner of the Prairie and Lodgepole ranches. Christy married Bethel Muir (10/14/19 – 2/23/98) on December 20, 1943. They had three daughters: Kristy Kay (born 4/20/1945), Colleen (born 2/4/1948), and Michele (born 6/13/1955).

Nels raised large crops of wheat and marketed his wheat through hogs. He fed the wheat and a little barley to his pigs and when they were properly fattened he trailed them to Osage and shipped them to Denver on the train. It took three days to make the drive. Feed was taken along in a wagon and two men drove the hogs. Nels' "Hogs from Horton, Wyoming" topped the market for seven consecutive years. Sometimes when Nels arrived in Denver to watch the hogs sell, he would find that they had been purchased before they got to market. If hogs and wheat were low, horses and cattle balanced the budget and vice-versa. Nels provided gentle, well-broke horses to homesteaders who came west about



"Horton Hogs".



Original Hereford Herd.



Governor Nels H. and Christy with Champion Bull in front of Governors Mansion.

the time of World War I.

Christy expanded in 1946 to have winter range on Lodgepole Creek southwest of Newcastle. He took pilot lessons from Clyde Ice the winter of 1948 and purchased a PA II Piper Cub with retractable snow skis so he could take off on the Prairie snow and land on the dry ground at Lodgepole or the runway in Newcastle. In 1951, they purchased a house in Newcastle so the girls could go to school. It was a family joke that “Daddy rode the school bus” so his girls could walk to school.

Christy always protected his ranch environment. He operated his ranch as economically as possible. He enjoyed an excellent reputation as a horseman and breeder of purebred Herefords. The foundation for his cattle herd was a gift from his father who bought the Champion Carload Lot at the Denver Stockshow in 1930 when Christy was 14. It was a difficult decision to begin using Angus bulls on his commercial cows. The times had changed and the economics proved this to be profitable. Another dramatic change was Michele’s addition of Polled Hereford Bulls.

Christy carried on the Smith tradition of public and community service by serving on the Wyoming Livestock Board from 1969 to 1975; he served as President of the Board. He was a director on The Tri County Electric Board for 18 years; he served as Vice President of the Board. He was a director on the board for the National Bank of Newcastle from its founding on October 18, 1963 until he retired in the 1980s. He was active in the Republican Party, serving as precinct committee man for many years. In 1964, he was a delegate to the Republican Convention in San Francisco. His father, Nels, was a delegate from Crook County, and his cousin Berniece’s husband Art Fleckton was a delegate from North Dakota. Cousin Marjorie Odell and her family lived in San Francisco so it was a huge exciting family reunion as everyone brought their children. He was an honorary member of both 4-H and FFA in recognition of his service to Weston County youth. He was a member of Masons and Shrine. In 1956 and 1957 Gerald Crary from Deadwood, South Dakota was the Shriner’s Imperial Potentate. He had the Deadwood



Nels H. in leather jacket.

Stage sent to Detroit, Michigan and Minneapolis, Minnesota so he could arrive in style at the conventions. Christy drove a six or four horse team pulling the Deadwood Stage with his cousin, Earl Christensen, along to ride shot gun.

Bethel was a University of Wyoming graduate. She met Christy when she came to Newcastle to teach commerce. It was no surprise that Bethel was the ranch bookkeeper! She was involved with all youth activities, a member of the Methodist Church, and served many years as a Sunday school teacher. She served as a member of the Weston County School board, 4-H leader, Girl Scout leader, Junior Rodeo Committee, PTA, Cow Belles, 20th Century Club, Delta Delta Delta Social Sorority, Phi Gamma Nu Commerce Honorary, and Kappa Delta Pi Education, PEO, Eastern Star, Daughters of the Nile, and a Republican Precinct Committee Woman for many years.

Bethel and Christy enjoyed traveling on trips associated with agricultural organizations. They



Marie at her office in the mansion; first native-born First Lady.

enjoyed being with other ranchers and then seeing how the ranch operations were carried out in Hawaii, New Zealand, Australia, and Sweden. Christy would be traveling in the United States and see farmers and ranchers in their fields; if they were close to the highway Christy would stop to see what they were doing. Their enjoyment of life was always centered around their family, friends, and the Pride of the Prairie Ranch.

Kristy Kay graduated from the University of Wyoming in 1967. She taught school in Richey, Montana; Moorcroft; and Casper. On June 7, 1969 she married Ronald H. Benson. Ronald was also a University of Wyoming graduate as an electrical engineer. Their life of adventure had just begun. Ronald was with Marathon Oil Company so they moved from Casper to Findlay, Ohio to Casey, Illinois and then back to Findlay where their daughter Elizabeth was born on February 9, 1976. Kristy Kay had broken her leg so the baby was delivered with Ronald holding her hand and an exhausted nurse holding her leg in the cast.

The family then moved to Houston, Texas where Candace was born on May 14, 1978. Then to Wilton, Connecticut where the girls were able to start and finish their elementary and high school education. Ronald's amazing career spanned international crude oil trading, the first joint venture between the U.S. and Russia to drill oil in Siberia, and associated with Tejas Power in their pioneering of salt dome storage for natural gas. He continues as a board member for Western Research Institute and a consultant for Haddington Ventures.

Every summer found the girls and Kristy Kay landing in Rapid City, South Dakota. Bethel and Christy were there to meet them with an immediate stop at the western store for new jeans, boots, and hats to last the summer. Christy had their horses ready; Bethel had meals and their rooms ready for the months ahead. Both girls participated in and won the Weston County Junior Rodeo. Many considered this an impossible feat but they spent days in the saddle with Grandpa Christy trailing cattle on a Forest Service permit in South Dakota and the Pride of The Prairie Ranch. Both girls attended the University of Denver on athletic scholarships. Beth played soccer and Candy played basketball. They belonged to Delta Gamma social sorority with Beth, the President, when Candy pledged. They both graduated with business degrees. Candy also received her Master's degree.

On December 30, 2006 Candy married Christopher Lien (5/27/77). They have two children: Colton (3/20/08) and Carsyn (12/17/10). When "Colt 45 and Kit Carsyn" sleep at the Pride of the Prairie, they are the sixth generation that has slept in the original ranch house. Ronald and Kristy Kay spend half the year on the Pride of the Prairie and half the year in Tucson, Arizona.

Colleen eloped with Warren Reese and they had two children: Christa Ann (4/14/67) and Cary Ray (2/12/69). On May 8, 1971 she married Rick Popham. Their life adventure has been the accumulation of a huge property they call Lone Tree Ranch south of Upton. Christa has a son, Ryan Jones, who is studying at Creighton University. She is married to Mark Hanson. Cary has two sons, Ace and Denton, who are being home schooled by their



Governor Nels Smith.



Official portrait of Governor Nels H. Smith.

mother, Cody Seeley Reese.

Beth Michele attended Newcastle High School and graduated with honors from the University of Wyoming in 1978 with a BS degree in Recreation and Park Administration. Her summers were highlighted with 4-H, FFA, and rodeo participation. She had many state fair champion Hereford bulls and heifers and won the all-around cowgirl at the Weston County Junior Rodeo. She has always been active in the Republican Party, serving as a delegate to the National Convention in 1976 and 2004, state committee woman, and Weston County chairman. She was an intern for Senator Clifford Hansen in Washington, D.C. She then backpacked through Europe and went on African safari with her dad, Christy, and her Uncle Pete. With these trips she developed a taste for international travel so she began her career as travel agent and business manager for Casper and Douglas travel agencies.

She lived in Wilton, Connecticut with the Bensons where she worked for Elf Aquitaine and Philipp Brothers in Stamford and both Midtown Manhattan and Lower Manhattan, New York City. She was a soccer referee and crewed with friends from her train commute in sailboat races on Long Island Sound. Her father, Christy, had heart surgery in Connecticut with the complication of staph infection. Her mother, Bethel, was diagnosed with acute myelogenous leukemia in 1994. Michele immediately returned to Wyoming where she and Kristy Kay assumed the care for their parents and Michele began running the Pride of the Prairie Ranch.

The Pride of the Prairie Ranch has had the friendship of two outstanding photographers: Chuck Morrison from Casper, who was a photographer for the Casper Star Tribune, and David Miles, who had his studio in Newcastle. These gentlemen have left a history of the ranch in pictures. In 1962 Chuck Morrison took a photo of Michele with her Great Pyrenees dog that was sent out on the Associated Press wire and was widely used throughout the USA for "Be Kind to Animals Week". David Miles was responsible for the legacy collection. These photos were of life on the Pride of the Prairie which has toured Wyoming and was displayed in the Senate

Rotunda in Washington, D.C. We are also thankful for Mable Brown's friendship and her articles about the Smith family in her "Bits and Pieces" magazine of western history. It was incredible to read her interviews and memories of three generations. It was also helpful to compile an accurate centennial story of this ranch and its people.

The ranch operation after one hundred years still has a trail drive, however, it is in the fall from the forest permit in the Black Hills National Forest near Buckhorn and Trailhead, South Dakota to the Pride of the Prairie Ranch. This is compared to the two and a half day trail drive that occurred from the prairie ranch to Lodgepole as they moved from summer to winter range. The present ranch does not own winter pasture so the replacement heifers are sent to Mike Grubl in Vale, South Dakota and the cows are sent to LaGrange where Billy Ward, his wife Marlo, and their sons, Dalton and Denton, care for them, calve them, and brand the calves before



Christy and Bethel Wedding December 20, 1943.



1959 Kristy Kay Grand Champion Bull State.



Governor Nels H. Smith on steps of mansion.



Michele showing one of many Grand Champions.

they are trucked north for the summer. The pickups still carry salt and fencing equipment in the back. Instead of joyfully riding along with Grandpa Nels or Daddy we are happily driving our children and grandchildren to throw out the salt, fix the fences, and check the water. Farming is done with two John Deere tractors instead of teams of horses. The hay is baled in 1400 pound round bales which is a change from the little square bales, although we still use the little bales for horse hay. The loose hay that was stacked in the hay fields to be pitched by hand onto wagons or sleds has given way to the present day hydra bed on the back of a pickup that can quickly and automatically rollout the hay. There is no longer a separate registered herd and the closed cattle herd is now a healthy mix of Angus and Herefords.



Nels H. Smith Family: Bethel, Nels H., Peter, Marie, Michele, Jeannette, Nels J., Christy, and Oydis

The ranch has been the scene of countless celebrations, cousin and kissing cousin's parties, Nels and Marie's 60th Wedding Anniversary,



Mature Marie.



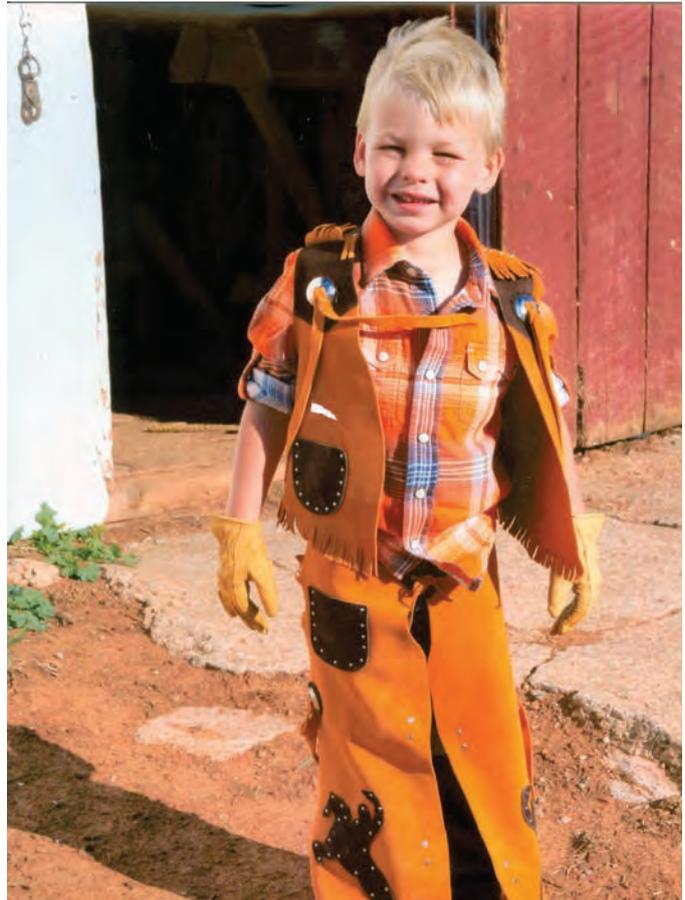
Christy and Bethel.



Family at Devils Tower.



Christy K. Smith family: Cary, Michele, Christy, Bethel, Kristy Kay, Ronald, Rick, Christa, Elizabeth, Candace, and Colleen.



Colton Cowboy.



Carsyn Cowgirl.



Cowboy Hall of Fame; Kristy Kay and Michele accepting for Christy.



Polled Hereford bulls.



Ronald H. Benson family: Ronald, Candace, Elizabeth, and Kristy Kay.



100 year party.

Christy and Bethel's 50th Wedding Anniversary, christenings (Michele's, Elizabeth's, and Carsyn's), and "The Daddy of Them All" the 100 year –BBQ on July 3, 2016 held in the yard of the "home place"! The caterer grilled 175 steaks, the children had hamburgers and hotdogs, the garage served as the bar, U.S. flags flew from all the tables that were under a tent, in the screened in porch, and in the shade of trees that had been planted by Nels H. Family, neighbors, and friends enjoyed a fabulous afternoon. Much of the family remained on the ranch for a mini vacation that included trips to

Devils Tower, Mount Rushmore, Sand Creek, riding horses, four wheeling, and shooting. It was also the celebration of Christy's selection into the Wyoming Cowboy Hall of Fame. We are grateful for the cowboy tradition of neighbors helping neighbors to get the work done and the Pride of the Prairie Ranch is thankful for the many hired men, their families, and the summer help that has contributed to the success and continuation of the ranch.



Gov. Matthew H. Mead, Rep. Cynthia Lummis, Smith Family, Sen. Mike Enzi.

Stutzman, Inc., 1916

The Stutzman Family, Park County



Main repair shop, storage facilities for certified, alfalfa seed, cutter bees, equipment, and the home of John Max and Bobbie Stutzman, 1998.



Lambs that were born in January 1963 and marketed in April for Easter weighing 100 pounds, in 100 days. Pictured are Glenn and son John Max Stutzman owners of Stutzman and Stutzman. The livestock brand is J-S.

As told by John Max Stutzman

In the spring of 1916 John and Alma with their one year old son, Glenn, moved from Cozad, Nebraska to Powell, Wyoming. John had been in a farming partnership with his brother Herb Stutzman for several years. John had grown tired of ‘if farming’. They would have had a good crop ‘if’ it would have rained one more time. The Bureau of Reclamation assured the homesteaders there was enough stored water in the Shoshone Reservoir (Buffalo Bill) to supply irrigation water for two dry years.

On March 13, 1916 John Stutzman used his Homestead Right by filling out his water right application under the Reclamation Act of June 17, 1902 (32 Stat/388). The lands in John Stutzman’s homestead were first acquired by the State of Wyoming from the United States of America under the Act of Congress of August 18, 1894 (Carey Act). This is the first entry in the Book of Deeds at the Park County Courthouse. These lands of the Shoshone Reclamation Project were part of the 1 million acres of land the United States offered to each of the arid western states for development where water was available. On May 22, 1899 the state engineer of the State of Wyoming delivered to W. F. Cody (Buffalo Bill) permit #1611 to use and

appropriate the water of Shoshone River to irrigate and reclaim 160,000 acres. These lands are situated in Township 53 to 57 inclusive and in Range 96 to 101 inclusive. Buffalo Bill was unable to develop this very large project even though he completed the Cody Canal Project around Cody, WY.

On Feb. 13, 1904 the United States reacquired these 160,000 acres with their water right permit #1611 priority May 22, 1899 by purchase from Buffalo Bill Cody. “In consideration of the sum of one dollar to him paid,” W. F. Cody relinquished all of his right to the land and the 1899 water right permit. This explains the reason the Shoshone Reclamation Project has a direct river water right with a priority of 1899. This is three years before the Reclamation Act of 1902 was enacted.

In 1933, Glenn Stutzman purchased an adjoining farm and began farming with his father. Health problems caused John Stutzman’s retirement in 1945. In 1956, Glenn and his son John Max entered into a farming partnership. Additional lands were then purchased. Several years later the farming operation was incorporated. In 1983, John Max purchased Glenn’s share of the corporation. Upon completion of college degrees, John Max’s sons, Tod and Brett, became part of the corporation. The

title of John Stutzman's original homestead has passed through his direct descendants and is now held by the fourth generation, his great-grandsons, Tod and Brett who, in 2008, purchased Stutzman, Inc.

John Stutzman witnessed tremendous changes in his lifetime. From organic energy (oats and hay) to fuel the horses and mules to hydrocarbons and electricity to power the machinery. As technology has advanced so have the requirements of education and capital. In use now is equipment that is steered by GPS to less than one inch deviation. Irrigation systems have also made huge advances. The irrigated acres have increased from the original homestead to 1300 acres of farm land and 700 acres of range land. The lamb feeding program has increased from several hundred to about 5000 head. The changes in the next 100 years will probably be even greater than in the past 100.



John Stutzman in 1941 on the Diesel D2 Caterpillar pulling a 10 foot spring tooth 2 section harrow. Leveling land for beans and covering 3 acres per hour. Working 12 hours a day on 1 Y2 gallons of fuel at the cost of 7 cents per hour.



The deteriorating cement ditches are being replaced by burying 15 inch plastic pipe as a delivery system to 12 and 10 inch gated pipe. The water flow is controlled with a solar powered valve (pictured in the photo).



The original windmill tower and what is left of the windmill over the water well that John Stutzman hand dug over 20 feet deep. The well water contained sodium that was unfit for domestic use but was adequate for livestock use. In the beginning a cistern was filled with irrigation water for home use. In the background are 40,000 bushel grain storage bins including dryers.



John Stutzman in 1960 watching great grandson Tod playing with toys on his 1st birthday while sitting on his father, John Max's, lap.



June 15 1990. Sugar beet field with Dan Shivley, president of Shoshone First National Bank, John Max Stutzman (3rd generation), Tod Stutzman (4th generation), Glenn Stutzman (2nd generation) holding Lee Stutzman (5th generation), and Brett Stutzman (4th generation).

STUTZMAN 100 YEAR HISTORY

Written by Bobbie Stutzman May, 2016

In Wyoming our family history is 100 years long
And looking back many things could have gone
wrong.

But our ancestors persevered and at least for this
time

Let's see if we can put their story to rhyme.

Horace Greeley said "Go West young man, go
west."

For the life you seek you may be able to best.

So in 1916 John Stutzman heeded that calling

And pulled up stakes and toward Wyoming started
hauling.

They left Nebraska and some family behind

but others had already come to the Big Horn Basin
to find

The promise of a better life, but it would take years

of hard work and luck

To finally start making the longed for big buck.

John, and Alma and one year old Glenn,

and livestock and machinery and at least one old
hen

Boarded a train with their life possessions

And sucked up their fears to face new concessions.

Their first home was a humble two room shack

And comfortable amenities it surely did lack

But they told of good times with neighbors just as
laced

And probably discussed the issues that they faced.

They helped out each other during busy harvest
spews

And the women prepared huge dinners to feed the
threshing crews.

All cooked on a wood stove that added to the heat

of their un-air-conditioned homes and they never
skipped a beat.

Little by little they added to their home

And running water was a luxury only enjoyed by
some.

A Saturday night bath whether you needed it or not

And the water all heated on the stove in a pot.

Slowly tractors were added and the work horses
retired

But were kept around in case the tractors got mired

Gas began to replace the oats and hay as fuel

But most farmers kept at least one old mule.

One-year-old Glenn soon became a man and in 1933 took a wife

and purchased an adjoining farm to start his new life.

In 1936 son John Max was born and later a sister was added to the mix

upon who John Max pulled lots of ornery tricks.

Great, great grandpa John's health began to be a bust

And in 1945 retirement became a must.

They bought a small tractor and headed down to warmer spots

And in summer a plot on Yellowstone Lake where the fishing was hot.

In 1956 a partnership was formed between Glenn and John Max

For John Max had married and took on a new task

of supporting a family which was sure to come

and providing the necessities of making a home.

Daughter Kim was later added to the troupe

and some time later son Jon Tod increased the group.

Daughter Sydney was next to be added to the fleet

And with the addition of Brett the family was complete.

Additional lands were purchased and the business grew and grew

and ideas were tried- some discarded and some became the new.

Incorporating the business was the next upgrade that was made

And it appeared that the farm was going to make the grade.

As Glenn headed into retirement and new interests came his way

And the office of County Commissioner took up time out of every day.

His share of the cooperation was sold to his son

so in 1983 the head of the business was down to only one.

Upon college completion and weighing pros and cons

sons Tod and Brett chose to return to the fold

And now own and run the corporation

and they certainly fit the mold.

And so John Stutzman's original homestead has passed down thru the ages

Through 4 generations in various stages.

Hard work and great planning have all been goals to pursue.

And we tip our hats to those who made it come true.

As this story unfolds there's more to be told

For many family members have been added to the fold.

In Arizona Kim met Mike who hailed from Iowa.

And a new son-in-law was added on their wedding day.

Several years later baby Alison came to be

And now their family consisted of three

A MIT graduate she is working on her PhD

And we're all pulling for her as she earns that degree.

A nurse was added when Tod and Mary married their careers were formed, but they were not to be harried.

they moved to Alaska where Tod was ready to pursue his career

erecting buildings as a civil engineer.

It was there that son Lee appeared on the scene

And they returned to the farm even though the years might be lean.

Later Daughter Lindsay was added to the group

and now 4 people rounded out their troupe.

Lee always loved to tinker and inventing things was his game,

but he became an engineer while waiting for his fame.

In 2014 Sierra became his bride

And another nurse was added to the Stutzman family pride.

Lindsay has developed her talents and is making her mark

by creating some beautiful innovative graphic art.

Two daughters were added when Sydney and Ric became a pair

Brittni teaches school and Chelsie colors hair.

When Brittni met Jason she knew he was the one

And when they wed Micheala and Kendelle were

added to the family fun.

The sixth generation began with baby Jace

And since he's been here life has picked up the pace.

Son Brett finished college and came racing back

with a dog and a horse and a fiancée to join the family pack.

Crista, John and Garrett appeared on the scene

and what they will do remains to be seen.

The farm always provided summer employment

even tho it wasn't always welcome as summer enjoyment.

Hard work was expected and everyone came thru

But boating, fishing and camping were enjoyed by the crew.

And so, John and Alma, what was started as your vision

Has passed down through your heirs who have made it their mission.

So we hope John and Alma that you would be proud

that your family of 3 has turned into this crowd.

Fox Creek Land & Livestock Co./Thaler Land & Livestock Co., 1916

Dennis & Sandra Thaler, Brandy Thaler Evans,
Goshen County



Bear Mountain; view from Dennis' yard.

Fox Creek Land & Livestock Company was established 100 years and five generations ago. First generation and founder was immigrant and homesteader Joe Matje. Joe Matje was born in St. Hubert, Hungary on May 17, 1883. He studied three and a half years to be a shoemaker in Hungary, but that wasn't the life for him! In 1903, 20 year old Joe came to the United States with \$1.10 in his pocket. On the dock a kid sold him a banana for five cents. The kid ran off with his change, so Joe started his adventures in America with only one dollar.

He went first to Chicago where he worked on the railroad, in packing plants, on farms, and at a summer resort. After six years, he had saved up seven hundred dollars and moved to Cheyenne in 1909. For the next seven years he worked as a cobbler at Fort Russell. He started his own business at 17th Street and Carey Avenue in Cheyenne. When the Cavalry was sent to the Mexican border to guard against Poncho Villa's raids, the cobbler business

dwindled. So in 1916, Joe took out a 320 acre homestead in Goshen County seventeen miles south of Torrington. By this time his savings had grown to \$10,000. He registered his brand in 1917 as Lazy M reversed J. He didn't know much about farming or ranching at that time. He relied on others' judgment when purchasing cattle. If they would bid \$20, he figured he could afford another 50 cents.

In 1938, he purchased what is today the main ranch 10 miles west of LaGrange. In 1950, he incorporated the ranch as Fox Creek Land & Livestock Co. He became a member of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association and the American National Livestock Association. In 1960, Joe established Joe Matje Incorporated. He raised commercial Hereford cattle, as well as 464 acres of wheat. Joe had managed to convert that original one dollar into a 28,000 acre ranch and become one of the most influential ranchers in Goshen County. Joe often said, "I'm not hard to work for, but I'm hard



Joe.

to loaf for.” His success and work ethic were well known throughout the state.

Joe never married nor had children of his own. But he liked kids, and over his lifetime he gave generously to St. Joseph Children’s home in Torrington. Joe was one of the founding fathers of South Goshen Conservation District and served on that board for thirteen years. Working with the conservation district and the soil conservation service was a real turning point for his ranch.

Stories about Joe are heard often. He would go to town and buy a new Cadillac only to take it out to the pasture and put a sick or cold calf in the backseat saying, “Well, they paid for it.” He went from the horse and buggy days to automobiles and tractors. He never was a very good driver and ended up getting in multiple accidents including hitting a train or two.

He also helped many young farmers and ranchers get started in the ranching business. One particular story relates that he drove into a young man’s yard

and told him the neighboring ranch was being auctioned that day. The man said, “I know, but I can’t afford it.” Joe said, “Come on. Let’s go find out.” Joe proceeded to bid on the ranch for the young man. When Joe thought that others were bidding him up, he stopped the auction and said, “This is what I will pay. If you want a check that is good, call me. This is all I’m paying.” Joe received a call later saying his bid was accepted. He gave the ranch to the young man. That family is ranching in Goshen County today.

Joe partnered often with neighbors to purchase ranches and then after selling them, Joe’s percentage would be donated to St. Joseph Children’s home.

Joe was proud to be an American and didn’t mind paying taxes. He lived the American dream. Joe Matje passed away in 1972 at age 89.

In 1948, as the second generation, Bud and Marion Thaler started managing the Fox Creek Ranch. Aloysius “Bud” Thaler was born in Newell, South Dakota, where his family ranched. He was in the Navy stationed in Florida, but never saw action. After the Navy he moved to South Haven, Michigan where he met Marion Steinbach, Joe Matje’s great niece. Marion was a secretary for a Chicago lawyer before marrying Bud. Bud and Marion and their two sons, Wayne (three years) and Dennis (two months), moved from South Haven, Michigan to join Joe Matje on the ranch. Bud was very innovative and always thought of ways to improve the land. In 1973, Bud and Marion obtained the U Bench brand from a neighbor, Clyde Stewart.

Bud, like Joe, gave generously to everyone. He was an extremely hard worker and worked all day pitching hay or whatever needed done, even serving as president of the LaGrange Fire District. He was known for being uncommonly strong and a great athlete, enjoying sports in his rare free time. Bud had a great positive attitude and is remembered as one of the best guys around. He would come into a basketball huddle when they were 20 points down with two minutes left and say, “Ok, guys, we got them right where we want them... we can still win this.” Bud was a good steer roper, but when the boys got older he bought a boat so they could be



Joe with cows.



Joe on tractor.



Joe, cobbler.

together as a family enjoying boating and water skiing. Bud always took great pride in the ranch and loved to give tours to visitors.

Marion was well-known as a good cook and baker, loving her sweets. She would cook for the employees who often lived with them and also for any visitors who came by. Bud and Marion were very community-oriented and enjoyed planning and participating in cards, holiday parties, and dinners. In 1989, they purchased a retirement home in Arizona where they spent a few months each year for some rest and relaxation.

Third generation Wayne and Dennis Thaler grew up in the Bear Creek community. Wayne left the ranch after college and went into banking. Wayne has four daughters and lives in Grand Junction, Colorado. Dennis went to grades 1-5 at the Bear Creek Country School and then attended grades 6-12 at LaGrange. He graduated in 1964 and

attended diesel mechanic school in Denver for one year. He was in the Air National Guard in Cheyenne for eight years. He loved the Guard as it was like a vacation for him from ranch work. Dennis shares his ancestors' good heart, helping out neighbors and the community often.

Dennis married Sandy Kinniburgh in November of 1974 in Saratoga. Sandy met Dennis through a college friend at the Hawk Springs Reservoir while water skiing, in keeping with the Thalers' favorite pastime. Sandy was born and raised in Rawlins in 1951, growing up with limited experience in the country life. Graduating from the University of Wyoming with a teaching degree, she taught in Hanna for one year before marrying Dennis and moving to the ranch in LaGrange. Sandy quickly fit in, applying her talents and business sense to helping on the ranch. She also served as a substitute teacher in Goshen County. In 1980, Sandy and Dennis were blessed with their one and only daughter Brandy.

Dennis started working full time on the ranch in 1965. In 1967, they expanded their herd genetics by purchasing their first Charolais bull, becoming one of the first herds in the area to start cross breeding with Charolais. In 1975, Bud suffered a stroke, but the words "can't do" were never in his vocabulary so with determination and strength, he regained his ability to walk and talk. At that point Dennis started taking the reins, but he and his dad made a great team. If one of them thought of an idea, the other worked twice as hard to make it happen.

In the 1960s the ranch changed its goal from buying more land to improving the existing land. Bud

and Joe started putting in stock water pipelines and stock tanks and began developing springs. They focused on better grazing utilization and more reliable water supply. They leveled land and removed old houses, garbage dumps, old trees, and ditches to wisely use every drop of irrigation water, maximizing all the natural resources. Some of those pipelines that Joe and Bud put in were within half mile to a quarter mile of wheat ground that Dennis converted back to grass and divided up into smaller pastures to form management intensive grazing. This allows increased numbers, better utilization, improved grass health, and preserves the native range until later in July. Because of the foresight of Joe and Bud, these improvements were accomplished with minimal expense. Pastures that originally could sustain a herd for two weeks can now keep the same size herd for two months. Dennis was one of the first in the county to implement rotational grazing under pivots.

Dennis and Sandy established Thaler Land & Livestock Company in 1988. Bud passed away in November 1989 at the age of 69. Marion continued to live on and be part of the ranch until 2004. Marion passed away in 2005 at the age of 85.

Teamwork is the key! Natural Resource Conservation Services, Local Conservation Districts, Goshen County Weed & Pest, CO-OP's, Wyoming Game and Fish, Wyoming Department of Agriculture, University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension, and Wyoming Stock Growers have all helped make the ranch a success. For 30 years, Dennis was actively involved in the conservation district, serving on the same board Joe helped found. Dennis' motto has always been, "There's no end to what can be done when we all work together."

In 2005, the ranch was awarded the Wyoming Stock Growers Environmental Stewardship award, followed in 2006 by the National Environmental Stewardship Award. In 2016, Dennis was inducted into the Wyoming Agriculture Hall of Fame.

The ranch is being carried on by Dennis's daughter, Brandy and son-in-law Kevin Evans. Brandy graduated from Southeast High School in Yoder in 1999. She played volleyball at Eastern Wyoming



Bud.



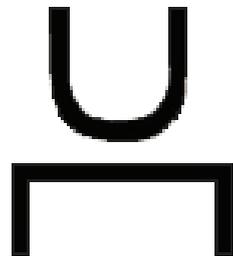
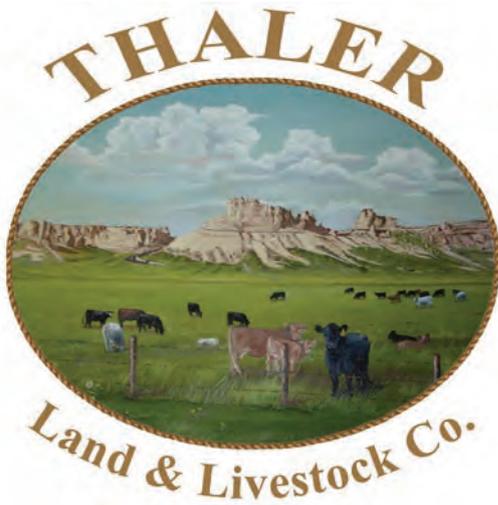
Ann Steinbach (Marion's Mother), Marion, Bud, Brandy, Sandy, and Dennis.



Bud and Dennis.



Bud and Dennis.



Thaler logo, Joe's brand, Ubench brand.

and went on to Crookston, Minnesota, where she played volleyball and graduated with a computer programming degree in 2003. She married Kevin Evans in 2004. Kevin was born in 1975 and lived in Elizabeth, Colorado. He went to Sterling, Colorado for college in Ag Business before moving to Bear Creek. His family had purchased the ranch bordering the Thalers'. This location enabled Kevin to pursue his dream of raising cattle. Elizabeth, Colorado was becoming like a big city, not conducive to raising cattle. At the time, Kevin never dreamed he would one day marry the "neighbor girl," but today Kevin and Brandy are happily married. They have two sons, Hadley and Hudson, starting the ranch's fifth generation.

In 2014, Kevin and Brandy started raising their own registered Charolais bulls. Kevin being highly skilled with animal health, nutrition, and genetics makes him a great fit to continue with the improvement of the ranch. Kevin and Brandy have implemented windrow grazing and controlled grazing using high tensile electric fence. They continue to improve the grass and herd health, while cutting back on operating expenses.

Today the ranch consists of more than 20,000 acres



Bud and Dennis.

of deeded land, including 3,000 acres of improved pasture consisting of wheatgrass and alfalfa mix, 445 acres of irrigated pasture under pivots, and 560 acres of hay ground under gated pipe or flood irrigated. The ranch leases 5000 acres from the State of Wyoming and 40 acres from the BLM. They also lease two other ranches on an animal unit per month basis.

Thaler Land and Livestock Company is located in Goshen County in the southeast corner of Wyoming. The elevation is 4,800 feet and the average rainfall is 12-13 inches. There are two streams that run through the ranch. Fox Creek meanders through most of the ranch and Bear Creek runs on the lower end with additional pivot, gated pipe, and flood irrigation throughout. The terrain includes rolling hills with some bluffs, canyons, and flatlands mixed in. Grasses include western wheatgrass, blue grama, needle and thread, dryland sedge, buffalo grass, and prairie sandreed.

The ranch's resource management goal is to maintain the health and vigor of plant communities on irrigated, dryland, and native range, which will maintain the resource base and support a long-term operation. By maintaining good health and vigor of all plant communities involved, erosion will be held to a minimum. The only farming that will be done is through crop rotation to maintain permanently introduced species for grazing and haying. With the improvement of their natural resources and proper management of their cowherd – through better



Dennis.



Kevin, Brandy, Sandy, and Dennis.



Back Row: Kevin, Hudson, Hadley; Front Row: Brandy, Sandy, Dennis.



Brandy and Marion.



Hadley, Dennis, Sandy, Hudson, Brandy, Kevin.



Sunset, Bear Mountains.



Brandy, Hudson, Hadley, and Kevin Evans.

genetics and vaccination programs -Thalers and Evans will continue to ship beef around the world for generations to come.

“Value your family and your neighbors. Pull together. Work hard and never give up. Find ways to improve what you have.” These are the lessons handed down from the Fox Creek Land & Livestock ancestors. This foundation inspired and guided their family through the first four generations. Building on these principles, Dennis and Sandy Thaler and Brandy and Kevin Evans work to ensure that Fox Creek’s ranching legacy will continue for another 100 years.



Gov. Matthew H. Mead, Rep. Cynthia Lummis, Dennis & Sandra Thaler, Brandy Thaler Evans Families, Sen. Mike Enzi.

Bootheel 7 Livestock, 1916

The Wasserburger Family, Niobrara County



Ranch headquarters, 1960.

As told by Henry L. Wasserburger Jr. and son J.D.

My father, Henry, was born August 16, 1895 the oldest child of Jacob and Anna Marking Wasserburger, twenty-five miles northeast of Harrison, Nebraska near Montrose, a German Catholic community. There were 14 children born to this union, twelve lived to adulthood.

There was only three months of school in those days, so at the age of thirteen my Dad, Henry Sr., left home to seek his fortune, first working for Neal Jordan, and then later for a fellow by the name of Murphy around Harrison. Eventually he came to Wyoming working for his Uncle Christ Ruffing on Old Woman Creek thirty miles north of Lusk. He walked five miles to cut fence posts in the Buck Creek Hills, returning at night. Dad worked several jobs in this area, trailing horses and hogs to Fort Robinson for the Cavalry, always dreaming of the day he would become twenty-one so he could file a homestead claim.

Dad was twenty-one in 1916 and he filed his claim in October and began his ranching career. Dad's brother John was fourteen months younger and in 1918 he filed a claim about four miles northwest of where our ranch headquarters are today.

Anna Josephine Pfister, my mother, was born October 27, 1900. The Pfister family was one of the original homestead families in the Lusk area; they came by covered wagon from Kansas in 1884. She was raised in the Lusk area and graduated from St. Mary's College in South Bend, Indiana. She then became a school teacher north of Lusk. My father met my mother when she was teaching at the Fairview School in 1928. They only knew each other about six months when they were married on June 26, 1929. My mother passed away in 1977 and my father in 1982.

My Dad, being of the school of learning, had saved and improved his homestead. He moved his bride into a lovely home for those days and raised his



Henry Wasserburger, Anna Pfister Wasserburger wedding with Maggie Pfister Olinger (sister) and John Pfister, father.



Left to right: Brothers John, George, Henry, and father Jacob Wasserburger.

family. I was born May 18, 1931. My brother John William was born July 26, 1934, and sister, Jean Ellen was born August 6, 1939. This house is lived in today by my grandson, Andrew, and his wife Anne. They have just welcomed into our lives a fifth generation Wasserburger, Henry B, born June 11, 2016.

Many times throughout the early years of our ranch, my Dad couldn't secure financing through banks. His brother-in-law Ed Arnold would loan him money to keep the operation running. At one point Ed demanded that if he were to loan any money to my father he would have to buy sheep with the proceeds. It was good advice. Sheep became a large part of our history; Dad always joked we had the cows to be called a cowman and sheep to purchase more land.

My wife Lorraine and I both graduated from high school in Lusk and were married in 1951 and we went to live on the ranch. We raised five children on the ranch: Henry III, Jolene (Tom), J.D. (Laurie),



Henry holding Jean; Bill and Henry, Jr.

Tom (Val) and Jeff (Tracie). J.D. graduated from Lusk in 1975 and returned to the ranch in 1978. We formed a partnership named Bootheel7 Livestock. This was my father's brand and is located on the left hip of cattle. My wife, Lorraine, passed away in 1999. I married Bonnie Baures in 2000 and we reside in Casper. All of my children have been successful in their careers. My oldest son is a veterinarian; my daughter a school teacher; my son, Tom, owns the Best Western Pioneer Court Motel in Lusk; and my youngest son, Jeff, has been a school principal and is currently a State Senator for Campbell County.

J.D. married his wife, Laurie, in 1980. They raised three sons on the ranch; Jason (Hilary), an attorney in Cheyenne; Eric; and Andrew (Anne), who both live on the family ranch. Eric owns my old brand -CF. Bootheel7 Livestock is now running over 1000 mother cows and about that many yearlings. Eric, Andrew, and Lance Hladky along with the Hageman boys, Brett and Lane of Fort Laramie, compete in ranch rodeos and have qualified for the



Henry, Anna, and Henry Louis, Jr. (first born, 1931)



Jolene, Tom, Jerry, Jeff, and J.D.



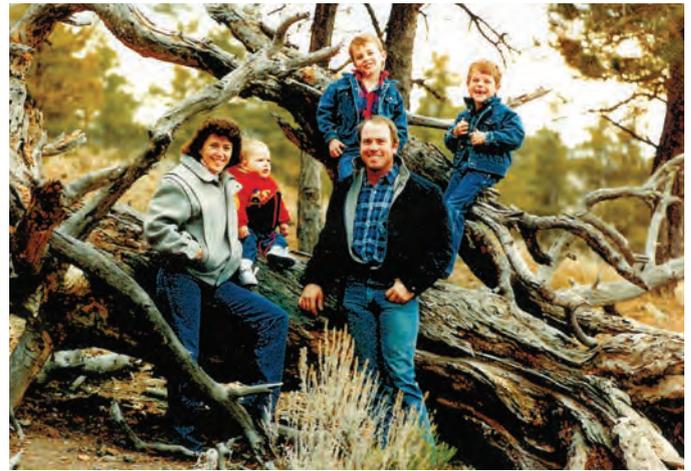
Henry and Lorraine's wedding, September 12, 1957.



Henry, Jr. with bucket calf.



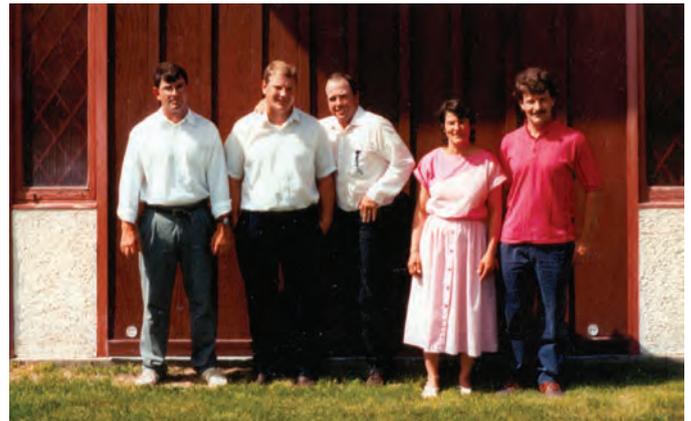
The next generation: Eric, Andrew, and Jason, June 2015.



Laurie, Andrew, J.D., Jason, and Eric, November 1989.



Bootheel 7 Livestock Champion Team 2014.



Henry and Lorraine's children.



Henry and Lorraine.



Henry Wasserburger.



Henry and Bonnie Baures Wasserburger, married August 11, 2000.



May 2016.



Jason, Andrew, and Eric Wasserburger, August 1993.

World Ranch Rodeo Championship in Amarillo twice. They have won the Wyoming State Fair Ranch Rodeo and the Nile Ranch Rodeo Finals in Billings, Montana. They are a tough bunch of young men! Bonnie and I have enjoyed watching them compete.

The Wasserburger Ranch has come a long way from the days when my Dad lived in a soddy with cowhide for a door. Wasserburgers have endured floods, droughts, blizzards, and everything nature can throw out. We have been persistent and persevered in times of anguish and privilege. I am proud of the growth each generation has contributed. To me, it is all about the next generation.

I'm proud that there are now five generations of Wasserburgers that have lived and been a part of the history of Lusk and Niobrara County.

Henry L. Wasserburger Jr.

As with all Centennial Ranches, current generations have to look back with admiration at the tenacity and toughness of their ancestors. My grandmother told me this story when she was a little girl: a flu epidemic passed through the Node area, how she and her mother walked to the neighbors who were sick, went to the window because they dare not enter and asked how the family was doing. The lady replied, "I'm doing better but the baby died." That story is a testament to all they endured through time, certainly a story I will never forget.

When World War I broke out my great grandfather came into the house and said to his wife and twelve children, "There will be no more German spoken in this house, we are Americans now." Just a little bit different than the landscape in our country today.

In the twilight years of my grandfather and father's livestock careers, instead of liquidating the equity they had built up through time, they gave willingly to the next generation. We now, and future generations to come, can't thank them enough.

J.D. Wasserburger



J.D., Eric, Jason, and Laurie, April 2007



Four generations of Wasserburgers: J.D., Andrew, Henry B., and Henry Wasserburger.



Rep. Cynthia Lummis, Wasserburger Family, Gov. Matthew H. Mead, Sen. Mike Enzi.

Other families

Bootjack Ranch, 1902

James Noble Family, Sublette County

Ewry Ranch, 1916

Straatsma Family, Campbell County

