



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

2019 WYOMING CENTENNIAL FARM AND RANCH YEARBOOK



ARTS. PARKS. HISTORY.

Wyoming State Parks & Cultural Resources

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Dear Centennial Farm and Ranch Families,

It is my honor to congratulate you on your inclusion in the 2019 Centennial Farm and Ranch Yearbook. Every year we celebrate operations that have spanned a century and not only highlight this accomplishment but share in thanking these special places for helping to preserve our history and culture here in Wyoming. This year, perhaps more than many in recent memory, particularly points out the value of perseverance and grit. You demonstrate the character that distinguishes Wyoming's legacy. Your inclusion in the yearbook is testament to not only your families' but to your dedication to agriculture as well as a profound work ethic that our state cherishes so dearly. I thank you for your continued work and for your role in putting food on tables across this nation and the world.

It was not easy to start or run a business 100 years ago and I often wonder what it must have been like to farm or ranch during the 1920's in post WWI America. Agriculture took a particularly hard hit with surpluses and crashes in markets that pushed many farms and ranches out of the business. The agricultural depression that followed lasted into the 1940's. I remember my father's stories about dust clouds and hopper infestations. Your families made it through each day to cut out a living during all these hardships. The generations that followed them have continued that legacy.

Markets will always fluctuate, styles will vary, technology will continue to expand and knowledge will improve ever faster. But your relationship to the land is what feeds our country. We are Americans and a hardy lot. While most are moving further from the land, your family continues to embrace it and care for it. That dedication to agriculture and land management is intrinsic to Wyoming and will always be a part of our great state. Wyoming still has more livestock than people, and we are still one big town spread over a large area. Agriculture makes it so. You cannot describe Wyoming without talking about the care our ranchers or farmers have for their home place, their communities, and the land that supports it.

As you celebrate this wonderful achievement in a remarkable year. Please know that I could not be more humbled to serve as your Governor, I would like to extend my most sincere congratulations and thank you to you and your family. Jennie and I hope nothing but the best for you and the next 100 years to come. Congratulations!

Mark Gordon
Governor



U.S. Senator John Barrasso, Governor Mark Gordon, and U.S. Senator Mike Enzi.

Alter Homestead, 1914

Alter and Downing Families, Goshen County



Aerial view of the homestead, early 1950s.

The Alter Homestead was claimed by Boynton (Bunt) Alter in 1914.

Bunt was born in Wayland, Iowa in September 1879. In 1900, he began working on the railroad and moved westward, eventually stopping in Lusk, where he worked on several ranches, drove horses to Montana, trapped wolves in the Harney Buttes and helped mark the grave of Mother Featherlegs. He worked as a surveyor for the Copper Belt and Michigan mines. Then he traveled and worked extensively, ranging as far as Alaska and northwest Canada, where he worked for the Whitehorse-Yukon Telegraph Company. After these adventures, he returned to Lusk and looked for a place to settle down. He selected a spot 17 miles south of Lusk and homesteaded there on 320 acres.

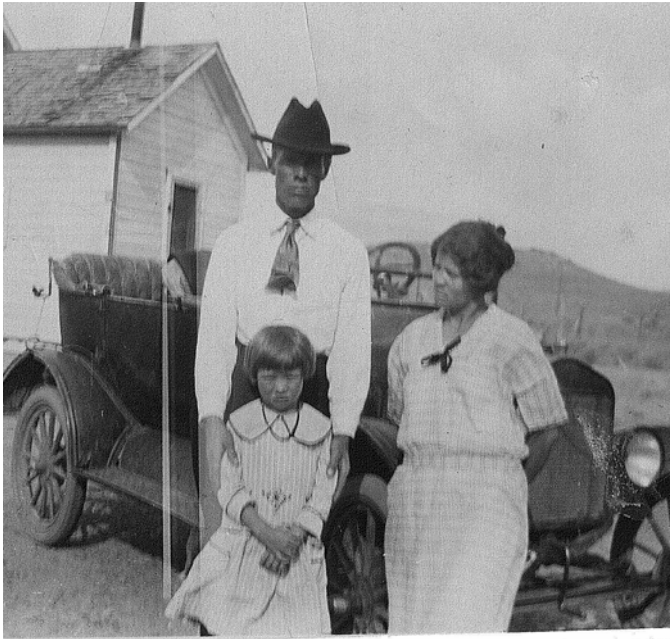
Anna Hanson, born in 1887, also had an adventurous spirit. After growing up in Norway, she traveled to New York, then moved to La Crosse, Wisconsin, where she worked for a year. In 1908, she and a friend traveled by train to Lusk. Both women took jobs as waitresses at the Northwestern Hotel, where

Anna worked for several years. She claimed her own homestead east of Lusk and later sold it. She and Bunt were married on April 15, 1915, and moved to the Alter Homestead.

In 1917, Bunt and Anna's daughter, Ione, was born in the homestead house. Ione spent her entire life ranching on and around her parents' homestead.

Bunt and Anna built the house and the outbuildings and started raising cattle and dry farming. Droughts, hail, and grasshoppers were hazards that made them decide to stop farming, buy grain, and shift to raising sheep along with a few cattle. In 1920, they added another 320 acres to their ranch. During the 1930s and 1940s they raised turkeys in addition to sheep.

In the late 1920s, neighbors, being discouraged by winters and economics, began to leave the area. One family that stayed and made a go of it along with the Alters was the Josie and Walter (Happy) Tyrrel family, whose land was just north of the Alter homestead. The two families became close friends and frequently



Bunt, Anna, their daughter Ione and their car, early 1920s.

visited each other and worked together. Subsequent generations have remained close. Descendants of the Josie and Happy Tyrrel family are still running their original ranch, and fourth generation Tyrrel descendants are leasing and nurturing the Alter pastures today. The strong friendship continues.

Many stories have been passed down about life on the homestead. Raising turkeys on the prairie was a challenge. The turkeys were herded like sheep so they could feed on grasshoppers. During a big grasshopper year they would range a mile from home. The turkeys would find snakes and circle around them. Anna usually herded them, and one summer she killed 75 rattlesnakes with a hoe. When it was time to market the turkeys, neighbors would get together and go from grower to grower and have a turkey plucking. They plucked hundreds of turkeys, enjoyed each other's company, and always had a huge delicious meal.

The homestead house was small and very basic but this did not stop Bunt and Anna from hosting frequent gatherings of friends and neighbors. They were known for their hospitality and Anna's good cooking. Sometimes the gatherings were work related, when neighbors gathered for tasks such as sheep shearing or turkey plucking, but at other times, people were invited just for a meal and a visit.

The blizzard of 1949 was almost fatal for Bunt and Anna. As the snow and wind intensified, they went out into the pasture on foot to bring in their sheep. But it was too late, the sheep had scattered and they had to abandon the search. Anna, suffering from hypothermia, tried to lie down to rest. Bunt carried her to the house through the storm. When the weather finally cleared, they and their neighbors searched for sheep buried in the drifts. Only a few survived.

They bought more sheep in the spring of 1949 and continued every year to run the ranch, raise a large vegetable garden, raise fruit trees, preserve large stores of homegrown food, help families with child care, and keep in close touch with neighbors. Bunt enjoyed playing the fiddle and had a collection of violins, and he often recited poetry and sang while he worked. Anna was an avid reader, and she enjoyed embroidery and crocheting.

Bunt and Anna sold the sheep and semi-retired in 1960. They stayed in the homestead house until 1967 when they purchased a mobile home and moved two miles away to their daughter's house. Ione looked after them there for many years. They finally moved to the Niobrara County Nursing Home, living there until their deaths in 1981; Anna was 94 and Bunt was 101.

In 1941 Ione married Raymond Hoy, the son of Josie and Stanley Hoy, neighbors who also stayed and met the challenges of life on the prairie. Raymond and Ione grew up knowing each other and attended Rawhide School and Lusk High School. In 1942 their daughter, Jo Ann was born. Ione, Raymond, and Jo Ann settled on and later purchased the Marie Porter ranch, which joins the Alter homestead. In 1952, Raymond died in an airplane accident. Ione stayed on the ranch, having acquired the skills and expertise necessary to successfully run a sheep raising operation. In 1957, Ione married Roy Turnbull, a rancher from east of Lusk. Roy moved in and became a valued and beloved new member of the Jay Em-area community until his death in 1984. Ione again stayed on the ranch on her own until 1996 when she moved to Lusk. She leased the pastures and continued to help with decision-making on the ranch until her death in 2015.



Bunt and Anna and their turkey flock in 1940.

In 1964, Jo Ann married Tom Downing, a Wyoming native from Cheyenne, and they eventually settled near San Francisco in Lafayette, California. In 2007, Ione passed the ranch, including the homestead which she had purchased from Bunt and Anna, to Jo Ann and Tom Downing's family trust. In 2016, Jo Ann and Tom passed the ranch and the homestead to their son, Jim Downing.

The Homestead, which provided a comfortable living for Bunt and Anna, is now used for pasturing Red Angus cattle owned by Pat and Jo Ann Wade (Jo Ann is the great-granddaughter of homestead neighbors Josie and Happy Tyrrel). A new well, a solar pump, new water tanks, and a water pipe line were installed in 2007. In 2012, a prairie fire destroyed the original homestead buildings and burned large portions of the pastures. The grass has recovered and is improving because of careful range management, and continues to support wildlife as well as cattle. Jo Ann and Tom, and Jim and his family, maintain Ione's house and spend as much time as possible on the ranch.



Bunt and Anna (left) with neighbors Happy and Josie Tyrrel, 1942.



Ione, husband Raymond Hoy and daughter Jo Ann, 1951.



Ione and her grandson Jim Downing on the sheep wagon, 1997.



Bunt and Anna celebrating their 50th anniversary in the park in Lusk, 1965.



Rohan Downing, the great-great-grandchild of Bunt and Anna Alter, on the prairie on the homestead land in 2011; the following year, the original buildings (background) burned in a prairie fire.

Happy's 3J Ranch, 1919

Happy Tyrrel Family , Goshen County



Aerial photo showing the new house built in 1942. The shelterbelt was planted in 1925 by Gene as a 4-H project and the windmill which was a remnant of open range days when it watered John Pfister's cattle herds. Photo circa early 1950's.

While living near Woodlake, Nebraska, Walter S. (Happy) Tyrrel noticed the fat condition of the cattle coming through on the railroad in late summer. The Nebraska cattle weren't getting fat by this time so Happy asked where these cattle were coming from. He was told the short grass country in Wyoming. Intrigued, he spent a winter in Manville, WY working in a drug store as a soda jerk. The oil fields in Lance Creek were booming and Happy couldn't believe how much money the oil field workers were making. He remembers their wives coming into the drug store and buying boxes of candy. That spring he was shown the ranch which they purchased from Dr. George A. Earl in 1919 and in 1920 Happy left their ranch in the Nebraska Sandhills and began the move to northern Goshen County.

When Happy arrived in Lusk by train, the railroad wouldn't accept his check to have his immigrant car unlocked. The train car contained his family's furniture, milk cows and 6 head of horses.

Walking down the street, Happy saw a sign "Otto Koeberlin, Tailor". To his relief this was a man from Nebraska who had known Happy all his life. He arranged for the cash Happy needed to get his train car unlocked and unloaded.

A local man helped Happy find a place to keep his livestock for the night in corrals owned by Tom Bell. When morning came, his 2 best mares, which were also his team, had been stolen and were never recovered. Short 2 horses, Happy traveled to the ranch, settled the livestock and furnished the house. He traveled back to Woodlake, NE to bring wife Josie and son Gene to their new home.

The family lived in the original 4 room log house until 1942, when a new house was built, complete with running water and carbide lights. The house was built according to plans drawn by Josie. To date, 5 generations of the Tyrrel family have called this house and ranch home.



The new house built in 1942 and the beginnings of the beautiful yard that Josie Tyrrel was known for. May 1945.

Early on various barns, sheds and corrals were built as the need arose and money was available. Unused homestead shacks from purchased lands were utilized as granaries and sheds. A wash house was built next to the old windmill that had supplied water to the cattle of John Pfister during the days of open range. As time passed, an adjoining homestead was purchased and Happy filed on an additional 120 acres.

Originally strictly a cattle ranch, sheep were added and eventually phased out the cattle. Corn and potatoes were grown in the early years until the drought in the mid 1930s brought farming to an end. Known for a large evergreen shelterbelt protecting the buildings and corrals, the trees planted by Happy and Josie's son Gene as a 4-H project in 1925 are still alive and serving their purpose today.

With the passing of Josie, Happy and second wife Jane, the ranch has passed down the generations and is now owned by three of the Tyrrel grandchildren who have many fond memories of time spent at the ranch with Happy and Josie. Today the land is leased by a great granddaughter and her husband.

The Tyrrels were known for their hospitality, taking in people with no other place to be during the Depression era of the 1930s and later always hosting friends, neighbors and family parties in their beautiful yard.

Happy was active in his community, serving for 21 years on the Goshen County District 6 school board, Chairman of the Royal Valley Community club for 15 years, and held office in the Rawhide Buttes Telephone Company. He was also treasurer of the Niobrara County Farm Bureau and a lifelong member. Happy was an avid hunter and fisherman who also enjoyed woodworking and collecting Native American artifacts.

Josie was a 4-H leader for 20 years, and a member in the Royal Valley Club where she was an active worker for betterment of rural living. Her hobby was the growing of flowers which she shared freely for others to plant in their yards.

Jane, whom Happy married after Josie's passing was a school teacher, librarian, pilot, and an avid historian and genealogist.

Since the Tyrrels arrival in 1920, they've been fortunate to have had as adjoining neighbors-Boynton and Anna Alters, their daughter Ione Turnbull, granddaughter JoAnn Downing and now great grandson Jim Downing. Together as friends and neighbors the generations of both families have endured blizzards, drought, prairie fires, and good years full of green grass. In 2019 both family ranches will celebrate being recognized as WY Centennial Ranches together.



Son Gene Tyrrel and his first puppy by the log house the Tyrrels lived in from 1920-1942.



Happy and Gene with the first coyote killed at their new Wyoming home.



Gene and his registered Hereford heifer.



(L to R) Boynton (Bunt) Alter, Happy Tyrrel, Anna Alter & Josie Tyrrel. Neighbors and friends then and down through the generations.



Happy feeding his calves.



After a snowstorm at the Tyrrel ranch in November 1956.



Potato picking time in a field north of the house.



Winter lambing in the corrals 1958.



View of the corrals in 1956.



The Tyrrel Family with U.S. Representative Liz Cheney, Senator John Barasso, Governor Mark Gordon, First Lady Jennie Gordon, U.S. Senator Mike Enzi at the Centennial Farm and Ranch Ceremony, August 2019.

Armstrong Ranch, 1919

Armstrong and Bregar Families, Fremont County



Trailing cattle, Armstrong Ranch.

*Article from the Wyoming State Journal,
May 11, 1987*

ARMSTRONG PLACE A PIONEER RANCH

By Jean A. Matthisen

The old part of the house at the Armstrong ranch north of Lander is constructed of logs, dove-tail cut and fitted together by a master carpenter, Charles Harrison. Jack Armstrong, who was born and raised on the place and still operates the 800 acres of holdings with his daughter Jeannie, explained, "There were two rooms made out of logs and also a sod room along with them originally." The sod room is long gone but the log rooms and the rest of the house are still very sturdy.

"The house probably dates from the late 1880s, since I do know that my great aunt, Lyda Pearl Doane, was born in one of the rooms in 1890," Jack said. "Finn and Nobe Harrison were both born here and they were kids when they planted these trees. That makes them over 100 years old."

Jack showed me two homestead certificates originally issued to Charles Harrison, one a desert land claim of 73 acres issued in 1888 when Wyoming was still a territory and the other issued as his homestead claim of 156.18 acres in 1890. The ranch was purchased by James and Elizabeth Harrison and Lawrence Silbers in 1914 and in turn sold to Jack's parents, John and Ellen Armstrong, in September, 1919. They purchased the place at \$73 an acre.

John had a degree in agriculture from the University of Nebraska. The family farmed, milked 10-12 head of Jersey cows, raised hogs and harvested grain and hay.

Jack was born on the ranch in 1922 and always lived there. As a child he attended school at the Lower North Form School at Milford about a mile from the ranch and he usually walked to school. He also attended school in Lander and graduated from the Fremont County Vocational High School in 1940. He was honored as state farmer in the Future Farmers of America for Wyoming when he was 16.

His dad (John) served seven consecutive terms in the Wyoming House of Representatives beginning in 1941, was a member of the Milford Grange, Farm Bureau, and the Hudson Creamery Board.

Jack's mother, Ellen, was a 55-year member of the Milford Home Economics Club, a 50-year member of the Eastern Star, and served seven years as secretary of the Fremont County Vocational High School board.

Jack is the oldest of two sons and was a charter member of the Lander Valley Farm Bureau.

In 1941 Gayle came to the area from Douglas to teach school at the Lower North Fork School at Milford. She and Jack were married on Sept. 8, 1941. They are the parents of two: Anita Jean who helps run the ranch, and son John D. Gayle has been a 4-H leader and has served on the FCVHS school board, on the boards of directors of the Fremont County Youth Camp and the Wyoming State Winter Fair and also as secretary for the Lander Chamber of Commerce. She joined the Milford Home Economics Club in 1941.

The Armstrongs hosted a dinner at their place during the One-Shot Antelope Hunt for 14 years, serving fried chicken and homegrown corn. Jack was a member of the One-Shot team in 1952 but didn't get an antelope.

The ranch has expanded over the years to include the Chavez and McDowell places on North Fork and part of the old Pete Carpenter ranch near Atlantic City. During the years he was growing up Jack said they ran sheep. They still have sheep and also run cattle. The cattle are moved to summer range in mid-May. For many years the Armstrongs trailed the cattle up but now truck them. They still trail the cattle back in the fall and numerous pictures have been taken of their trailing the herd. The cattle are brought in from summer range and kept on the Carpenter place about a month and then brought down around the first of November to the home place.

I asked him if ranching was very different now than when he was growing up. "Well, you've got to manage things a lot different now than you did then. We work to get as big a calf crop as possible and

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JACK ARMSTRONG

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pregnancy test the cows to make sure. We have to vaccinate them a lot more. Low cattle prices make a pretty tough time to get by. The high prices the past year didn't help either," Jack said.

In the yard an old spring house made of cobble rock dates back to the early days of the ranch. Charles Harrison was a carpenter and helped build several of the log buildings at Ft. Washakie. His wife made cheese and sold milk and cheese at the fort or traded it for food staples. A small water wheel by the spring house brought water up from the river, which ran through a trough in the building and kept the milk, cream, and cheese cool.

It was a bright spring evening and the sheep were baaing near the old barn that also dates to the days of the Harrison Homestead. Nearby an old wagon slumbers by a sheep wagon. Nobe Harrison once recalled that the Indians used to camp on the river nearby in the winter. The Indian women would dig post holes in exchange for winter meat, usually mutton.

The ranch was honored as a Pioneer Ranch in 1984 by the Farm Bureau for being in the family ownership well over 50 years. The sign they were presented hangs prominently on the old part of the house. The ranch remains a pioneer ranch of the Lander area, steeped in history and a proud family tradition.

John W. and Ellen Armstrong purchased and moved to what is now known as the Armstrong Ranch in 1919. Their son John A. (Jack) married Gayle in 1941; after they were married, Jack and Gayle joined his parents on the ranch. Jack and Gayle lived on the ranch their entire lives. Their daughter, Jean, joined them and is still active in ranching today. Their son John D. is active in the ranch. John's daughter and son in-law, Annette and Bill Bregar, came to the ranch in 1994 and are continuing the family legacy. John W. and Ellen had dairy cattle, sheep, pigs and all other supporting farm animals to support themselves. Native hay and grain were the primary crops. Jack and Gayle continued and added beef cattle, alfalfa hay and acreage to the original ranch. Jack passed away in 2007 and Gayle in 2019. Now the operation focuses on a commercial Red Angus cow/calf operation.

Bill and Annette's son, Hunter Bregar married Allison Engle on August 18, 2019, and thus the family was unable to attend the Centennial Farm & Ranch Ceremony in Douglas on the same day. The family picked up their sign early so a family wedding photo could include the Centennial Farm & Ranch honor. Bill and Annette's daughter, Heather and her husband Drew Nielsen, returned in November 2019 to help with the ranch.



(L-R) Drew Nielsen, Heather Nielsen, John Armstrong, Allison (Engle) Bregar (bride), Hunter Bregar (groom), Annette Bregar, Bill Bregar, Jean Armstrong.

Arrowtail Ranch, 1919

Smith and Newkirk Families, Albany County



"Boot Heel" west of the Homestead.

The history of the George & Augusta Smith + ⇨ "Cross Reversed 4" Homestead & the Nat Smith / Newkirk ⇐ "Arrowtail" Ranch in northern Albany County Wyoming (WY) began in Council Bluffs, Iowa, where George E. Smith was born May 25, 1888, and Augusta M. Henggeler was born January 4, 1893. Dad's family was of English & Irish descent--he was the oldest of four children. Mother's family, the Joseph Henggeler, was of German descent and she was third youngest of nine children. On February 20, 1917, George & Augusta were married in Curtis, Nebraska (NE), and farmed near Stockville, NE with his Dad. Their first child Nat Edward, was born in Curtis on July 1, 1918.

In the spring of 1919, with a year-old baby and another shortly on the way, they came to WY looking for land--free for the homesteading. Since no one had farmed this part of WY, George assumed it would be much like in NE. The land they legally filed on (Section 14; Township 26 North, Range 76 West) was approximately 35-miles northeast of Medicine Bow and 40-miles north of Rock River, near the landmark hill of "Boot Heel". They returned to Curtis, NE to winter, and 2 weeks later Florence Elizabeth was born September 17! *"Mother was a most courageous woman to make a trip like that so close to giving birth."*

In the spring of 1920, Dad returned to WY in an immigrant car on the Union Pacific Railroad with all their belongings--cows, horses, machinery, furniture, chickens, etc. Unloading in Medicine Bow ("the Bow"), he hitched his team to the wagon filled with all it would hold and went to the homestead. The "overflow" was left in the Bow, confident it would still be there later, since honesty and trust were the standard back then--a man's word was good and a handshake sealed a bargain. *"How far we have strayed!"* While living out of a tent, Dad built the first 8 X 10 foot cabin from West Coast Fir purchased in the Bow. With a dirt floor, 2 small windows, table, chairs, bed, a small woodstove, he also added an overhead hammock for the kids to sleep in.

Groundwater for the house, garden, and livestock were scarce, so Dad punched a well, using a cable system to lift and drop the handmade bit (perhaps like a "Drive Point" bit), hitting a good source approximately 80 feet deep. Then he installed a hand pump (*"I guess you could say we had running water - someone always had to run and get it!"*). He later put up a windmill.

In the late summer of 1920, with the cabin finished (and still standing today) Dad sent for his family and Mom, Nat and Florence arrived by train. This was

the beginning of the new adventure, never dreaming of the struggle that life on the barren plains of WY would bring.

Due to cold, severe winters, the family couldn't spend the first few of them in their cabin, so they took their livestock and spent them at a neighbor's place, about 10 miles north, near the Marshall Post Office. Dad helped care for the livestock and did other chores. Mother kept the house and did the cooking.

As time went on, it became apparent farming in WY wasn't like in NE, with the only water--from Mother Nature--the critical element. Dad worked long, hard hours to break up the land and plant crops--small grains initially (rye, clover). Later, potatoes did very well--more than enough for the family, so he took the rest to the Bow and sold them to help pay the grocery bill. Along with other "Mom" duties, she always raised a big garden.

During the first several years, there were trips back to NE doctors for Nat, since his right arm was injured at birth and didn't develop properly. It was put in a cast raised above his head and later in a metal brace. Mother removed the brace several hours each day, and massaged the muscles and nerves with a battery-operated vibrator. His arm did grow and develop, though somewhat smaller and shorter than his left. But it was never a handicap--he used it for everything.

Our family continued to grow. Mae Helen was born Sept 11, 1923, so in 1924 Dad built not only a larger house using rough lumber from a nearby saw mill, but also a small cabin for the school house. A district school was established for Nat (6) and Florence (5). The teacher lived with us and paid \$20 a month for room and board. Katherine Augusta (Kay) was born Sept 12, 1926, and Anita Margaret - a winter baby - was born Jan 11, 1929 in Laramie. The rest of us were born at the homestead with Dr. Cell from Medicine Bow attending--*provided he got there in time!* By 1930, they needed a bigger house, so we moved an existing one from another homestead south of us and joined the two together. In the fall of 1931, Dad went to the Bow and bought our annual winter supplies, livestock feed, new shoes for Mae and Kay, and a 5-gallon can of gas. On the way home, the truck caught fire. He tried putting it out with snow,



George and Augusta Smith on their wedding day on February 20, 1917 in Curtis, Nebraska.



Nat Smith standing on top of "Boot Heel" with ranch buildings in the background (n.d.).

but had to back away and watch it burn, then walked approximately 12 miles home in the dark. The next morning as he told us all, tears came to his eyes--the only time we ever saw our Dad cry. He rebuilt the truck later and used it for several years. On Nov 2, 1931, Fred Joseph Smith joined the family. In 1932, Dad made plans to build a nice log barn, and eventually did with the help of neighbors.

The depression was hard, and many homesteaders "gave up" and moved away. But we thankfully made it through due to a good dose of perseverance, working hard, and our family made many social friends as we attended neighborhood dances, school programs, 4-H activities, community picnics, and, weather permitting, Easter Sunday church was in Hanna approximately 50-miles west, a long trip in the back of the old truck!

Winter of 1936, the family experienced a double tragedy. In December, my Dad was called back to Curtis, NE as his father was very ill (injured by a tornado May of 1935). Dad went by train, sick himself from that cold winter from helping build the LaBonte Canyon Albany County road to Douglas with horses, slips and Fresnos. Shortly after arriving in Curtis, Dad developed pneumonia, his condition worsened, and just after Christmas Mom was telegraphed to come to NE. So she took the train, leaving us 6 kids home alone. Regrettably, on December 29, our Grandpa Fred Smith passed away, and two days later on December 31, our Dad, George (48) died. On New Year's Day 1937, Dick Cooper, Chevy dealer in the Bow, delivered *another* telegram stating we all needed to go to NE for the funerals. So Nat immediately found a neighbor to stay and care for our place, Florence gathered things for the trip, then Dick took the 6 of us back to the Bow, and put us on the train to North Platte (he bought our tickets, later reimbursed by Mom). Both funerals were held in Curtis, a couple days apart. Shortly thereafter, Mom's brother John Henggeler brought Mom and the 6 of us back to WY in the nice car Grandma Smith gave us--a 1936 Ford they'd only owned for a short time. We were so grateful and fortunate to have it.

What did the future now hold for us as we settled in without Dad in the place he had so proudly acquired only 16 years before, worked so hard to



The first homestead cabin George built in the summer of 1920. The picture was taken in 1923. (L-R) Augusta (30), Nat (5), and Florence (4).



Florence and Nat by water well drill tower.



The log barn is still standing and in use today.



(L-R) Florence, Anita, Mae, and Kay.



Nat with a "Super Coyote".

keep, constantly improved and raised his family? Mom was almost 44, Nat-18, Florence-17, Mae-14, Kay-10, Anita-almost 8, and Fred-5. We stayed the rest of that winter helping Mom and continued our schooling. That fall, Nat married Marion "Rae" Rinearson on November 13, and took over running the ranch. Mom took us 5 remaining kids to Laramie, working any job available, determined to keep our family together. We all went back out to the ranch the next summer, and that Fall (1938), Mom turned the ranch over to Nat. Mom had purchased the section just west, homesteaded by George's sister-the Battelle's, for a tax title, and included a nice livable house.

Nat and Rae had 4 children: twins Margaret Ann & Marie Elizabeth were born January 7, 1939; Daniel Edward on December 4, 1940, and Donna Lee on March 14, 1942. They were all raised on the ranch. At one time, the kids had a bobcat they raised from a kitten. If Nat had trouble getting the kids up in the morning, all he had to do was open the bedroom door and the bobcat did the rest!

Rae was a certified teacher so the school district re-established the school and she taught all of them through the 8th grade. Nat raised both cattle and sheep. He devoted his life to the ranch, but was a good neighbor, and made many friends all over the country. He always enjoyed the Fall antelope hunters, and vice versa. For several years he sold Goose Neck trailers, and made many friends in Texas where he bought them. He loved to tell stories and incidents of rural life [e.g., "At a family gathering, all the kids wanted to ride a horse. 'Old Strippy' (she had a white stripe down her nose) was saddled, then facetiously Nat said to us (Florence, Mae, Kay) loud enough for the kids to also hear, '*you'd better put one up there first who you don't care much about because I don't know how she will act with kids.*'"]

Over the years Nat went into the sheep business almost entirely. He had acquired more available land, and it was most suitable to sheep. Besides Nat's busy and dedicated ranch work, in August 1949, he received the contract to be the rural mail carrier for the Marshall route. It was a twice-a-week ~85 mile round-trip on dirt roads to transport mail sacks back and forth between area ranches and the Medicine

Bow Post Office. (In 1974, the U.S. Postal Service awarded him for 25 years of accident-free driving, and 20 years of never missing a day of service, records he continued nearly unblemished for more than 50 years, despite major winter snow storms. Not many folks in their 80s could claim that honor!) As he travelled those roads, he was always on the lookout for the primary predator of his sheep--the abundant coyotes. They could kill or maim a number of herd sheep in short order, seriously impacting his family's livelihood; thus, he dispatched them when he could, selling the winter hides.

In 1952, Rural Electric Association crews built electrical services to all the local ranches. What a blessing – refrigerators, deep freezers, dishwashers, radios, automatic washers and dryers, television, electric lights in the home and out buildings – these were some of the pleasures these hardy folks had lived without. And with only local “hoot ‘n holler” telephones, the two-way business band radios were a great invention, used by many ranchers, both in homes and vehicles (*precursors of cell phones!*).

In 1961, Nat and Rae were divorced and a couple of years later in 1963, he married Kathleen (Kitty) McCoy. She had a son Eric Thompson who joined them on the ranch. Kitty raised and trained Arabian horses. (She passed away in 1991).

By 1978, Nat's children had married and moved away. His youngest daughter Donna and husband Ernest Newkirk moved from McFadden and bought a place just north of Rock River. They had three boys, Robby, Ronny, and Roger. The two places were only about 40 miles apart, so they spent many days helping at both places doing the necessary ranch work--a welcome arrangement to meet Nat's need for extra help in his later years. Regrettably, Ernie (42) passed away from leukemia in 1983, but Donna, Roger and his family stayed at the Rock River ranch and continued using both places for their ranching operations. Nat remained on the homestead, managing the day-to-day work of caring for the sheep well into his eighties. “...(Nat) gave up horses for 4-wheelers...they always stand where you leave them...and you don't have to feed them when they're not working.” Roger and wife Tammy purchased most of his sheep, and gradually took over



(Standing L-R) Mae, Anita, Fred, Kay. (Seated L-R) Florence, Augusta, Nat. Picture taken in 1948.



(L-R) Nat, Florence, Mae, Anita, Fred, Kay.



(L-R) Fred, Anita, Kay, Mae, Florence, Nat. Picture taken in 1998.



Nat and Rae Smith's house started out as a two-room homestead cabin. Nat added on to it as the family grew to four children.



Original house George Smith built (1920) for his wife and two children.

their management, with sage advice from Nat. They were also awarded the Marshall mail route job. Nat and Ellen Smith were married in 1993, and remained on the ranch until health issues precluded it.

In 2004, Donna Newkirk received the Albany County "Ranch Woman of the Year" award. Not only had she continued to help Nat with the livestock, haying, etc., she kept up with her grandkids 4-H projects and school activities. And since 1978, she was the Rural Mail Carrier for the northern Albany County Garrett community, also a twice-weekly, approximately 130-mile round trip on dirt roads in all kinds of weather. On July 1, 2008 Nat celebrated 90 years enjoying the ranch life he lived. On New Year's Day, 2009 while staying with Donna in Rock River, he suffered a stroke, then passed away in Laramie on February 17, 2009.

The George Smith homestead can claim 5 generations. Although George, Augusta and Nat are gone, Donna, son Roger, Tammy and their 2 girls, Cassidy and Jacie, continue to ranch on the land George and Augusta originally homesteaded 100-years ago. However, Roger regrettably reports they've had to get out of the sheep business after 75 years due to predator losses to coyotes, eagles, ravens and bobcats. Instead, the family now runs a cow-calf operation, and summer about 200 head of cattle on the original homestead. They keep about 200 over the winter on hay meadows just outside of Rock River.

As for the rest of Nat and Rae's family: Marie and Charles Atkinson had 2 girls--Laurie, Barbara; Margaret and Don Williams had 4 kids--Robert, Dean, Sharon, Rochelle; Dan & Dollie (Stacy) Smith had 2--Kim, Dannette; later Dan married Charlene Anderson, with her son Charles.

As for our Mom--Augusta--and the rest of us 5 kids, Dad had left a small insurance policy that was used to pay bills and his funeral expenses. In the fall of 1938 after Nat took over the homestead, mother took us to Laramie--her frugal ways continued. At first, she received some help financially from the School District and Social Services, but she was never comfortable to be on welfare. She always had a job--cleaned houses, worked in the stockroom at Woolworths, took in washing and ironing, was a motel maid, cooked at the hospital, and one winter took care of a small handicapped child. None of these brought in much money, but she was determined to keep the family together. As us girls and Fred grew older, we all worked in any job available for teenagers and helped out in any way we could. We all graduated from high school and some went to college. Life for Mother became less demanding, but she continued her independence, and simple way of life--ironing clothes up until the time she was no longer able. The love and pride she instilled in all of us as a family, is hopefully a credit to her hard work and dedication.



Nat Smith.



Nat and Rae's family.

Several years before Mom died, she expressed a desire to move our Dad's remains from Curtis, NE to Laramie. In 1980, she purchased a double plot at the Laramie Greenhill Cemetery, where he now rests. On July 2, 1981 Mother passed away at 88, now laid to rest forevermore back together beside our Dad. And all of us married and stayed in WY (except Fred) and raised our families, always remembering with profound respect and gratitude the hardships they endured and the sacrifices Mom and Dad made for all of us! God rest their souls.

Of the original 6 Smith children, Kay Curry (94) and Anita Hilim (90) continue living in their respective Laramie homes--alone!

This history is an updated version (Jan, 2020, by Darrel Curry) of the memories from the 6 children originally compiled by Florence (Smith) Atkinson in 1987, and written by Kay (Smith) Curry (2013) with inputs from Donna (Smith) Newkirk.

Family ties are precious things
Woven through the years
Of memories of togetherness--
Of laughter, love and tears.

Family ties are cherished things
Forged in childhood days
By love of parents deep and true
And sweet familiar ways.

Family ties are treasured things,
And far though we may roam,
The tender bonds with those we love
Still pull our hearts toward home.



(L-R) Tammy, Cassidy, Donna, Jacie, and Roger Newkirk with their Centennial Farm and Ranch Sign.



The Newkirk, Smith, and Curry families with U.S. Senator John Barrasso, U.S. Representative Liz Cheney, First Lady Jennie Gordon, Governor Mark Gordon, U.S. Senator Mike Enzi at the Centennial Farm and Ranch Ceremony, August 2019.

Atkinson Sheep Creek Ranch, 1895

The Atkinson Family, Albany County



Sheep Creek Ranch today.

When he was 18 years old, Felix Atkinson, the oldest son of James and Jane Atkinson, immigrated from England to America along with his parents and six other siblings. Records show this happened in 1884.

After spending some time around Laramie, the family settled in northern Albany County on a ranch on Duck Creek near Owen, Wyoming, where they raised sheep and Shire work horses. The Atkinsons had been livestock people while living in England.

Felix began looking for a place of his own. As he rode around the country he noticed a place on Sheep Creek that had excellent water, would blow clear in the winter, and had red ground that was warmer and melted out sooner in the spring.

During this time, he met Lizzie Bailey the daughter of Ledyard Bailey who was foreman of the Bar M Cattle and Horse Company located near Bar M Mountain on Bar M Creek. The couple were married in 1895 and after spending some time at Owen, soon moved to Sheep Creek and each filed on a homestead. The couple ended up raising five sons -- Paul, Carl, Day, Merl, and Wayne ("Toots"). Carl died at a young age but Paul, Day, and Merl were livestock men their entire lives.

Felix was a good sheepman and he prospered at Sheep Creek. Back in those days, he could use his homestead and other land he acquired as a base for his operation and then take his sheep herds out and camp them on free grass. This was before the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934, which regulated grazing on public lands. He bought a ranch on Cottonwood and Antelope creeks where he could raise hay and haul it across to Sheep Creek with four-horse teams to have it on hand to feed the sheep during storms and periods of snow cover. One has to wonder how much of that hay the horses ate!

Felix had some good ideas for developing hay at Sheep Creek and he filed on the first water right on the creek in 1899. His father, James, was a surveyor and they picked out dam sites and surveyed ditches to irrigate the land. Trouble was, with only teams and wagons to work with, the log crib and rock structures they built to divert the water would not hold up under the stress of the floodwaters of Sheep Creek. It would be many years before structures would be put in to withstand the high water. The ditches, when checked with modern surveying equipment, were all "right on the mark" for accuracy.

Felix and Lizzie were very successful at Sheep Creek and had many nice things. The log house they built

in 1898, the schoolhouse, the log barn built in 1912, and the shearing shed built in 1920, were all first-class structures for their times. The boys rode good horses and Hamley saddles and the family had a Reo car which was one of the first in the area.

During lambing season, Felix would leave Lizzie at the ranch and camp out in a sheep wagon to tend the herd. On one of these occasions, the foreman of the horse round-up came and set up camp with six hundred head of horses in a field near the ranch. The horses proceeded to eat the grass that the Atkinson's needed for their sheep. Lizzie sent one of the boys out to tell the man to move the horses. He ignored her request so she got her rifle. While standing on the porch of the house, she started shooting getting closer and closer to the man with each shot. He immediately took the horses and left the area. Lizzie could drive a team of broncs, was an excellent cook, and enjoyed the isolated life on the remote ranch.

The family ran sheep and continued to prosper until 1919, when a severe drought hit the area and no grass or hay was available to winter the large number of sheep that the family owned. Felix decided to try to winter 1500 young ewes at home and they would send the majority of the sheep out of state for the winter. In December they set out with the herd in two different bands for the railroad at Medicine Bow. The plan was to send them to Kansas for the winter. When they were about halfway, the blue-sky shirt-sleeved weather turned into a raging east blizzard followed by a blizzard from the west. The sheep got away and drifted under snow banks. When things cleared away most of the sheep were dead and the ones they did find and dug out, developed pneumonia and eventually died.

In later years Day Atkinson said he thought it was a mistake to have ever left with the sheep. He thought they could have wintered the sheep on corn and sagebrush, and roughed them through the winter. Had the sheep been at home when the blizzard hit, they probably would not have drifted away. Who knows what would have happened?

Afterwards, Felix was anxious to get his sheep numbers restored so he bought a herd of sheep in New Mexico and had them sent to Wyoming. These



Felix and Lizzie Atkinson -- wedding photo 1895.

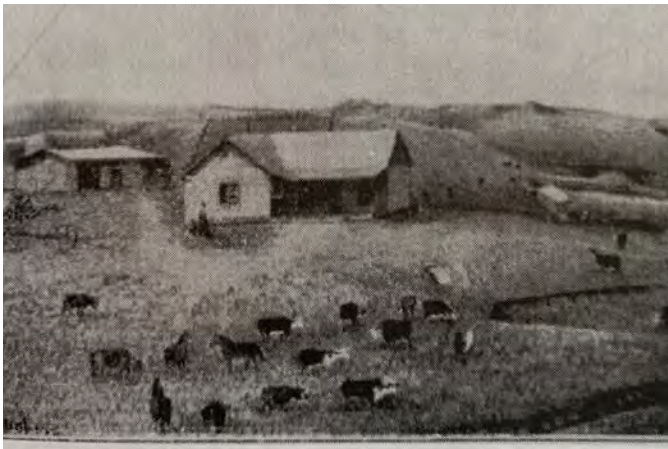
he mixed in with the 1500 head he had at home before discovering the New Mexico sheep had the scabies. Soon, all the sheep were diseased. They tried dipping the sheep and spraying the land with tanks mounted on wagons to kill the parasite. But the disease held the upper hand and became the demise of Felix and Lizzie's empire. Felix continued to struggle and died in September of 1929, at the age of 63, without ever being able to rebuild his livestock enterprise to its former glory.

After Felix died, the sons hung on and continued to operate the ranch. When the Great Depression hit, things really got tough. The middle son, Day, had filed on a homestead next to Felix's original homestead so he ended up being the one who would, in the long run, own and operate the original ranch. Carl died of kidney failure in 1930, Merl took over the holdings on Antelope and Cottonwood creeks, and Paul moved to a ranch in Colorado. Toots went on to become the custodian for the Rock River School.

While living at his homestead, Day had gotten acquainted with a young school teacher from Cheyenne by the name of Connie Ulrich. Connie



Felix Atkinson Family, c. 1920 – (L-R) Day, Carl, Lizzie, Felix, Paul, Merl, and Toots.



Sheep Creek Ranch, 1901.

had moved to the Little Medicine area to teach the children of her aunt and uncle, Marie and Earl Lacy. Day and Connie were married in 1934, and had three sons – Lawrence, Gene, and Jim. They continued to run sheep and a few head of cattle. They were the first in the neighborhood to run Angus cows. In the late 1940s, they remodeled the old ranch house adding indoor plumbing, a new porch, stucco exterior, and remodeled the interior.

In the fall of 1949, they were faced with Lawrence attending high school so they decided to move to Wheatland in the winter months. Day's brother Merl and nephew Kenny agreed to winter the cows and the sheep were trailed to Wheatland in the fall and run there until spring before returning to Sheep

Creek. This took place for four years until Lawrence graduated in 1953. Gene elected to board out and finish his senior year at Laramie, graduating in 1954. Jim attended first-third grades at Wheatland, before doing fourth-eighth at the ranch with his mother as teacher. In the fall of 1958, Jim and Connie would move to Laramie for the school years until he graduated in 1962, Day would "batch" during the week with Jim and Connie traveling home on weekends as weather permitted.

In 1959, Day and Connie were able to purchase additional land contiguous to the home ranch and increase their land holdings. In addition to grazing, this land had water rights and potential for development of hay ground which was an asset to their operation. Jim graduated from the University of Wyoming in 1966, and began helping full-time in the operation of the ranch. In 1976, Jim married Cathy Reilly who was teaching in the area and they lived at the ranch as Cathy continued to teach at nearby isolated schools.

In 1977, Day Atkinson died in the same house in which he had been born almost 77 years previously. Connie continued to live at the ranch and Jim took over the business end for her.

In 1979, Jim and Cathy bought the original Jim Newell homestead located 12 miles east of the Sheep Creek homestead. Jim and Freda Newell lived there for many years and raised a family. They sold to Les and Catherine Atkinson who lived there until 1973, when the place was sold to Richard Wendling. After holding it for just a few months, Wendling sold to a group of lawyers and businessmen from Ft. Collins, Colorado. They retained ownership until Jim and Cathy purchased it.

With help from Jim and his family, Connie was able to continue to live at the home ranch until the fall of 1999, when health issues prevented her from continuing to live at Sheep Creek. She moved to the Iverson Ladies' Home in Laramie. Jim and Cathy had two children -- Kacy Lynn born in 1980, and Colter Day "CD" born in 1984. Connie died at the age of 90 in the fall of 2003. Jim and Cathy continue to run both ranches. Cathy retired from teaching, after 37 years, in 2015.

The Atkinson Sheep Creek Ranch has had its share of ups and downs in more than a hundred years but it is still in the family and there is no debt on the original holdings. The plan was for CD to take over the holdings but he unexpectedly passed away in 2016. The ranch is currently held as a Limited Liability Corporation that is owned by Jim, Cathy, and their daughter. Hopefully it will continue to be owned by the Atkinson family for another 100 years!



Raking Hay—Dump rakes are used to form the newly cut hay into windrows.



Day & Connie 40th Anniversary, 1974 – Lawrence, Jim, Connie, Day, Gene.



Stacking Hay—The loose hay is stacked in log cribs using a Drube stacker.



Oats – Oats were planted as the first crop in the development of the new meadows.



Shipping Calves—The Angus calves are sold on the Superior Auction video in August and shipped in October.



Feeding Hay— Hay is fed from the cribs using an “old” military Army truck.



49 Meadow—The 49 Meadow is one of the ranch’s greater assets as it has open water for the livestock year-round.



Plowing Snow—Due to severe winter conditions in our area, a trail often has to be plowed to move cattle.



Trees— Throughout the years, the beavers have been responsible for the loss of nearly all the trees and willows on the ranch. Jim has spent his lifetime trying to replant and protect new growth.



Jim Atkinson Family –Kacy Lynn, James, Catherine, and Colter Day “CD” Atkinson (2011).



Jim & Cathy—Jim and Cathy Atkinson are the current owner/operators of the ranch.



Kacy Atkinson—Kacy Atkinson and Bam Bam.



CD Atkinson -- CD Atkinson at spring branding. (d. May, 2016)



Wyoming Cowboy Hall of Fame—Jim was inducted into the Wyoming Cowboy Hall of Fame in September, 2017.



The Atkinson Family with U.S. Senator John Barasso, Governor Mark Gordon, First Lady Jennie Gordon, U.S. Representative Liz Cheney, U.S. Senator Mike Enzi at the Centennial Farm and Ranch Ceremony, August 2019.

Baxter Ranch, 1919

The Baxter Family, Platte County



Three-room cabin the Baxters lived in until purchasing the Zook property to the west. Bill and Mary lived there while building the present house.

William Richard Baxter was born in Circleville, Kansas in 1882, the third of seven children on a family farm.

Hattie Mae Gingles was born in 1892 in Stockton, Kansas. Hattie's father was on the local school board so it was no surprise when she and her older sister both received their teaching degrees after the 8th grade and both started teaching.

William and Hattie met, courted, and were married in 1912 in Phillipsburg, Kansas.

They had two sons in Speed, Kansas, Leonard in 1913 and Lawrence in 1914.

Both sides of the family, along with William and Hattie themselves, migrated to the northwest. Siblings of William started ranching in northern Idaho. The Gingles also located to northern Idaho. William and Hattie, along with William's parents, settled in the White Sulphur Springs area of Montana.

William and Hattie had two more children while in White Sulphur Springs. Geraldine was born in 1916

and Willard in 1918. They worked hard on their land but struggled even though Hattie continued to teach at the country school.

They decided to move on after selling their Montana property and headed south. They moved into a three-room cabin near Glendo, Wyoming and lived there until purchasing the Zook family property which lay to the west. They farmed and ranched while Hattie taught at the Ridge School. By this time, she was teaching her own children who swore she expected more of them than the rest of her pupils.

Once Willard was in trouble, so Hattie asked him to wait outside for her. It was cold so instead he walked home. On the way home, he came to the realization that he'd be in bigger trouble when his dad saw him home early. So, he hid in the milking barn until school was out. By the time Hattie found him gone and arrived home Willard was in double trouble. He learned his lesson and never did that again.

Education was important to Hattie. After teaching for years, she received her high school diploma from Glendo in 1927. She was the first of four generations

to graduate from Glendo High School. Willard graduated in 1935, Pamela in 1971, and her children Penny in 1992 and Joe in 1993. Willard also served on the local school board in the early '70s.

As time went on the Baxters continued to buy more property. The boys worked on area ranches and used the money to purchase land of their own.

In the fall of 1939 Hattie Mae Baxter died of complications after surgery. At the time she and William were raising a granddaughter, Sue Ann (known as Pee Wee), who was 9 months old. After that William raised her on his own.

When World War II broke out Leonard and Lawrence both joined the service. Leonard broke his ankle before boarding the ship for overseas so he became a cook stationed in Washington state, where he settled after the war. Lawrence served in Europe. Geraldine had by now left home and Willard was the only child remaining on the ranch. He continued to work the ranch and made payments for his brother's land. After the war, Lawrence returned to the ranch with his family.

Willard married Mary Ellen Morell Gould on December 31, 1951. Mary had an 8-year-old son Ronald. They lived in Glendo while Lawrence and family lived on the ranch in the original three-room log cabin.

Willard and Mary had a daughter, Pamela Hattie, in July of 1953.

In 1954 Lawrence asked Willard to buy him out and he moved with his family to Casper where he became a welder.

After borrowing the money to buy out his brother and build a new house, Willard, Mary, Ron, and Pamela moved out to the log cabin. Ron slept in the old sheep wagon with his dog Patsy. They broke ground on the new house, which Pamela still lives in today, in 1954. Mary refused to move in until the new house was totally finished. They finally moved in in the summer of 1957.



Willard (known as Bill) and Mary Baxter.



Family in 2019 (L-R) Rudy, Brian, and daughter Penny Nesvik; Brittany Jaxon, Karmen, and Noah Huffman; Aspen Nesvik; David, Pam, Joe, Sheryl, Michael, Kiley, and Erin Anderson.



Baxter Siblings (L-R) Bill, Geraldine, Lawrence, and Leonard Baxter.

Willard and Mary continued to add land to the ranch. In the early 60s they sold their herd of sheep due to the growing coyote population and expanded the cattle herd. They continued farming a little wheat on the old Zook property. Mary died in 1983 and Willard in 1988. Just before Willard died, he gave the Zook house and farm ground to his brother Lawrence.

Ron moved to California in the early 60s where he joined the Los Angeles Police Department. He retired after over 40 years of service and moved to Spearfish, South Dakota.

Pamela married David Anderson in 1973. They had three children, Penny, Joe, and Michael. Michael died in a fishing accident in 1997 at Intake, Montana.

David and Pam helped Willard and Mary with the ranch while David also worked for Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad for 40 years.

David, Pam, and children continued adding to the ranch and making more improvements.

Penny is married to Brian Nesvik. They live in Cheyenne with their two children Rudy and Aspen.

Joe retired from the US Air Force after 22 years in 2019. He now flies for Southwest Airlines. Joe and his wife Sheryl live in Cheyenne with their three children Kiley, Michael, and Erin.

In June of 2019, the ranch held its 100-year celebration with about 250 Baxters, neighbors, and friends.

David and Pam continue to work and live on the ranch west of Glendo waiting for the next generation to take over.



Baxter Boys (L-R) Bill, Lawrence, William, and Leonard Baxter.



The Baxter boys hauling hay with mules Maude and Nance.



William R. and Hattie Mae Baxter.



Baxter and Gingles Family (L-R) William, Leonard, Sherman Gingles, Lawrence, Hattie, Willard, and Arwilda Gingles. Willard's job was to herd the turkeys in summer. He said they were the dumbest birds ever.



David and Pam Baxter Anderson.



The Baxter Family with U.S. Senator John Barrasso, Governor Mark Gordon, U.S. Representative Liz Cheney, First Lady Jennie Gordon, U.S. Senator Mike Enzi at the Centennial Farm and Ranch Ceremony, August 2019.

Johnson Family Ranches, LLC, 1903

The Robert R. Johnson Family, Niobrara County



JA6 ranch house 1913.

Alfred (Peddy) Johnson was the third son of Ellis and Johanna Johnson who were raised and educated in Norway. They moved to the United States about 1870. They moved to Columbus, Nebraska, where Ellis was engaged for some years with the livery business.

Around 1880-81, Ellis moved to Silver Cliff, now Lusk, which at that time was in Converse County. He didn't want to move his family until after the railroad came through. Alfred, his older brother Lawrence, and three of his four sisters were born in Columbus, Nebraska. His youngest sister Emma was born in Lusk. The rest of the Johnson family moved to Lusk in 1887.

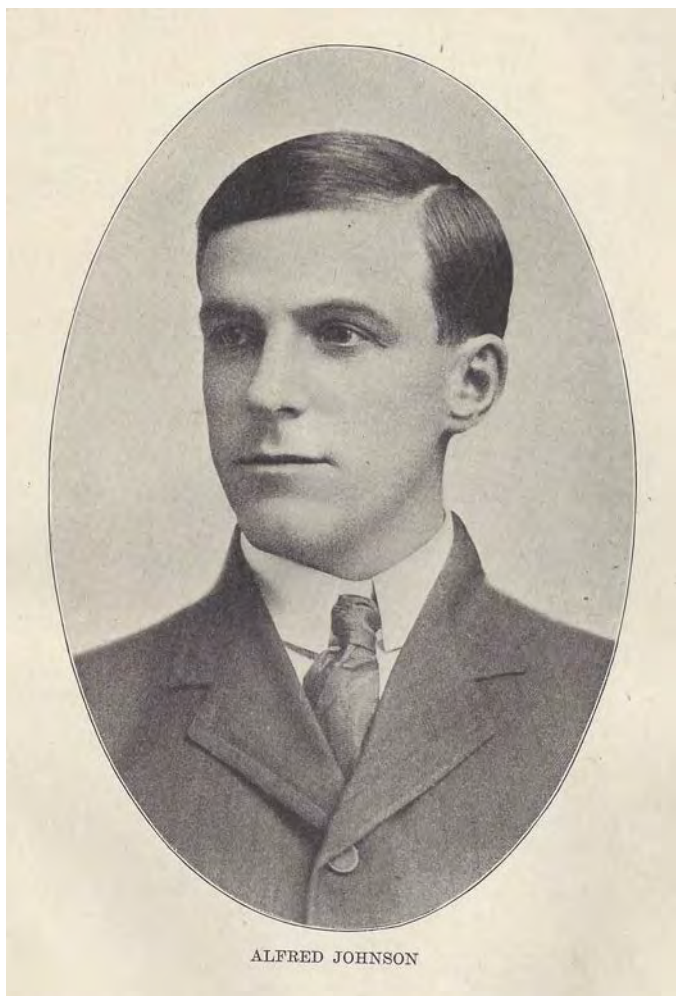
Alfred was only 15 years old when he went to work for J. B. Kendrick (at that time Mr. Kendrick was a United States Senator from Wyoming), where he was a ranch hand on the Kendrick Cattle Ranch for six years. Kendrick Cattle Ranch was located near Sheridan, Wyoming. Alfred would attend school in Lusk during the winter months and in the spring would ride by horseback, with his friend and fellow ranch hand Henry Petz, from Lusk to Sheridan. They would return in the fall to again attend school.

After obtaining his majority Alfred engaged in the ranch business on his own account in partnership with his elder brother Lawrence. This partnership existed for eleven years until 1907. During the years of the "Johnson Bros" partnership they raised sheep and horses. Alfred bought out Lawrence's interest in the "Johnson Bros" partnership and retained the JA6 ranch. Alfred designed and registered the JA6 brand in 1909 and this brand has remained in the possession of Johnson Family Ranches. This brand is still in use to this day.

After Alfred and Lawrence dissolved their partnership, Alfred moved more into the cattle business, at one time having over seven thousand head. He also had two hundred head of high-grade Shire horses.

Alfred married Miss Olive Roy in 1908, and they had three children Roy A., Ruth L., and Grace O.

Alfred acquired two more ranches in his time. The Hat Creek Ranch was purchased in 1928 and the McFarlane Ranch in 1913. These ranches are still part of the Johnson Family Ranches. The McFarlane Ranch became available when a spring blizzard



Alfred Johnson in his late teens or early 20s.

wiped out most of the sheep belonging to George and Muriel McFarlane and Alfred was able to purchase the land. The Hat Creek Ranch belonged to Z. Burton Crinklaw. Alfred purchased the property from the bank.

After Alfred's passing, his son Roy took over the management of Johnson Ranches.

Roy A. Johnson was born on July 20, 1909, he attended school in Lusk and graduated from high school in 1927. (The old high school still stands and is now the Elks Lodge). As a child Roy enjoyed fishing, ice skating, and trapping muskrats. He was an athlete in high school as he was one of the taller basketball players.

Roy married Miss Elenor Mae Schaefer on September 26, 1940. Their only child Robert Roy was born in 1949.



Johnson House in Lusk. Built in 1911. (L-R) Olive, Roy, Grace and Ruth.

Roy and Elenor worked very hard to improve and turn the ranch into a prosperous, quality ranch operation. Roy was innovative and always looking to improve his land and cattle. He raised mostly Hereford cattle as he surely loved that red color.

Roy put in a water pipeline that fed from an abandoned oil well. This pipeline provides water to several pastures. He also improved many of the reservoirs and dams.

Roy told his son Robert (Bob) that he remembered going to the McFarlane Ranch with his dad, where a barn was being built and telling the carpenters that the United States had just declared war. This was WWI in April of 1917, that barn is still standing to this day! We are so proud to have this beautiful testament to fine workmanship; we try to keep it strong and standing!

Roy and Elenor were working partners for their 55 years together. During their early years, they rode the many acres and worked the cattle together with only one other ranch hand. They had a house at every ranch location and would "move" to whatever ranch they were working cattle on staying for days or weeks at a time. Elenor had some kitchen wares at every house, but carried her favorite items with her. Every summer of his junior high and high school and college years Bob worked on the ranch, running the hay equipment, riding and branding calves and helping his dad in any way that was needed.



JA6 ranch house 1913.

Bob graduated from the University of Wyoming in the spring of 1972 with a degree in Ranch Management. Bob married Miss Paulette (Polly) J. Schneider (from Worland, Wyoming) in 1973. They moved to the McFarlane Ranch in the spring of that year, sharing the house with skunks and a few bull and garter snakes. They have continued to live on that ranch for 46 years of marriage.

Bob and Polly have two children, Keven Johnson and Deeanne (Dee) Johnson Engle.

Dee is a family practice doctor and Chief of Staff at the Converse County Memorial Hospital, in Douglas, Wyoming. Dee and her husband Kurt have three daughters: Macey is 13; Maddie is 10, and McKenzie is 9.

Keven lives in Sandy, Utah and is a Field Applications Scientist, DNA sequencing technologies, working for Thermo Fisher Scientific. Keven and his wife Jessie have three children: twins Samuel and Stephanie are 5 ½ and Noah is 3 ½.

Roy passed away in 1995, leaving a strong legacy that we have tried to carry on and pass to our younger generations. Bob took over management of Johnson Family Ranches along with his mother Elenor. She continued contributing information and advice until her passing in 2002.

Bob and Polly have been a steward of the land, adding a wetland area at the McFarlane Ranch for



McFarlane Barn built in 1917. (L-R) Jack Cashman, Roy Johnson, Len Christian.

waterfowl. We love watching ducks and geese raising their hatchlings.

We have also added solar power to our windmills to ensure water for the cattle. In the last 15 years we have added Angus bulls to our stock to improve herd stock. We have mostly black baldy cows and calves, although we still run some Hereford bulls with the older cows. We love to see those Hereford calves in the mix. The quality has improved and our calves have frequently been the top sellers at market.

As we have gotten older and less able to maintain and run a large number of cattle, we have leased the Hat Creek Ranch to the same party for 11 years.

We have also leased some pastures to neighbors and friends. We still maintain a herd of around 400 cattle but will be decreasing these numbers in the coming years.

We love this ranch and the ranch life and feel privileged and honored to still run this beautiful place.

We are very hopeful that either of our children or grandchildren will come back to the ranch and keep the ranch for a fourth or fifth generation of quality ranching.

We feel blessed beyond measure.



Roy Johnson 1930.



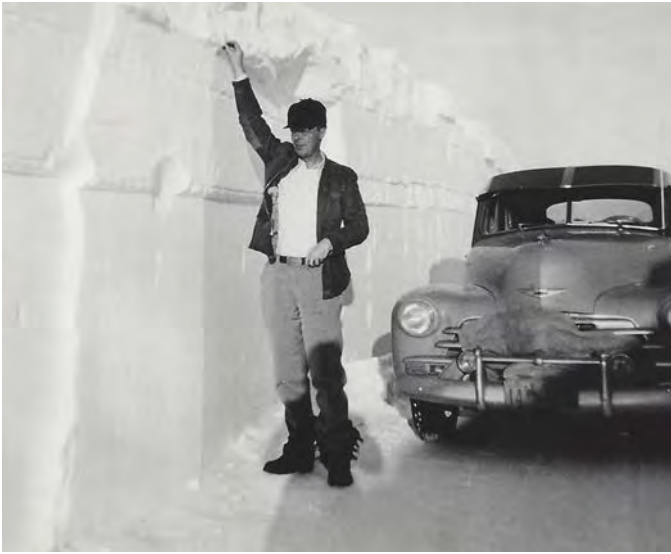
Roy and Elenor Johnson at the JA6.



(L-R) Olive Johnson, Julia Roy, Roy Johnson, Ruth Johnson.



(L-R) Julia Roy, Roy Johnson, Elenor Johnson, and Ruth Johnson.



Roy Johnson showing the deep drifts after the 1949 blizzard.



Roy Johnson at Torrington Livestock Commission in 1955.



(L-R) Alfred (Peddy) Johnson and Lawrence (Yoy) Johnson.



Using a sling to pull hay into the loft of the McFarlane Ranch Barn.



(L-R) Roy, Bobby, and Elenor Johnson in 1953.



Hat Creek Ranch 1950's.



Roy Johnson and longtime hand Dean Leimser at McFarlane Ranch.



Branding in the early days at JA6.



Branding hydraulically. Bob Johnson branding, Rex Biehler and Polly Johnson.



Kev and Sam riding. (L-R) Keven and Sam Johnson, Bob Johnson. Photo taken in 2018.



(L-R) Dee Engle, Polly Johnson, Bob Johnson, Keven Johnson.



The Johnson Family with U.S. Senator John Barrasso, U.S. Representative Liz Cheney, Governor Mark Gordon, First Lady Jennie Gordon, U.S. Senator Mike Enzi at the Centennial Farm and Ranch Ceremony, August 2019.

Lamb Ranch, 1919

The Lamb Family, Crook County



Aerial view of the ranch in 2019.

Chester “Chet” Oliver Lamb was born to Andrew Jackson Lamb and Rebecca Synthia Hall in O’Neil, Nebraska, August 13, 1890. He was the 8th of 12 children but little is known of his early life with his parents and siblings as he rarely talked of them; our story really begins in 1914. It was then that Chester first ventured into Crook County, Wyoming. His sister, Annie, and her husband, “Big” Bill Townsend had homesteaded a ranch between Upton and Sundance, and Chester came up from Nebraska to work for them. He had two, four horse teams he used to haul freight between Beulah and Sundance for John Grice’s hardware store in Sundance and he hauled for Bill Townsend’s sawmill as well. He also worked at Ralph Partlow’s sawmill all with the goal of earning enough money to build a house and a barn and obtain land of his own. By 1918 he had the money to make his stake and homesteaded three miles south of Sundance. While living in a claim shack, he built a nice hip roofed barn complete with hay mow, stanchions, and wood floor; he also built a small two-story house and began to “prove up” on

the land to obtain an additional 40 acres. He did some farming as he came from a farm background raising mostly corn, but cattle became his focus.

In 1918, while attending the funeral of his sister Elma, who died in the Spanish Flu Pandemic of that year, he met Pearl LaVina McCone. They were married in 1921 and would go on to start a family of seven children; Charlotte, Imogene, Duane, Arlene, Darrel, Lila, and Keith. Unfortunately, Pearl passed away in 1937, leaving Chester to raise the children alone, the youngest, Keith, being only four years old.

The nation still felt the effects of the Great Depression and Chester was away from home a great deal, picking up work on larger area ranches and working the homestead at the same time. Times were hard for many people during this period and it was no different in the Lamb household, but they pulled together as strong families do. Like most ranches at the time, besides running cattle they raised chickens, milked cows, and sold cream. There was always a



Pearl McCone and Chester Lamb (seated) on their wedding day attended by her siblings, Vera and Alvin.

crop of potatoes in the cellar as well as the typical jars full of canned foods put up from the summer garden. Winters were often brutal, and the snow was usually very heavy across the entire ranch. Storms from the northwest would skirt down the south side of the Bear Lodge Mountains delivering blizzards with large amounts of snow that made movement hard. Horse and sled or walking was the mode of transportation, made difficult with deep drifts.

Imogene took charge of the household and is largely credited with raising her siblings and, as the children grew, they began to take on more work around the place; everything at this time, of course, was done by hand. Wood for heat and cooking was cut and hauled by team and wagon from the nearby Bear Lodge Mountains and all farming, hay production, and feeding of cattle was done by teams of horses. Chester was a good hand and would take on young horses in the spring each year and train them, getting full use of them throughout the summer and then return them to their owners in the fall, who would now have a fully trained team. He taught his boys to train horses as well and all were working teams in the fields when they were quite young. Keith spoke of everyday chores such as harnessing teams while standing on a bucket so he could reach high enough to place collars on the horses and driving teams in the fields when he was as young as six years old.



Chester and his children; (L-R) Keith, Darrel, Lila, Arlene, Imogene, Duane, Charlotte and Chester.

As the years passed, the children grew, married and moved away to start families of their own but Chester remained to work the ranch. Over time he became very crippled with arthritis and was rendered unable to work like he once had. Keith and Darrel, who had done a lot of the work on the ranch while growing up, both eventually moved to work in the oil fields south of Newcastle, Wyoming, which were booming at the time. Both came home to help when they could and much of their free time was spent on the ranch. They purchased a neighboring homestead from Al Fawkes in 1951 adding much needed graze and water and eventually Keith bought out Darrel's share, taking sole ownership. In 1953 Keith married Donna Speidel of Sundance and in 1955 they decided to move back to the ranch full time as Chester was no longer able to care for it himself. Chester turned the ranch over to Keith under the condition that he could remain there the rest of his days, which he did. Chester



Cattle alongside the original barn.



Some of Chester's teams beside the original windmill.



Homestead house built by Chester and the storm cellar to the right.

passed in 1977 at the age of 87 and was buried in Mt. Moriah Cemetery just west of Sundance, Wyoming, near his own father, Andrew Jackson Lamb.

With a new generation comes new ideas and ways to work. As Keith and Donna took over the ranch a new era arrived as teams of horses were replaced with tractors and more modern machinery. Work that once required many people could be accomplished by one or two and in less time. They had started their own family by this time and would have five children; Debby, Jim, Shelly, Kerry, and Reese. As they raised their family, they continued improvements on the ranch such as a new, modern house that replaced the original house Chester built. The once beautiful red barn, now severely listing and in disrepair, had to come down and was replaced with new, larger barns more efficient for early spring calving and working cattle. Keith, like his father, was an exceptionally hard worker and was handy in a lot of ways. Not only good at working cattle and horses but also mechanical work and could fabricate, build, or fix nearly anything.

In addition to operating the ranch, Keith had a career with Tri-County Electric, now Powder River Energy, spanning some 40 years. One of the first Journeyman Linemen in the area, he helped usher in electric power to towns, homes, and ranches throughout a three-county area. He even ran a bucket truck during the filming of "Close Encounters of the Third Kind." He retired from Powder River Energy in 1998 but sadly succumbed to illness a short time later. He passed away at home on the ranch he worked and loved surrounded by his family on May 4, 2002 and is buried in Green Mountain Cemetery east of Sundance.

History tends to repeat itself and just like previous generations the Lamb children grew up, married, and moved away but all returned when they could and still do. The ranch has always been a safe haven from the rest of the world and day to day problems that wear on us all and a place for family to gather. Donna remained on the ranch after Keith's passing, caring for it as he had until their youngest child, Reese, and his wife Wendy returned home in the spring of 2007. They had spent nearly 22 years in the Air Force living a nomadic life often required of

military families. With their children, Shaylee and Jordy, now grown and on their own, Reese and Wendy established themselves as the third Lamb generation on the ranch. They worked for ten years rebuilding a vibrant cattle herd from the few head Donna kept from the original herd. Like the generations before them they have many plans for the land they love and call home with the hope that another generation will settle there and enjoy all they worked for.

This is a very short account of Chester Lamb, his family, and the land they settled more than a century ago. For how can one sum up the lives and events of so many people over the span of a 100 years? A ranch is truly a family endeavor and each person must be involved, always being good stewards of the land, taking care of cattle and horses, working to improve everything over time, and constantly fighting the elements. Endless hours of hard work, determination, and at times, sheer will are required to thrive in a beautiful but often brutal land. There can be no “quit” only “go and do what must be done.” It is an attitude, a commitment, and a strength that is passed from one generation to the next.



Digging out the barn after the Blizzard of '49.



Keith on a saddle horse in front of the original chicken coop and barn.



Keith and Darrel in front of the storm cellar after another blizzard.



Lila with her horse Cricket.



Darrel plowing on the new Minneapolis Moline.



Donna in the 50's on Keith's old truck.



Darrel fixing corral fence in front of the original barn.



Keith on a horse named Blondie.



Keith installing a new water pump over the hand dug well.



Keith and Donna circa late 1990s.



The Keith Lamb Family circa 1974; (Front L-R) Shelly, Reese, Kerry (Back L-R) Debby, Donna, Jim, and Keith.



Keith and some cows looking for a treat.



Keith, Jim and Reese by the new barn in 1980.



The Reese Lamb Family (L-R) Wendy, Jordy, Shaylee (wearing her Grandpa Keith's old Carhartt) and Reese.



The Lamb Family with U.S. Senator John Barrasso, U.S. Representative Liz Cheney, First Lady Jennie Gordon, Gov. Mark Gordon, U.S. Senator Mike Enzi at the Centennial Farm and Ranch Ceremony, August 2019.

Maddison Ranch, 1912

The Weaver and Maddison Families, Crook County



Looking down from the rimrock at the house.

Thomas W. Maddison was born on November 7, 1857 in Delaville, England and Gwennie (Jones) Maddison was born on March 1, 1860 in Wales and were married on April 2, 1881 in Beacon, Mahaska County, Iowa. They moved to the Aladdin, WY area with their six children. Thomas and the older boys worked at the coal mine in Aladdin, WY. They built a house on the hill behind the present Aladdin Store where their youngest son, Milton, was born on August 12, 1900. Thomas and the boys hunted deer and while hunting found a spot where two creeks merged together into one which is now called Red Water. Presently, it is surrounded by Black Hills Forest Service land. Thomas started improving on the land by clearing trees for better fields and built a house. They hauled their water from a spring in the Red Water Creek. He purchased the Homestead Patent on October 10, 1910 but it was filed on April 29, 1912.

Thomas's older sons were not interested in farming, so they left the Aladdin area. His youngest son,

Milton, stayed and helped on the farm. At that time, Milton was too young to file a claim for a homestead. Milton worked for the Forest Service and sawmills and helped his mother on weekends. Thomas passed away on May 24, 1931, at the age of 74, on his homestead. Before his father passed away, Milton's brother, James (Jim) came back to the Aladdin area and stayed with his mother.

Milton bought a sawmill and set it up across the creek from where the original house was built and he cleared more trees, sold the lumber and sawed the lumber for a new house. His brother, Jim, was a good carpenter so he built a house to the east of the original homestead house and closer to the barns and corrals. They raised horses, cows, chickens, turkeys, and grew grain and all their hay. Gwennie had a big garden and canned vegetables and wild fruit for the winter.

Milton married Helen B. Dillavou on December 23, 1939 and they took over the farm after Gwennie



Grandma Gwennie (Jones) Maddison on April 2, 1881.



Thomas Maddison on April 2, 1881.



Evan and Gwen.

passed away on January 11, 1941. Together, Milton and Helen moved into the new house that Milton and Jim built. They raised stock cows and a Brown Swiss bull. They bought 5 Guernsey cows that they milked and sold the cream. They also raised sheep and pigs for a number of years. Milton had a field of oats one year that was almost six feet tall. They grew hay and grain as well. He had a thrashing machine that he went around to the neighbors and helped thrash their grain.

Milton and Helen had two children: Evan Thomas was born on January 1, 1942 and Gwennie (Gwen) was born on December 19, 1943.

Milton was working for the County during the Blizzard of '49 plowing snow. He plowed snow for over a week straight with only stopping to refuel and sleep in the cab of the plow. People would come out of their place to give him something to eat and thank him. The storm continued and Helen couldn't get to the livestock that were two (2) miles west of the home place where they leased some land. She tried going with a team and sled one time. Another time she tried to go with a saddle horse, but the snow was too deep and the horse played out and she ended up coming back home. She was getting desperate as the livestock needed fed. She tried again riding a horse and was slowly able to get to a neighbor who lived three (3) miles east of them. She borrowed one of their horses and rode until that horse was too tired to go anymore. She tied the reins up and turned the horse loose to make its way back home. From there she walked and crawled and was finally able to get to a neighbor with a phone and was able to call the



Evan with the old barn behind him.

County Commissioner, Ralph Nickelson, and let him know she needed help. It took her all day to go three (3) miles and she still needed to go get back home to Evan and I who were at home with her brother-in-law, Jim Maddison. In later years, she said at times she thought she would never see her family again but she was determined to get back to her children and knew it was up to her to do something to get help.

I worked outside with Mom, Dad and Evan helping haying, feeding livestock and moving snow and would come in from outside and help Mom make a big meal for everyone. I learned some mechanical skills from Dad and Evan. Evan and I would guide the folks' hunters and help pack their deer out.

They had a lot of hunters that came to the place every year and they became really good friends. Some of the hunters came from South Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Nebraska every year for years to hunt deer and sometimes to come out in the summertime and just visit. They loved to have company and Helen could make a gourmet meal out of canned meat, homemade bread, and taters. The cookie jar was always full and there for visitors or grandkids.

Evan liked working on and driving machinery. He drove a skidder for years, drove log trucks and ended up being an over the road truck driver. He was not afraid of anything and would laugh and "give her hell."

In 1976 Milton had a stroke. He was able to walk but needed the help of a crutch. Shortly after the stroke, Milton and Helen moved a trailer house down to

Durwood and my place so we could help them. They were still able to go for drives and were able to enjoy their grandchildren.

Milton passed away on July 1, 1980 and Helen passed away on February 11, 1983.

A tornado started up by Cook Lake on July 13, 2009 and was on the ground for nine (9) miles and was over half a mile wide, taking everything in its path. It uprooted huge pine trees or broke them off like a giant weed eater. It went through the Maddison Place and completely destroyed the barn, corrals and the old meat house. Amazingly it left the house. One tree landed on the roof of the house above the kitchen and broke the window and porch. The big beautiful trees in the yard were gone. It was such a mess and was so devastating. It took weeks to clean up and still there are places you cannot get to. Since then, numerous trees have been re-planted in the yard. The trees will grow back and will someday provide shade for the house again. Every summer on July 4, we have a picnic to get together and visit and celebrate birthdays, camp and go hiking up on the rim rock overlooking the place. It is still a beautiful place.

The Deed to the place read: Durwood and Gwennie Weaver and Evan Maddison, half interest. The original 160 homestead acres was in the Maddison family for over 100 years. Durwood Weaver passed away on April 17, 2018.

Evan Maddison passed away on January 10, 2015. After Evan Maddison's estate was settled, his half of the land was split between his two (2) children who received their 40 acres in their names. His daughter sold her 40 acres but his son, Derald and his wife Maritza E. Maddison still have their 40 acres and I have 80 acres of the original 160 acres. There has never been a fence to separate the land to this day.

-- Gweenie (Gwen) Maddison Weaver



Evan.



House with original deck.



Grandma Gwennie (Jones) Maddison with her turkeys she raised.



House after the tornado went through on July 13, 2009.



Grandpa Thomas Maddison with his horse in the corral at the original homestead.



Grandma Gwennie (Jones) Maddison at the original homestead.



Evan and Gwen coming up the trail by the corral and barn headed to the house.



Durwood and Gwen Weaver with Joany, Lance (grandson), Judy, Kelly, Cameron (grandson) Kenny and Kody (grandson).



Looking down at the place from the rimrock.



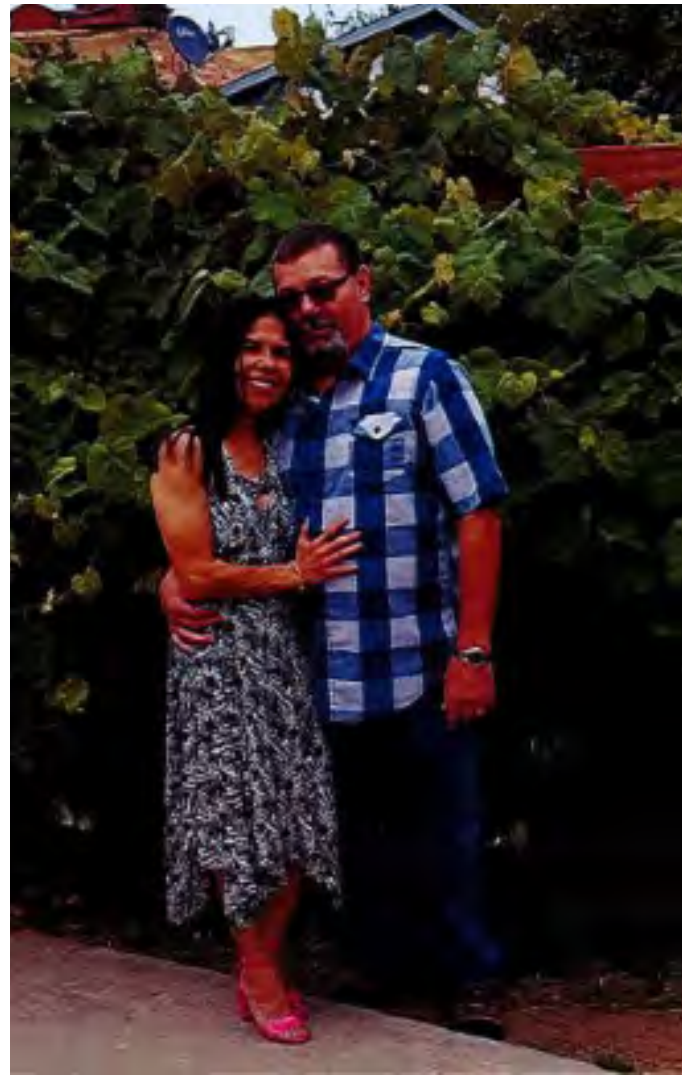
Fork in the creeks at the Maddison place where the original homestead was located.



Milton & Helen Maddison's 40th anniversary.



Durwood & Gwen Weaver.



Derald and Estella Maddison.



The Maddison and Weaver Families with U.S. Representative Liz Cheney, U.S. Senator John Barasso, First Lady Jennie Gordon, Governor Mark Gordon, U.S. Senator Mike Enzi at the Centennial Farm and Ranch Ceremony, August 2019.

The Weaver Ranch/Dairy, 1913

The Gwennie Weaver Family, Crook County



Content dairy cattle on the feed ground.

Ben Arthur Weaver was born in Harrison County, Iowa on February 20, 1872. One of his sons said he was a red headed Irishman and a temper to go with the red hair. He married Lena Rosett Weco on April 2, 1902 in Waterloo, Iowa and they moved to Chandler, Minnesota.

He moved to Aladdin, Wyoming and filed on a homestead where he built a small log cabin, dug a well, made improvements and on March 17, 1913 he established and duly consummated, in conformity to the law for his land. He made several trips back and forth until he was ready to move his family of three small children to their new home. They had three more children while in Wyoming, but a little girl passed away at a very young age.

Ben raised cattle, chickens, and turkeys. The turkeys were raised and butchered and sold at Thanksgiving and Christmas. He also worked in the Aladdin Coal Mine in Aladdin, WY. The road went by their house and people stopped to water their livestock and visit as they were passing thru. Lena was a very good cook and had a good garden and canned a lot of food for the winter from her garden. She was called upon to help sick people or when there was a baby being born. She also played the organ for dances and at Church.

Ben's brother, Norm Weaver, homesteaded to the east of Ben and Lena, in what they called the "Breaks". Lena's mother and stepfather, Carl Herrell, homesteaded to the south of them and Lena's half-sister and her husband, Bessie and Charley Wyman, lived to the north of them. As the other family members moved, Ben and Lena bought the land and added to their place. All of the children, along with the neighbor children, went to school north of the Weaver place. It was called the Weaver School. As the children grew older, they moved away or went into the service.

Ben Arthur Weaver passed away in 1938. After he passed away, his oldest son, Lyle Weaver, moved back to care for the place.

Lyle married Famie Froid on November 18, 1931 and they made their home in Sundance, WY where Lyle worked for the Forest Service. To this union two (2) children were born. Durwood Lyle Weaver was born on June 27, 1932 in Ben Weaver's homestead house and Grandma Lena was the midwife. Nine (9) years later, they had another son, Ronald Weaver, born on March 9, 1942.

Lyle grew grain, corn, and hay, and raised pigs, cattle, and milked cows and sold the cream. The cream



Ben Arthur Weaver and Lena (Wesco) Weaver.



Durwood standing in front of the dairy barn with the flowers.



Durwood was so proud of his little family: (L-R) Judy, Kelly, Kenny and baby Joan.

cans were put on the mail and delivered to Belle Fourche, SD. Durwood was Lyle's little shadow and he followed him everywhere and learned how to work and care for livestock and the farm. They had a corn chopper and helped most of the neighbors when it was time to chop corn. When they were able to get electricity, Lyle bought a welder and he was able to help neighbors with lots of repairs. Lyle could weld about anything and was very creative. He built a frame with a sickle and put a washing machine gas motor on it so he could mow the yard.

The Mormon crickets were really bad one year. They ate everything they came to: siding off of buildings, fence posts, all the grass, and even killed trees. The government set up a station so they could kill the Mormon crickets with arsenic and saw dust. Lyle helped spray the fence line with arsenic using a team of horses to pull a wagon which had a hopper set in the back. Lyle and Durwood would shovel the sawdust mixture into the hopper and it would spread out on the ground as they drove along. That fall and winter there wasn't much food after the Mormon crickets ate everything up, so Lyle used a pitch fork to gather up the tumble weeds that blew into the fences, stacked them and poured molasses on them to feed the cattle during the winter. There wasn't a lot of food value in either of them, but it kept the cattle alive and gave them a little energy.

Lyle Weaver passed away suddenly on August 6, 1962 of a heart attack in the original homestead house that Ben Weaver had built.

Durwood quit school after finishing the 8th grade because he was nearsighted and couldn't read the chalkboard. He helped the neighbors by doing odd jobs for them until he was hired on a construction crew as a mechanic or otherwise known as a "grease monkey" on the road which ran by his place. As a "grease money" he would do small mechanical work and grease all the equipment. That road is now called HWY 111 and was moved to the east of its original location by a quarter of a mile or so. Later he worked as a laborer on I90 West of Sundance and Lander, WY and on I25 by Kaycee, WY.

Uncle Sam called on him and he was sent to the Army. He first went into the Army for basic training

and was sent home because he needed to gain weight. They sent him home for a couple months to “fatten up” and when he went back a couple months later, he had lost weight! They took him anyways and he served in the Army for two (2) years as a cook. He was tall and thin and never gained any weight and was the same weight when he passed away.

Durwood was working for the Forest Service in the southern hills of South Dakota when he received a call and was informed his father had passed away. He quit his job with the Forest Service and came back home to Aladdin to finish the haying and combining and cared for his mother’s cattle. He bought some sheep and raised sheep until the coyotes were so thick they were killing too many sheep and the wool prices were so low. He gave the last of the sheep to a neighbor kid. He helped a neighbor hay along with other chores when he needed help and one neighbor had a dairy farm and he was given some heifer calves for payment. Durwood and his brother Ron, started building a dairy barn but his brother moved to Sheridan, WY and got married before the barn was finished.

Durwood started dating a neighbor girl, Gwennie (Gwen) Maddison, who was a mechanic at John’s Garage in Belle Fourche, SD. Back in the 70s, you didn’t see a woman working in a man’s world as a mechanic, but I worked there for fourteen (14) years. Our first date was July 4, 1975. We were married on December 27, 1975 in the Catholic Church in Belle Fourche, SD.

After getting married we finished the dairy barn and bought twenty (20) heifers from Wisconsin and started our Grade A Dairy in April of 1976, known as the Weaver Dairy. We had a neighbor who Artificially Inseminated (AI) the cows before we were AI certified, and we raised our own replacements. We worked together, side by side, in the barn milking cows, caring for and raising calves, haying, hauling hay from Newell, SD, and working on machinery when it broke down. We had four (4) children: Kelly Lyle, Kenneth Jim, Judy Carol, and Joan Marie. As the kids grew up they were good help. Although sometimes they would complain “Why can’t we live in town? Those kids don’t have to do chores.” Now they don’t complain, and they are happy



Three generations of the Weaver Dairy. (L-R) Durwood, Joany and Lance. April 2007.



Original white farm house in the background on the left with the addition added onto later.



Durwood calling cows into the barn to be milked.



Time to be milked.

because they have never had to look for work and they have a good work ethic. The boys had to take turns helping in the house with dishes, cleaning and cooking and the girls had to help outside in the barn packing grain buckets, feeding animals and stacking square bales. All the kids have gone through college and have good jobs, such as, truck driving, EMS, volunteer firefighting, day care provider, circuit court employee, and ranching. If anyone needs help, they are there to do what needs to be done.

We cut grass and alfalfa hay at home but we also hauled 200+ tons of small square alfalfa bales a year from Newell, SD. Durwood and I each drove a pickup and pulled a trailer and with the help of our kids, loaded small square bales onto the trailers and unloaded and stacked them in a nice stack when we got home. People would wave or give the thumbs up sign as we drove by. We had a particular way in stacking the hay on the trailer. We stacked five (5) tiers high then pulled the next tier to two (2) bales and the top was a single row for a total of seven (7) tiers high on the trailer. The alfalfa hay really helped the cows produce milk.

Durwood's Grandma Lena had a T+ (T cross) brand which Durwood and his mother used for their cattle. After she passed away Durwood bought the brand. My parents had a U-spear brand they weren't using anymore so we bought the brand from them and used it on our dairy cattle. We used the U-spear on the heifers and the T+ on the steers. Durwood's dad also had a Lazy D hanging 4 that Durwood's brother, Ronald, used on his cattle.



My tummy's full.



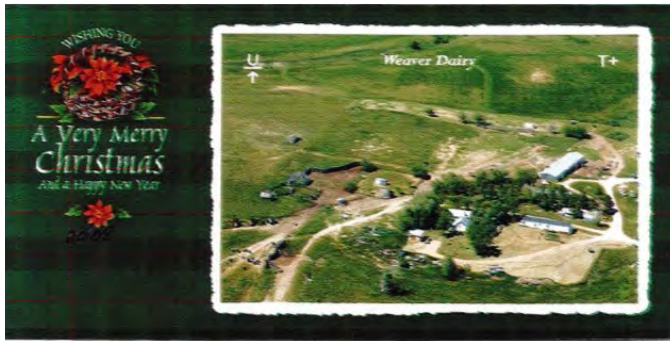
(L-R) Ronny, Famie, Durwood, Lyle. October 11, 1953.



Durwood's family - photo taken on the west side of the original homestead house before the enclosed porch was built. (L-R) Lyle, Famie, Durwood, Ronny.



Sad day when the cows were sold. (L-R) Gwen, Durwood and Lance Weaver with dogs Hunter and Mandy. April 2007.



Aerial view of the Weaver Dairy.



Durwood and Gwen Weaver.

In April of 2007, the milk plant in Rapid City, SD, where our Grade A milk was transported to closed down and there was no place for our milk to go. After 32 years of milking cows we had to sell the dairy. It was a very sad and stressful day when we milked the cows in the morning for the last time. There was a yellow semi-truck backing up to the holding pen door to load the cattle and take them to eastern South Dakota. One of our little grandsons, who was 5 years old and who spent a lot of time with us, asked in the afternoon when it was the usual time to start milking. "We have to go get that yellow truck and milk the cows." We kept a couple of the older cows and bought a few calves to continue raising. It was hard to get used to not going to the barn every morning and night to milk.

Durwood was a very hard worker and instilled in his children and grandchildren a good work ethic. You couldn't quit or go eat until all the livestock was fed, watered and taken care of. He never asked anyone to do something he didn't like to do. He passed away on April 17, 2018 after having a stroke and not being able to get around for the last 2 ½ years. He was at home where he wanted to be and had his family with him. His smile and quiet demeanor is missed dearly each day. I still live on the place and take care of everything. Our youngest daughter and her husband, Joan and Dean Bethea, cut the hay now and run some cattle and a neighbor uses some of the pasture to run some of his cattle also.

We have been blessed from both sides of the family to have grandparents that homesteaded the land and it's still in the family for over 100 years.

-- Gwennie (Gwen) Maddison Weaver



Gwen Weaver with her four children and eight grandchildren in Douglas on August 17, 2019.



Looking down at the Weaver Dairy Farm with the original homestead house on the left.



Durwood Weaver - the two signs were put up after he passed away so he never saw them but would be very proud of them.



The Weaver and Maddison Families with U.S. Representative Liz Cheney, U.S. Senator John Barrasso, Governor Mark Gordon, First Lady Jennie Gordon, U.S. Senator Mike Enzi at the Centennial Farm and Ranch Ceremony, August 2019.

McClure Ranch, 1919

The McClure Family, Campbell County



McClure Ranch Buildings 2019.

My Granddad, Earl McClure, homesteaded and built his first house, which was a dugout, in the fall of 1919. In the winter time, he moved to Wyodak to work for the railroad, along with his brothers and brothers-in-law. He worked in the winter only for the railroad and only for a few years. He always came back to the ranch in the spring to farm. He started ranching full time after that.

A few years later he bought a log house at an auction sale to the northeast. He numbered it, tore it down, moved it, and then reassembled it as the main house. When my Father, Dean McClure, got the place, he moved in first a single wide trailer and then a new double wide, where we were raised.

When we, Merle and Vicki, bought the place, we had already built a large multiple storied round house on the south edge of the ranch, which is all concrete and steel. It is our hope it will serve several more generations. Our grand-children are still living on the ranch.

The ranch originally started out with farming for the first couple years. It has been both farming and ranching ever since.

-- Vicki McClure



2013 McClure Family Picture.



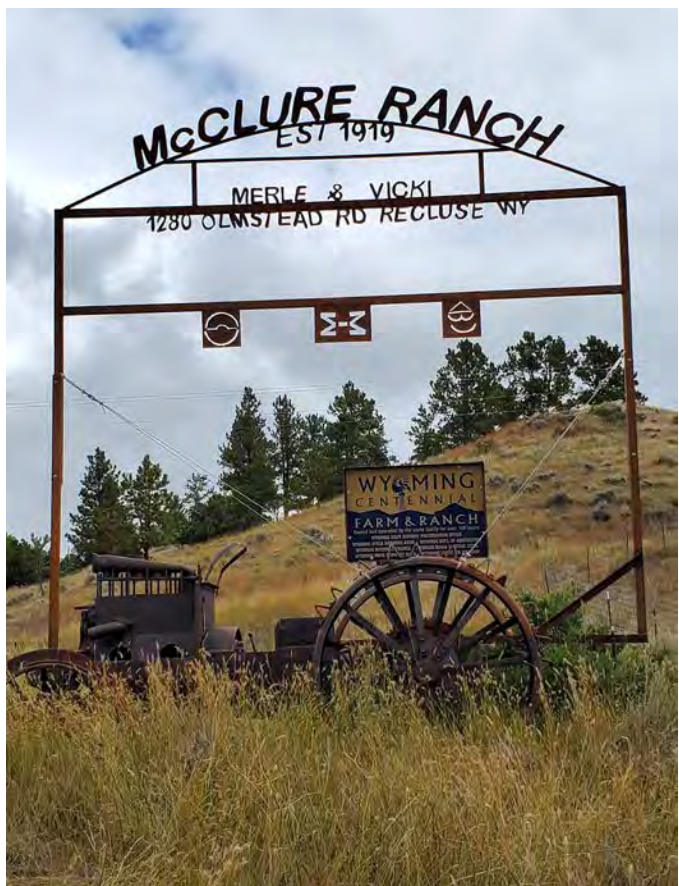
2017 McClure Family picture.



Centennial Farm and Ranch sign.



Main ranch house.



Main ranch sign.



Dean and Beryl at log house after their honeymoon in July 1945.



Earl at the log house.



Beryl at the log house.



Dean at the log house.



The McClure Family with U.S. Senator John Barrasso, U.S. Representative Liz Cheney, First Lady Jennie Gordon, Governor Mark Gordon, U.S. Senator Mike Enzi at the Centennial Farm and Ranch Ceremony, August 2019.

Miller and Son Ranch, 1919

The Miller Family, Sheridan County



Aerial view of Miller and Son Ranch.

Miller and Son Ranch was originally jointly purchased by C.W. “Charlie” Miller and E.R. “Edward” Schunk. It is located in the foothills of the Big Horn Mountains. West Pass Creek runs through the entire length of the ranch. The deed was recorded on July 12, 1919 and included a total of 570 deeded acres. While the deed was recorded in 1919, the ranch was originally acquired around 1916 when Miller and Schunk jointly purchased the ranch from Ben and Bertha Holstein. However, both of the Holsteins passed away and an extensive search was undertaken to find their legal heirs. The property then had to make its way through probate before it could legally be transferred to Miller and Schunk. In 1934, the ranch was deeded to Charles and Olive Miller after the death of Edward Schunk.

Charles “Charlie” Miller was born in Cobdin, Illinois on April 6, 1890. He was the son of Joe and Victoria (McCoubrey) Miller. His parents came to Wyoming in 1896 when Charlie was 6 years old and settled in the Sheridan area. Charlie attended school in Buffalo, Wyoming and Spokane, Washington. As a young man, Charlie worked for numerous ranches in the area including the Wrench Ranch until he became an independent ranch operator in 1916. Charlie Miller

was a Mason, a Shriner, an Elk, and a member of the Stock Growers Association. Charlie passed away on June 13, 1981.

Charlie married Olive Mabel Surrena on October 30, 1912, in Banner, Wyoming. Olive’s parents, Elmer and Jennie (Tompkins) Surrena, were early settlers in the Banner Area. Olive was born in Sheridan, Wyoming on December 2, 1891 and passed away January 28, 1976.

Charlie ran approximately 400 head of Hereford cattle under the S Cross brand which he established in 1908. In the fall, Charlie would trail his yearling steers to the stockyards in Parkman, Wyoming. The steers were loaded into cattle cars, and Charlie, dressed in his Sunday best, would ride the train with his Hereford steers to the sale barn in Omaha, Nebraska.

Charlie and Olive raised three children, two sons and a daughter. Their eldest son Harold was born on August 30, 1913 in Sheridan, Wyoming. Harold attended Slack School and then graduated from Sheridan High School. Slack School, a rural one room school located near Parkman, Wyoming,

is still a functioning primary school to this day. Harold joined the US Army and was a member of the Military Police. Harold passed away April 10, 1945 on board his ship due to an infection and hematemesis. Harold was initially buried in a U.S. Cemetery in Finschhafen, New Guinea. His body was disinterred in 1947 and then reinterred in the United States Armed Forces Cemetery in Manila on the Philippine Islands.

Frances Miller was born on June 6, 1924 in Sheridan, Wyoming. Frances attended Slack School and graduated from Sheridan High School. Frances left the family ranch and moved to Saint Xavier, Montana. Frances married Henry Seder and started a family of her own. Frances and Henry raised five children, Leo, Dorothy, David, Ronnie, and Larry. Frances currently still resides in eastern Montana and continues to visit Miller and Son Ranch on an annual basis.

Lawrence “Red” Miller was born September 23, 1915 in Dietz, Wyoming. He was one year old when his family moved to the homestead on West Pass Creek. Lawrence attended Slack School through the 8th grade. The sole form of transportation to and from school at that time was on horseback. Lawrence and his siblings frequently had horse races on their way home from Slack School, and were known to have the fastest horses on West Pass Creek. Lawrence married Marjorie “Margie” Louise Endicott on December 19, 1953. Margie was born on February 11, 1931. Her parents were Roy and Maude (Conner) Endicott. Lawrence and Margie lived in a small two-bedroom, two-bathroom house next to Charlie and Olive. Their home was built from sections of the original house that was on the homestead when the ranch was purchased. Lawrence and Margie raised six children, Everett, Marilyn, Peggy, Nancy, Jeannie, and Karen. Lawrence established the Quarter Circle N brand and continued to run Hereford cattle on the ranch and maintained the bloodlines that had been established by his father. The deed to the ranch was formally transferred to Lawrence and Margie Miller on November 30, 1960 for the sum of one dollar. Lawrence passed away on April 24, 2003. His wife Margie passed away the following year on September 20, 2004.



Charlie Miller and his horse.



Everett Miller in front of milk barn.

Charlie and Lawrence built a cabin on the Dry Fork Ridge allotment in the late 1930s. When Lawrence spoke about the cabin at the cow camp, he would recall how a downed log was chained to the back of the horse drawn wagon to act as brake so that the wagon would not overrun the team of horses or cause them to bolt. A side benefit of using the log, was that the road to the cow camp was kept smooth and free of ruts.

Everett Miller was born November 23, 1954 in Sheridan, Wyoming. Everett attended Slack School and Tongue River High School. Everett stayed on the family ranch and worked side by side with his dad Lawrence and his grandfather Charlie. When Everett was a young man, the hay was swathed, collected as loose hay with sweep heads and stacked. Feeding hay in the winter time was extremely labor intensive as the loose hay had to first be loaded onto a wagon and then pitchforked off the wagon to feed the livestock. Everett moved into the main house on the ranch after the death of his grandparents. In the late 1980s, Everett introduced Red Angus bulls into the Hereford bloodline. Every year, Lawrence and Everett sold their yearling steers to a local cattle buyer.

Everett recalls his first trail ride to the Little Horn as a painful experience. His mount was an older horse that had trouble keeping up with the herd. The horse would lag behind, then trot to keep up. As the horse trotted, Everett's legs would bounce and slap against the fenders on his saddle. Before long, his legs were sore and raw. After the completion of his first cattle drive, Everett and his grandad rode from the Little Horn back to the family homestead as there was not enough room for all of the horses to be loaded into the horse trailer.

On June 6, 1987, Everett married Robin Julene Arndt. Everett and Robin refreshed the blood lines by first introducing Gelbvieh and then Black Angus bulls to increase the size and weight of the offspring and to add hybrid vigor. Robin worked alongside Lawrence and Everett to work cattle, maintain the ranch, and put up the summer hay crop. After the first summer of stacking small square bales, Robin persuaded Everett that he needed to look into new equipment that would require less time and manpower than



Frances Miller.



Outbuildings facing the Big Horn Mountains.



Harold Miller.



Horse barn.



Olive and Charlie's home.



Horse drawn buggy.



Lawrence and Margie's house.

picking up, stacking and feeding small square bales. A Hesston big round baler was purchased. The round baler turned baling and stacking hay into a more simplified operation. Feeding the round bales required additional equipment, as it was difficult to unroll the round bales by hand with cows pressing in on all sides. Another lesson learned was that it was dangerous to stack the round bales too high, as the round bales could easily roll over the back of the forks and land on the person operating the farmhand. Miller and Son Ranch transitioned from selling yearling steers to a cow-calf operation. Each fall, steers and heifers were weaned and sent to the sale barn in Torrington, Wyoming. With the advent of video sales, weaned steers and heifers were marketed via Superior Livestock Auction. Miller and Son cattle were run under the S Cross, Quarter Circle N, and the Anchor H brands.

Miller and Son Ranch was deeded to Everett and Robin on April 5th, 1991. Everett and Robin raised two children on the family ranch, Tyler James and Paige Marie Miller. Tyler was born September 18, 1989 in Sheridan, Wyoming. Tyler attended Slack School through the 4th grade and then transferred to Tongue River School Elementary School. Tyler played baseball, basketball, and football through-out elementary and middle school. He participated in 4-H where he raised and showed market pigs. Tyler also excelled in leathercraft as his 4-H leader in



Gunny sack race - Centennial Celebration July 12th, 2019.

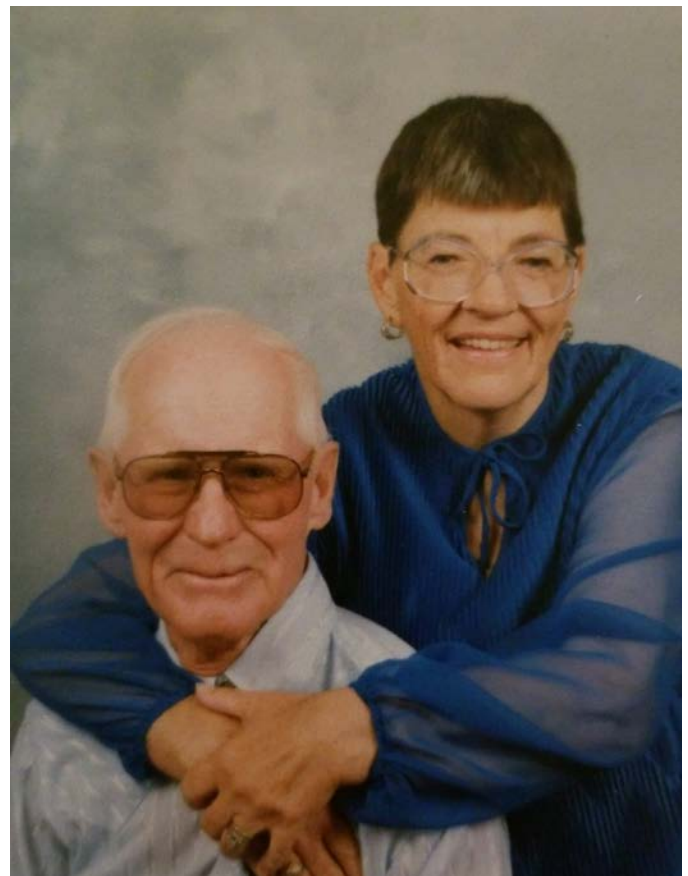
leathercraft was his dad. Tyler was a member of his high school varsity football and track teams. Tyler graduated from Tongue River High School in 2008 and attended Sheridan College where he studied diesel mechanics.

Paige was born June 2, 1992 in Sheridan, Wyoming and attended Slack School until the 2nd grade. As the only girl in Slack School, Paige was shy and timid. Paige was enrolled in gymnastics as a way to increase her confidence and be around other girls. Paige eventually became a competitive gymnast and competed until the program disbanded. Paige was an active 4-H member and raised and showed market lambs, pigs, steers, and breeding ewes. Paige also showed horses and competed in barrel racing, pole bending, and western trail riding. Paige graduated from Tongue River High School in 2010 and participated in varsity track. Paige currently holds the Tongue River High School record in the 100-meter hurdles. Upon graduation, Paige attended Buena Vista University (BVU) in Storm Lake, Iowa. Paige graduated from BVU in 2014 with a double major in graphic design and digital media.

Both Tyler and Paige have memories of being raised in the back of the Hesston tractor and being with their dad as he fed the livestock. Paige particularly liked helping her dad bottle feed young calves that either needed extra nutrition or had lost their mama.



Ice house.



Lawrence and Margie Miller

An older Shetland pony named Dandy was the first mount for both Tyler and Paige. Their first time on horseback they rode double. They both also fell off the pony together when the saddle slipped under the pony's belly while the pony was being turned to head back home.

Like his father, Tyler's first taste of the Little Horn cattle drive was a miserable experience. Tyler's horse was a wide backed draft pony. Although he had ridden this pony many times, he had never ridden for several hours. Straddling a pony with such a wide back proved to be too much for Tyler. After making it about half way, Tyler had to dismount and lead his pony to where the truck and trailer had been parked the day before and wait for the rest of the riders to return.

Miller and Son Ranch produces approximately 500 ton of grass hay annually. While the ranch is no longer actively involved in cattle production, our pastures are leased and livestock continues to be raised on our 1100-acre ranch. Several buildings that predate the acquisition of the ranch are still standing and in use. The horse barn, bunk house, and icehouse are all well over 100 years old. The shop and parts of Lawrence and Margie's house were built from sections of the original homestead prior to Charlie and Olive building their new residence in 1951.

Miller and Son Ranch has been owned by the Miller family for four generations. Lawrence, Everett, and Tyler have lived their entire lives on the ranch. Unfortunately, in this day and age, each of us has found it necessary to have full time jobs outside of the ranch. Everett, Robin, and Tyler continue to live on the ranch and are actively involved in maintaining and operating the ranch. Paige resides in Omaha, Nebraska where she is the Marketing Director at Prime Communications.

-- Robin Miller



Olive and Charlie Miller.



Tyler and Paige Miller feeding Holstein calves.



Paige Miller and Copenhagen.



Robin and Everett Miller - wedding day.



Tyler and Paige Miller 2008.



Shop and bunk house.



West Pass Creek facing Big Horn Mountains.



The Miller Family with U.S. Senator John Barrasso, U.S. Representative Liz Cheney, First Lady Jennie Gordon, Governor Mark Gordon, U.S. Senator Mike Enzi at the Centennial Farm and Ranch Ceremony, August 2019.

Nine O Cattle Company, Inc., 1919

The Jordan Family, Niobrara County



Jordan Centennial sign.

Robert Emmet Jordan was born March 12, 1882, in Boone, Iowa to Cornelius and Sarah Frances McCoy Jordan. He was five years old when his father died. His family came to Sioux County, Nebraska when he was eight. Robert “Bob” Jordan was united in marriage to Oressa Hunter at the home of the bride’s parents on October 1, 1902. Oressa was born February 8, 1883, at River Phillip Cumberland County, Nova Scotia to John and Margaret Caroline Dixon Hunter. The young couple made their home on Indian Creek, Wyoming, where Bob was a foreman on a cattle ranch. Bob’s sunny disposition and open-handed hospitality made the Jordan home a place where people loved to stop. They were the parents of seven children: John, Raymond “Buck”, Sarah, Bernice, Margaret “Margie”, Dan, and Mary. John and Mary died at birth.

Bob and Oressa were hard working and ambitious. Bob was able to purchase land on Indian Creek from his employer and the family made their home there. Oressa staked a homestead claim on land to the north and west of the land Bob owned but their love for the area made them stay. The original home in which Bob and Oressa raised their family is no longer there,

with the exception of parts of the foundation. It lives on in paintings and people’s memories.

Life on Indian Creek had its challenges and one of those left Oressa a widow in 1928. On a morning in December on the Mark Mortesen ranch, the neighbors had gathered to get ready to dip the cattle (a method used to delouse animals). The vat was filled with water and the fire had it heated to a boiling point. Vats were typically cooled before use. Bob decided to put the dip solution in the vat from a barrel when his foot slipped and he fell into the vat and disappeared completely. After climbing out, he rode his horse to the Mortesen house to get a change of clothes where he discovered how badly he was scalded. His life could not be saved and with his family at his bedside, he died at the age of 46. He was a man of true western type and a fine neighbor and friend.

Dan, Bob and Oressa’s son, moved back to the family ranch after completing his education. Dan married Velma Leona Zimmerman on August 14, 1937, in Ardmore, South Dakota. Velma was the daughter of Grover Cleveland and Mildred Melissa Eberspecher

Zimmerman. Dan was a progressive thinker and was approached to be the supervisor on the phone line project in the Indian Creek community. He made many improvements on the ranch to ensure the legacy of the place he loved so much.

Dan and Velma were very active in the Lusk, WY and Harrison, NE communities. Dan and Velma had three children: Carol, Dale, and Sherry. They would take their children to local dances, and they helped teach square dancing to anyone wanting to learn. This was not an easy feat considering Dan had some major hearing loss from rheumatic fever as a child and a high school football injury. They held many card parties and dinners. They loved cards of any kind: bridge, pinochle, and poker, to name a few. They passed the love of cards onto their children and grandchildren.

Dan and Velma raised Hereford cows and bred them with Angus and Hereford bulls. Their son Dale was their right-hand man for many years. He and his wife, Dorothy Buckley Jordan, raised their three children, Diana, Danese, and Dean on the ranch as well. Dan and Velma's son-in-law Durl Holtz (Carol) also helped out on the ranch on weekends. He and Dale raised cattle on the ranch.

In the 1960s, they installed a pipeline which supplied water for the entire ranch from wells near their homes. This pipeline continues to be used and updated to this day. Dan was very conservative with the resources from the ranch and was able to feed his cattle well in both lean years and good. In wet years, they hayed the meadows along Brush Creek. They also utilized the water from Indian Creek for flood irrigation using submersible pumps for hand-move sprinklers along the creek bottoms and a tow line on a hay pasture west of the houses.

Dan and Dale were both excellent mechanics and did the majority of carpentry, plumbing and electrical work on the ranch. They enjoyed dirt work and were able to build dams and fills with a small dozer and scrapers that they were able to keep running, even though the machinery was ancient when Dan bought it. Dan seldom bought new vehicles; he purchased a pickup and a new car for Velma once every several years. Machinery was always "well used" when it



Robert (Bob) and Oressa Jordan.



(L-R) Margie, Sarah, Buck, Bernice (Seated) Dan, 1915.

was purchased and took a great deal of welding and mechanic work to keep operational.

Although the focus of the ranch was work, there was time for the occasional fun here and there. Dale and Dorothy hosted several ice-skating parties in the winter. These were well attended, bringing friends and family from all over the county. The family was very proud to follow in the footsteps of Robert and Oressa by always being known for a place where people loved to stop.

The tri-state marker for South Dakota, Nebraska and Wyoming is on the property, recently celebrating 150 years since its original survey on August 17, 1869. In 1989, surveyors using modern equipment including Global Positioning System (GPS) found the original marker to be less than one foot from the exact coordinates. The family has escorted many people from various parts of the country to visit and have their picture taken by or on the marker.

When Dale and Dorothy moved to town in the early 1980s, their son Dean worked on the ranch most summers until graduating from college. Dan continued to run the ranch by himself for a few years until he retired and moved to town in the mid 1990s. Dan passed away in 1997 and Velma in 2004 after which Dale and Sherry operated the ranch together. Currently, Danese Jordan Reed's daughter Kaylee Barner, husband Trevor, and Dan and Velma's great-great granddaughter Roarke are currently living on and operating the ranch. This makes the 5th and 6th generation of the family to make the Jordan Ranch their home.

In the late 1970s, Dan and Velma wanted to protect all their hard work by forming Nine O Cattle Company, Inc. They used their cattle brand "9" "O" as the inspiration for their corporation. The family is pleased this brand has been kept in the family and is held by Dean Jordan, Dan and Velma's grandson.



Newlyweds Dan and Velma Jordan.



Dan and Velma's original home.



(L-R) Carol, Sherry and Dale Jordan.



(Standing L-R) Buck, Bernice, Dan (Seated L-R) Sarah, Margie.



Dan and Dale with colt.



Oressa Jordan in the 1960's.



(L-R) Carol (Jordan) Holtz, Pam Rising, Durl Holtz and Kendy Rising, 1975.



Dan and Velma in the 1980s.



Jordan Ranch barnyard.



(L-R) Sarah, Bernice, Margie, Dan, 1996.



Jack and Sherry (Jordan) Larson.



Family Pic 2017 (Top to Bottom) Danese (Jordan) Reed, Diana (Jordan) Martin, Dorothy, Dale and Dean Jordan.



Dale and Dorothy Jordan.



Trevor Barner at Wyoming, Nebraska and South Dakota corner marker.



Jordan extended family in 2016.



Trevor, Kaylee, and Roarke Barner, with Chase (dog) 2019.



The Jordan Family with U.S. Senator John Barasso, U.S. Representative Liz Cheney, First Lady Jennie Gordon, Governor Mark Gordon, U.S. Senator Mike Enzi at the Centennial Farm and Ranch Ceremony, August 2019.

Steers Ranch, LLC, 1888

The Steers Family, Fremont County



Overhead photo of Ranch. ca. 2005.

“The desire to seek fortune in the West and the surging wave of romance that come from the coast telling of gold to be found in every mountain caused them to place their few belongings into a covered wagon to which was hitched an ox team and to take the trail being worn by the stream of pioneers who were traveling toward the setting sun.

“In that train was a fine upstanding youth, John C. Steers. It is but natural that the young miss of 16 should find in him a true lover. After the hardships of the plains had drawn them closer together the two were united in marriage in old Fort Bridger.” (Taken from the obituary of Rosalia Lovina Steers, 1924)

Two years later the couple had twins, Lillie and William Henry Steers, born on July 11, 1865, in Millersville, Utah Territory on the outskirts of Fort Bridger. William was the young man who later came to own the ranch three miles northwest of Lander on present US Highway 287.

History of the ranch indicates that John Burns (husband of Lillie) filed a homestead claim on the land, and then on November 12, 1888, he relinquished his homestead rights and all the improvements to William Henry Steers and John W. Bay for the sum of \$500.

As a young man of 23, W. H. Steers and partner John Bay operated the ranch near the North Fork of the Popo Agie River. They ran approximately 75 head of cattle. Will Steers had become interested in cattle when he had ridden as a youth with the Texas trail herds as they traveled through Wyoming to Montana.

On December 29, 1897, Will married a young lady who worked at the Indian Agency. Charlotte (Lottie) Grace Mason lived with her parents on their homestead on Mexican Creek on the upper North Fork. Lottie’s mother was Mary Mason, School Superintendent for Fremont County when it covered land to the Montana border. Their ceremony was performed at Milford by the Reverend John Roberts.



Rosalia Steers holding twins William Henry and Lillie Jane (1865).



William Henry Steers and Charlotte Grace Mason married in 1897.

On May 11, 1900, the brand called the Lantern Globe was recorded in the name of William Henry Steers. Sometime in this period of time, John Bay and William Steers parted company and on July 6, 1901, William Henry Steers received the patent on 160.68 acres of land from the U.S. Government.

Will's entire life was devoted to the ranch. He is reputed to have been an excellent horseman who truly valued the animals he owned. He once had a big brown horse he called "Fred." Fred was one of the fastest walking, most strong-hearted horses in the valley. One time a man offered Will \$500 for Fred, which at that time was a very high price; Will refused the offer. Later that same week Will loaned Fred to his hired hand to ride into Lander for the evening. That very evening there was a jail break and Fred was stolen. A posse was sent after the escapee and the horse. They tracked them over Togwotee Pass (100 miles to the north), then lost them. No horse was able to keep up with and overtake Fred.

Will and Lottie continued to run the ranch and somewhere around 1910 acquired a lease from the State of Wyoming for grazing land on the face of the mountain between Mexican Creek and Baldwin Creek. That same lease is still in the Steers' family today.

In those early days, Lottie and Will raised a large flock of turkeys, as did many of the people in the valley. One evening after they had gone visiting and returned home not many live turkeys were to be found. Coyotes had gotten into the flock and killed over 80. Their bodies were strewn from the large apple orchard to Kimpel Draw, about one mile behind the house. They never again had that large number of turkeys.

At one time Will and Lottie contemplated moving to Oregon to join her family where they had taken up residence. They left their home with a team and wagon and traveled through Yellowstone Park. On the way, near Crowheart Butte, one of the horses became lame and Will rode back to the ranch to get a replacement. Lottie remained with their belongings until he returned. After arriving in Oregon, they remained for about one year before returning to Wyoming. Will did not like the continuous overcast



Original house on Will's ranch. ca. early 1900s.



Will on his horse Fred.



Roy Jason in front of the house he built for his mother.

skies; he missed the clear blue sky of his homeland and the mountains and the dry air.

In 1939 an additional 320 acres was acquired from Hepburn and Maghee for \$600. This land lies just west of the original homestead, behind the Cottonwood Ditch, and includes an area known as Kimpel Draw, known as Kimble Draw to locals today. It was near this time that 220 acres were purchased along the head of Mexican Creek and an additional 80 acres along Paradise Creek near the rim of the North Fork Canyon. The land on Paradise Creek was later traded to the Bureau of Land Management for 80 acres adjacent to the deeded land on Mexican Creek. The Paradise Creek land had no access and the 80 acres obtained in the trade lay along Mexican Creek and is the site of a sheep wagon that has been the "cow camp" for the Steers family since the 1930s. That sheep wagon is now on display at the Museum of the American West in Lander. In addition, there is a tent house frame that has been enclosed by boards making it weather resistant. This provides a cook shack for the many hunters who use that as their headquarters. Although the main purpose of these structures was to provide shelter for family members during the Fall round-up; it also was a place of shelter for anyone who got caught in a snowstorm or perhaps got lost. There were always provisions left in the two structures and there is a sweet, ice cold flowing stream that provides pure water nearby.

Will and his wife had no children. They were very active in community affairs in a quiet sort of way. Both were willing to help anyone in their time of need. They gave of themselves and it has often been said that "Will Steers didn't have an enemy in the world." They belonged to the Milford Grange and were active participants in the building of the grange hall in the early 1900s. This hall was a gathering place for members of the community for box socials, dances, dinners and just plain visiting. Will was a member of Woodsmen of the World and Lottie was a charter member of the Milford Home Economics Club.

As Will aged, he relied more on his brother, Roy, for assistance in running the ranch. Will was twenty years older than Roy Jason. Roy had always been a hard worker although he never got land of his own. For

several years Roy operated a ranch for his brother-in-law, Arthur Wroe, on North Fork. Plans were for Roy to purchase the land from Arthur as he was very ill with testicular cancer, but those plans were changed when Roy had a ruptured appendix. The doctor felt that he would not survive so the incision was not sutured. It took Roy a couple of years to heal from this. It was during this time that Arthur died and his ranch was sold. Roy then got a job herding sheep on South Pass. He took his young son, Roy Jr., born in 1916, with him. Roy Jr., "Bud" as he was known for most of his life, remembers his father lying on the bed of the sheep wagon while he, Bud, tended to the sheep. Other jobs that Roy Sr. worked were primarily managing ranches of others, one being his brother-in-law Jack Findlay. He cooked for the Poor Farm located just outside Lander for a while. He was a very hard worker and loved the outdoors. He had married Isabelle "Belle" Wroe McCoy in 1911. His wife, Isabelle, far preferred the town life, so most of their marriage was spent in separate houses.

After Roy Sr.'s father died in 1907, he built a home near Milford for his mother. The logs were brought from Dickinson Park by team and wagon. It is amazing that one man could build such a striking home. It was a two-story hand-hewn building that still stands although it is rapidly giving way to the elements and will probably collapse soon. Roy Sr. and his mother lived in it until ill health caused her to move to the Wind River Agency to live with her daughter, Lillie, and son-in-law, John Burns, in 1918. She passed away in 1924. It was then vacant for several years while he worked for other people. It was probably the mid-1930s when he and his son moved back into the house. They farmed and ranched the school section on which the house was built for several years. Throughout this time, they had about 20 head of Jersey cows that they milked for part of their livelihood. The milk and cream were sold to a local dairy.

It was also during this time a young mother came to keep house for them in the summer, cooking meals and cleaning the house. In 1941 Bud asked her to stay on as his wife. He and Elsie Morganstean McCoy were married in 1941. Will was aging (he was now 80 years old) to the point he could no longer run his ranch by himself, so he asked Roy and Bud



Roy Jason Steers and Isabelle Wroe McCoy married 1911.



Gathering of family and neighbors in the living room of Will's house. Will and wife are in the back row under a photo of Will's father, John. In front of them is Will's twin sister, Lillie. Rosalia Steers is seated in front of Will. To her right are Roy and Wife Isabelle (Belle).

to help. In 1945 Roy Sr. and Bud and family moved to the “upper place” to live with Will and help in the operation of the ranch. Roy and Bud continued to farm the “lower place,” putting up hay in the summer and pasturing cattle on it during the fall.

The hard work of keeping the ranch going was a busy time for the entire family. Roy and Bud continued to milk cows, pigs were raised, and farming was done. Many of the ranchers in the valley raised grain and when threshing time came would move from place to place helping with the harvest.

Will’s death in May of 1953 was a sad time for the family. His younger brother, Roy and son Roy Jr., bought the ranch from the other heirs and operated it. Father and son brought many changes to the ranch in the two years following Will’s death. No longer were white-faced cattle seen grazing on the mountain, there were now black angus. The cattle were still trailed to the face of the mountain for their spring range and then taken further back to the summer range. In the Fall, many a round-up took place when the weather was cold and wet.

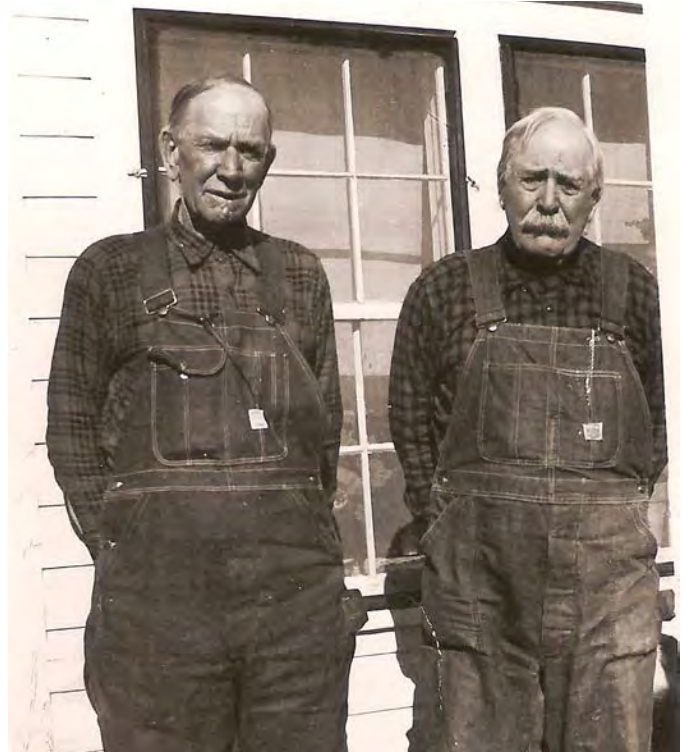
After a two-year battle with lung cancer, Roy Sr. died in 1955. Bud continued to improve and expand the ranch. In 1970 land to the north of the original homestead was purchased. This added about 120 acres to the ranch.

Although ranching was a full-time business, Bud found time to be actively involved in the community. He was a 4-H leader and an active member of the Milford Grange. He was a supervisor on the Soil Conservation Service for 10 years and the treasurer of the Big Cottonwood Ditch Company for 40 years.

Much of the irrigation water necessary for the success of the crops in this area originates from Shoshone Lake in the Wind River Mountains to the west. Roy Sr. was involved in building an earthen dam in the 1910s and, although he didn’t live to see it completed, he and his son were actively involved in the formation of a group of interested persons to replace the original dam. Bud was instrumental in procuring funding for this project and it was through this that the present dam at Shoshone Lake was completed in 1959. Until 1982, Bud was one of



Branding Herefords in the early 1940s.



Roy and Will standing beside the breakfast nook of Will’s house. ca. 1950.



Roy Jr. “Bud” with original outbuildings in the background. From front to back—granary, icehouse, garage, blacksmith shop. ca. 1950s.



Moving hay. Will, Roy Jr. and Bonnie. ca. 1950.



Community members working on Parshall flume below the new Shoshone Lake dam. 1958.

the people whose responsibility it was to regulate the headgate at the dam. Many trips were made in adverse weather to make sure flooding wouldn't take place in the lower valley, and these trips were by horseback as the road into the lake is so very rough.

Will's original house was a two-room log cabin located about one-half mile behind the present home site. That was moved to its permanent location in the late 1890s. Several rooms were added through the years. The original cabin became the living room and dining room with a kitchen added later. Then two bedrooms were added one autumn but winter set in and there weren't enough logs, so a roof was put on the rooms and they had a lean-to appearance. Finally, a third bedroom, a breakfast nook, and a bathroom were added. It was a cozy house, but as the foundation was made of large logs which rotted with time, the floor started to collapse and it was replaced by a new log house in 1975. Heating in the original home was by a central stove in the living room and the wood burning cookstove in the kitchen. It is no wonder that everyone slept beneath down quilts in the winter. In the early 1950s Roy and Bud hand dug a basement under Will's home and put in a floor furnace which was fed by a coal stoker. That kept the house much warmer through the cold nights but is no comparison to the modern heating methods of today.

The new house is a modest log cabin, having two bedrooms and a bath upstairs and an unfinished basement. Bud and Elsie designed and built the house themselves with the help of a neighbor. This home was always warm and welcoming. There was never a stranger who crossed the threshold. Bud continued to live in it after Elsie died in 2000 at the age of eight days short of 91. Bud could be seen repairing fence, riding his four-wheeler to irrigate the hayfields, mowing and baling hay, and being actively involved with the caring for the cattle herd until macular degeneration robbed him of his sight. He died in 2009, less than a month before his 93rd birthday.

In looking back, surely Will would be astonished about the changes that took place during his life: from a life where travel was by horseback or team and wagon to planes carrying many passengers through the air. He would be surprised to know that

man has already landed on the moon and an explorer craft has roamed around Mars. Will, Roy Sr. and Roy Jr. have left quite a legacy for the family to carry on.

Prior to Elsie's death, Bud and she had a trust formed and upon his death the trust, the Steers Family, LLC, was left to their children, Bonnie Steers Willhelm, Gary John Steers, Peggy Steers Hornecker and grandson Michael Hornecker. The ranch is at present managed and run by Michael much in the same way his grandfather taught him.



Bud, Pioneer Days Parade Marshall, riding in buggy driven by neighbor and longtime friend, Jack Armstrong. ca. 2002.



New house built by Bud and Elsie in 1975.



Bud's children: (L-R) Gary, Peggy, Bonnie. ca. 1953.



Bud and Elsie in front of sheep wagon on mountain range. ca. 1990.



(L-R) Hired hand Percy Young, Will Steers, Roy Sr., Roy Jr., Mr. Nylin visiting from Denver. ca. 1952.



Bud coming in from checking cattle. ca. 1970.



Modern branding. ca. 1998.



The Steers Family with U.S. Senator John Barrasso, U.S. Representative Liz Cheney, Governor Mark Gordon, First Lady Jennie Gordon, U.S. Senator Mike Enzi at the Centennial Farm and Ranch Ceremony, August 2019.

Sunshine Valley Ranch, 1917

The Pellatz and Neumiller Families, Converse County



Wedding photo Orville and Vena.

The year was 1916 when young Vena Ford traveled to Converse County, Wyoming to visit her brother and his young wife. Not long after that visit she made plans to homestead alongside them near the north bank of the Cheyenne River. Later in 1917 another married sister and a young man they all had met while they were studying higher education in Lincoln, Nebraska joined the ranks of several young energetic men and women establishing small homes on acreage available for homesteading. That young neighbor was Orville L. Pellatz from Ceresco, Nebraska. Orville and Vena were married in Nebraska on August 18, 1918.



Vena's homestead.

He enlisted in the US Army and left for basic training in Kansas not long after the wedding. Vena returned to Wyoming and spent time on her homestead property. When Orville was discharged from the Army he returned to Wyoming. Vena and Orville each proved up on their homestead acres. After the required time passed to prove up on the homestead her one room house was moved, perhaps by skids, up the hill to where Orville had built his one room home. They raised their family in a two-room home for many years. Vena was awarded her land patent from the US Government on January 27, 1922. By this time they were parents of a young daughter, Mary Isabelle, who was born on August 18, 1920. Another child was expected in April. A son, Lincoln Douglas, arrived on April 8, 1922 in Ceresco, Nebraska. Orville's land patent was issued on October 14, 1926. Three more children were born into the family: Donald Dean, Jeanetta June, and Jewell Ann.

This photo shows their home with a log addition which was added to the north side after the badger was captured, adding some money for construction. Many vines were growing up the side of the house where Vena's gardens were located. She took great pride in her flowers, bushes, and trees.



Home place.

It was a lot of work raising 5 children and several garden crops along with the corn and wheat in their fields. The lack of rain at critical growing times was concerning to the young family. The years 1937 through 1939 were severely dry and windy. However, they kept faith and continued to plant and pray for rain. Additionally a few cattle were accumulated and they became ranchers also. Numerous letters were exchanged between Vera and her mother, Jeanette Ford, showing a continued connection between the generations and their happiness by sharing many seeds and plants through the US Mail. Several bushes and little trees were also mailed to Vena and Orville so that the homestead could be dressed in pretty flowers and little trees to make a happy place for the young family. Letters between them also included patterns and fabric for clothing for the children. Vena was quite adept at taking some clothing apart and making new articles of clothing for her growing children. She often wrote of not having new clothes for herself but was resigned to wearing clothing until it was no longer useful. She wrote to her mother about the concern for having help at home with her children while she had successive babies. The last three were born not far from the homestead, perhaps at the local Doctor's home. She was able to pass her sewing skills along to her daughters. 4-H was an activity the children participated in for many years.

All of their children were capable of making many things with their minds and their hands whether it be with cloth, metal, wood, wire or other materials.

Orville's degree from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln was a Law Degree, however, he was too young to take the bar exam upon graduation so he headed west to meet up with those friends and begin his farming life. The urge to go west must have been pretty strong because he graduated in early June and his birthday was June 11 so he would not have had to wait long to take the exam, but head west he did. Orville spent several years teaching other children in their community. He would ride his horse to the family who hired him and spend Monday through Friday teaching school. He would return to his family and spend weekends with them. Although I have no written proof I trust that he spent time checking up on the progress of education for his own children on the weekends as well as loving on them for precious hours. One story passed down was how Mary and Lincoln would take their mother's wooden spools of thread and warm them up on the wood stove. Then they would melt holes in the ice on the inside of the windows so they could peep out to see if they could spot their Daddy riding home on his horse on Fridays. There were some trips taken by car down to northeastern Colorado near Eckley to visit the Ford family. Fewer trips were taken clear back to eastern Nebraska where Orville's family lived near Ceresco. However, one memorable trip was taken before Mary and Lincoln graduated from Douglas High School in 1939. It must have been quite a trip with seven people in a car.

Mary was schooled at home for a short while, however, she and Lincoln soon attended a nearby school at Verse. Orville had a certain workhorse which he trusted enough to carry Mary and Lincoln to school. He fashioned a second set of stirrups for the child riding behind the saddle. The school had a small corral in which horses were kept until school was dismissed. They would also pick up the mail and bring it home while riding. They had a special mailbag which was hung from the saddle horn. They tried not to have it flap in the wind because that would scare their horse. When Mary was in third grade, Lincoln and a classmate Lydia were also placed in third grade when they were just seven years old. I'm sure that made teaching several children in a one room school easier for the teacher. From then

on Mary and Lincoln were classmates and graduated from Douglas High School together in 1939.

Later on when Donald and then June went to school, Orville had obtained a cart in which the children rode to and from Verse School. The children crossed the Cheyenne River at a low crossing with the horse and later the horse and cart. Later the children were sent to Dry Creek School through the 10th grade. The final two years were taken in Douglas and all five children graduated from Douglas High School.



Badger.

A favorite family story is when the children were returning from their school one day in 1934 a badger was spotted along the riverbank. They tied up the horse pulling the cart and devised a way to catch that badger and tie it to the floorboards of the wagon. Orville was able to kill and skin the badger. Later he sold the hide for \$12. That money paid for construction materials for the foundation for an addition to their home. Those ingenious children sure did help their parents every way they could.

The Great Depression was hard for the young family. I remember the ball of string that my Grandpa saved so that he always had string available. My Dad, Lincoln, shared some tokens and coupons from the depression years with me. Orville used horses to plow fields and had his riding horse. They also raised Hereford cattle. The family had a few milk cows and chickens for eggs and meat. No one lacked for chores at the homestead.

There were a few accidents that the family had endured. One was a time when the car they were

riding in hit a sinkhole and June was launched off Vena's lap through the windshield. June was a baby and was not injured, however, Vena suffered several severe cuts and had to have neighbors help her while she healed. Another time, the family was returning from Colorado and a tire blew out on the car and it rolled over. A lot of time had just been spent picking fruit and nearly all the fruit was destroyed. Vena hurt her back in that wreck.



(Back L-R) Mary, Orville, Lincoln, Vena (Front L-R) June, Jewell, Don Pellatz.

Of course, WWII was imminent and with young adults in the family there were the enlistments and those years were difficult. Both sons served overseas in the Pacific Theater.

Second Lieutenant Lincoln D. Pellatz was an Airman in the US Army Air Corp. By this time he had married a young neighbor girl. He and Ruth Eleanor Johnson were married on July 30, 1944. They traveled to Tonopah, Nevada for his final training. It was sad to return to Douglas in October to visit his mother as she was struggling to hold on to life. He was but one day away when she passed away on October 8, 1944. Lincoln returned to Tonopah and was shipped out of the Port of San Francisco in November. Ruth returned to Douglas to await the birth of their first child. Steven Lincoln was born on August 8, 1945. Lincoln was honorably discharged from the US military in November, 1945.

Lincoln and Ruth settled in Douglas after spending nearly a full year as he worked on a ranch out

northeast of Douglas. He was able to work building and remodeling houses. Another son, Robert Dean, was born on June 27, 1947 and their last child, Joan Ruth, was born on June 6, 1949. Late in the spring of 1950 they were able to purchase a property from Perry Burdon out in the country about 10 miles from his father. Orville and Lincoln were helpful to each other. We grandchildren would spend many hours playing around the homestead while they worked on projects together. I remember vying for a turn with cousins and brothers playing on the large stone sharpening wheels. Of course, we were cautioned not to bother the work horses or the milk cows, so that part of the yard was off limits to us. It bothered me most, because I was so in love with all things horse. We were infatuated with the milk and cream separator. Grandpa raised enough milk cows and laying hens to be able to sell milk and eggs in Douglas. We also had to be very quiet and careful if we were to help gather eggs or feed the chickens with him. He had a total of 18 grandchildren.



Lincoln and Ruth's wedding.

The year 1959 was a year of separation for my little world of a 9 year-old and I missed my Grandpa a lot. My Dad and Mom moved across the Great Divide to Farson, Wyoming. My brothers, Steve and Robert, and I all graduated from Farson High School. I attended the University of Wyoming the fall of 1967. While there I met a young man named Wayne Neumiller. As it would happen we fell in love and married at Farson on July 5, 1968.

A few months after our wedding in 1968 my parents sold that farm and returned to the homestead home. Grandpa was then 73 and asked Lincoln to return to Converse County to assist him with raising cattle and all the associated ranch work. Orville had earlier purchased a house in Douglas and enjoyed spending more time there. He had remarried in 1961.



Wayne and Joan's wedding.

Although Grandpa spent time at first driving out to help transition Lincoln to the ranch, he suffered a stroke in the spring of 1971 and passed away October 22, 1971. That precipitated a transition from the first generation to the second generation ownership of the Ranch.

Lincoln and Ruth raised cattle and a few horses. Dad was very busy for years making improvements in water retention and storage. He was instrumental in using a blade to remove cactus for better grass habitat. They were kept busy trying to rid the West Pasture of the prairie dogs that inhabited many acres. Mom enjoyed our annual spring event as Mother's Day afternoon was an annual kickoff to ping rodents.

It was always a treat to get to visit my parents at the ranch with my children as they always had horses, kittens, and a dog. Our daughter, Paula Michelle, was born while we were in Laramie at college on January 22, 1969. Our son, Neal Patrick, was born on June 27, 1973 in Liberal, Kansas. Wayne and I would try to arrange time off from our jobs wherever to return to help with special events like branding and cattle drives with my parents. Annual Christmas gatherings of Grandpa's children and grandchildren were always highly anticipated. Annual picnics are a tradition kept to this day.

Our children could spend hours playing all around the place and especially enjoyed making mud pies.

They would ride horses and play for hours with kittens and all other things country. We all especially loved the scent in early spring of the large lilac tree planted by Vena in her garden right in front of the home. Mom would saddle up horses for them all to ride four miles across country to the mailbox to get the mail. The saddle for the children was the one which her father bought for his wife and Ruth grew into it as a child. It is pictured in the photo below with Michelle and Neal on Wonder, my old barrel racing horse. Mom used that old family mail sack to carry any mail home hung from the saddle horn.

Lincoln and Ruth began to draw plans for a new home on the ranch in 1977. The walls of the homestead house were built of cottonwood logs and those logs were aged out after so many years. The new site was chosen down near the banks of the Cheyenne River. An artesian water well was drilled. The basement was dug and their son Robert was kept busy helping them lay the cinder blocks after the cement was poured for the floor. Their plans for a nice log home were finalized in 1982 when they were finished enough to move into and begin living at 331 Woody Road. How they delighted in all things new. Pocket doors were Dad's specialty and Mom loved those beautiful oak hardwood floors. It was all built by them except for electrical and plumbing work. It is sporting a new and revitalized look as I had the logs blasted and stained in July, 2019.



Michelle and Neal on Wonder.



Vena's lilac bush all grown up with Michelle, Neal and Joan.

With the era of hard times in the cattle industry during the 1980s and it took a toll on the ranch as it could hardly pay off debt accumulated. It was during their hard times that I was able to help them and gave them the peace of mind that bills would be paid. However, Mom moved out and established a residence in Glenrock, Wyoming. Dad continued to live and operate the ranch by himself until January 1, 1993. He had studied genetics and used various bulls on the cows his father had and made several improvements to the herd. One thing he impressed upon me was that the horned cattle were far more adept at intimidating the coyotes on the ranch than polled cattle. So when he turned the reins over to me, I gained a herd of about half horned and half polled cattle.

Grandpa Pellatz had operated it for 50 years and then Dad operated it for 25 years. Thus in 1993, I began the third generation of ownership of Sunshine Valley Ranch. My reign has lasted 27 years plus now. Vena, Orville, Lincoln, and Ruth are all buried in the Douglas Cemetery

I have managed to introduce more Angus genetics into our herd. Red Angus were my first choice. Finally, I relented and introduced blacks. There is now about a half and half herd of reds and blacks. Along with those introductions the horns have all but disappeared. Since 2010 I have relented to Wayne's preference not to use horses for ranch work. He says it takes too long to catch and saddle my horse, and that he can have my work done with his motorcycle before I'm ready. It was 2010 that I lost my best mare. I miss that wonderful, capable and lovable Arabian. Not only that but she was by far the most savvy cow horse of all. I usually only had to think of another move for her and she was on it like lightning. She always brought the whole remuda in with my call "Hey, Zima!" Head and tail high she brought them all in. We do still have a small remuda. I'm sad to admit that they are more pasture ornaments than used mounts now. An era has passed.

However for many years I enjoyed the company of our daughter Michelle and several friends who liked riding horses trailing cattle. Our son Neal was plagued by hay fever and animal allergies and since horses especially bothered him he usually walked

the whole cattle drive. The longest drive was over 20 miles. He has stories of killing rattlesnakes with his walking sticks. Many memories of horseback cattle drives were made the first 17 years of our ownership. Now we have other assorted memories of motorized moves. Those memories are different but nevertheless unforgettable. Some broken bones are attributed to motorized vehicles. Ask us about 7-7-07 and a huge story will unfold.

As the years have marched on, Wayne and I have been blessed with four grandchildren. They are Elle, Dycen, and Grady Neumiller, and Joshua Schilling. I am the middle generation of this family.

We have also taken on the ownership of nearby additional acreage. This has allowed us to make further improvements to the ranch operation. Our ranch markets grass fed beef with our USDA label attached. We take great pride in our genetics and our healthy natural beef. Neal has been helpful with the ramped-up production which includes pastured chickens and eggs. A Market Garden looms on the horizon as 2020 has come into appearance. This journey continues to challenge and excite the Ford/Pellatz/Johnson/Neumiller descendants. Tally Ho and God Bless.

--Joan Neumiller



The Pellatz and Neumiller Families with U.S. Senator John Barrasso, U.S. Representative Liz Cheney, Governor Mark Gordon, First Lady Jennie Gordon, U.S. Senator Mike Enzi at the Centennial Farm and Ranch Ceremony, August 2019.

Triangle-M Voight Ranch, 1915

The Voight Family, Platte County



Voight Ranch with the foothills to the west.

We three third-generation Voight children feel so blessed to have been raised on the ranch—to have learned true-grit pioneering values from our parents, Louis and Viola Voight, as well as from our homesteading grandparents, Albert and May. It is our honor and privilege to share the centennial-ranch story.

The Triangle-M Voight Ranch west of Chugwater, Wyoming began when two adventurous and successful homesteaders, Albert Voight from Germany and May Whipple from New York were married. They combined their assets and acquired additional land a little at a time during subsequent years. Louis Voight wrote their story in 1981 for the book *Wyoming Platte County Heritage*. As a member of the Platte County Heritage Book committee, Viola (Wilhelm) Voight also worked to make this important historical volume a reality.

Here is Louis's story about his parents, Albert and May:

From the Kiel Harbor area of northern Germany to the rolling plains of Wyoming was a vast difference in environments. This was the situation of my father, Albert Voight. He was born in Laboe, Germany in 1887, the son of a submarine engineer. During his schooling he was taught the trade of being a waiter. He left Germany in 1909 and went to England where he entered the waiter business, working at several large restaurants and hotels until April 1912. [We subsequently learned from old documents that Albert was trained as a wine steward -- a sommelier!]

On Sept. 8, 1912, my father came to America. First he went to Grand Island, Nebraska, where he worked on the farm of a former German friend and his family, the Ted Arps. While there he learned some farming methods. Then he moved on to Cheyenne where he worked for the Becker Hotel, driving the brewery wagon. It was while on this job that he learned about the homesteads available in the Chugwater area. He filed on 160 acres with an additional 160 west of the TY Basin in 1915. Upon arriving in Chugwater, a Mr. Porter, who lived about a mile west of town, helped him find his land. One time when Dad was riding a horse from Cheyenne to Chugwater, he followed the



May Whipple portrait, 1913.



Albert Voight portrait, 1913.

telegraph line and didn't get off his horse until he reached Eagle Spur, four miles south of Chugwater. When he got off, he fell flat on his face. He had no feeling in his legs because he had been in the saddle so long. While he was proving up on his homestead he worked for different neighbors. He would get up, do his chores, and then walk three or four miles to work for Philip Ash who lived near Chugwater. He said the grass would hit him above the knees sometimes. It is hard to realize what the homesteaders went through to acquire this land when they were "proving up" on it.

One of my father's greatest goals was to be a good American. During World War I, he was drafted and sent to Ft. Lewis, Washington. Shortly thereafter he was sent back home as an enemy alien because he had only finished his first papers on naturalization. [He was not allowed to remain in the Army. In fact, he was detained in an "Alien Camp" in Centerville, South Dakota.] This was a very painful thing for him. On Dec. 4, 1919, my father married May Whipple. She, too, was a homesteader who came to Wyoming in 1915 from New York. Her brother, Ogden Whipple, had homesteaded here so wrote for my mother

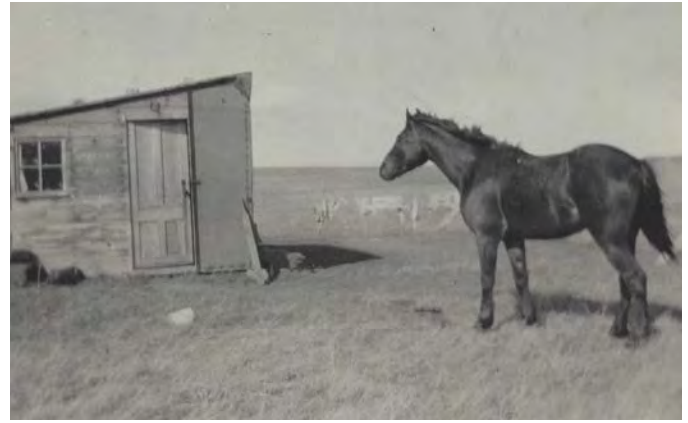
(May), my aunt (Florence), and my grandfather (Vischer Whipple) to come west to homestead. They all homesteaded near Ogden west of Chugwater. My mother and Aunt Florence both were school teachers. My mother taught school east of Chugwater and at that time boarded with the Post Eastwood family. She later taught west of Chugwater near her homestead and would ride horseback to her school.

My mother was born in Porter Corners, New York in 1888, the daughter of Vischer and Emma Jane (Van Ness) Whipple. Emma Jane was a distant relative of President Van Buren. After my mother's formal education, she taught school several years in New York before coming to Wyoming. Her homestead was located in Sec. 31, T21, R67. Aunt Florence's was about a mile farther west, and Uncle Ogden and Grandfather Whipple had homesteads north of her, all about eight to ten miles west of Chugwater.

After my father and mother were married they decided to build their home near my mother's homestead. It is the house in which I was born and it is where Vi and I still live today.



May Whipple, her homestead and her horse, 1915.



Albert Voight homestead, 1916.

While my aunt Florence was proving up on her homestead, she worked part-time for Dr. Phifer at the Wheatland Hospital. He asked her to tutor his son, John, so she brought him to her homestead one summer where she privately tutored him. Aunt Florence did not remain in the west, but returned to Saratoga Springs, New York where she taught school most of her life.

Grandfather Vischer Whipple lived with us a great deal of the time when I was little. He was an ardent gardener and helped start many fruit trees and other trees on our ranch. He always raised a big garden and would sell fruit and vegetables to the town folks. My generation had the opportunity to observe the transition of complete horsepower to mechanized power.

When I was little there were still many homesteaders nearby. Among our closest neighbors were Lou and Byrd Enlow, Crouses, Herricks, Bredas, Jacobs, Swansons, Gustafasons, Moons, Marosics, Ashes, Lathams, and the Bert Morrisons. Another life-long friend, Raymond Cushing, started his ranching career on the Diamond and later he and his wife, Frances, ranched near Laramie and then returned to the Wheatland area.

My folks had two sons: an older brother, Carl and myself. Carl, who became an air force navigator shortly after he was married, tragically was killed during World War II. He lies in the military cemetery in Nettuno, Italy.

[On original documents, Albert spelled his name without an "H" (VOIGT). By the mid-1930s the family name changed to the more Anglicized version: VOIGHT.]

My folks acquired several homesteads around theirs and built up a nice little ranch. They were both active in community activities. My father belonged to the local Masons. My mother served her church, the Methodist, in many capacities. She was the church pianist and a devoted Sunday school teacher for many years. At the time of her death our local pastor wrote a tribute to her entitled "Portrait of a Saint," and I guess this does best describe her. She died Nov. 11, 1967, and my father passed away Oct. 8, 1961.

During World War II, I was a Naval pilot and instructor. In 1949 I married Viola Wilhelm, daughter of John and Katherine Wilhelm of Wheatland. We have three children: Lucinda Lorraine Houtchens born 1951, Teresa Kay Baker born in 1953, and John Albert born in 1955. Lucinda and her husband, Alan, are presently residing in Santa Barbara, California where Alan is working on a PhD in Musicology and where Lucinda works for the University. Teresa and her husband, Dennis, farm east of Chugwater. They have a daughter: Lori Lorraine. John, just recently married, is presently at home on the ranch and he and his wife plan to get their degrees at the University of Wyoming next year.

In 1956 Vi and I were fortunate to be able to buy a part of the Bert Morrison ranch. We bought the



May Whipple Brand Certificate, 1919.



May (Whipple) Voight with her turkeys, ca. 1920.

lower Morrison, and Ned Wedemeyer bought the upper Morrison. Included in our parcel was Aunt Florence's homestead. Margaret and Bert Morrison were some of our best neighbors, so very generous with their help and knowledge. Each summer when we were young, my brother, Carl, and I would take turns going up to the Morrison ranch to work. We looked forward to this every summer. They treated us like sons and took us to movies, restaurants, etc. which was not too common in those days. Mrs. Morrison was the former Margaret McDonald, sister of the late Hugh McDonald.

Vi and I are active in the Methodist church, singing in the church choir being a priority. I am presently commander of our local Legion, vice president of the County Predator Committee, and a member of the County Soil Conservation Board. Vi is active in the American Legion Auxiliary, UMW, the Octavo Music Club and the Chugwater Homemakers Extension Club. We both belong to our local Stock Growers Association and Cow-Belles groups, and I am a charter member of the National Cattlemen's Association.

Since Louis's writing in 1981, Mom and Dad continued to invest in their local community. They were one of the five founding families who created the Chugwater Chili Corporation that is still in operation today. In fact, Mom's recipe for the Chugwater Chili Dip and Dressing Mix won national awards on more than one occasion. Dad continued to be a strong steward of the land and one year received the prestigious County Conservation Award. He also served for a number of years on the Weed and Pest Board.

It must be mentioned that music has played an important role in the Voights' lives throughout generations. Not only were we active in church music, as Dad mentioned, it is worth noting that before they were married, Mom (Viola) was lead singer in the Harry Dearing Band in Wheatland. And from the moment Dad and Mom met, it is no secret that the dance floor was one of their favorite destinations! Grandmother May also was a big musical influence who taught us from a very early age to play the piano and sing cowboy songs and hymns. When we grew older, Mom and Dad made



May with sons, Louis and Carl, ca. 1927.



Carl and Louis with mare and colt, ca. 1928.

sure we three kids had voice lessons and learned to play musical instruments. Early on, Mom made sure we performed in public, especially for the annual Stock Growers and Cow-Belles Annual Meetings! In fact, she penned most of the songs! We feel so blessed to have grown up on the ranch with so much music all around us.

Dad died in 2002 and Mom in 2009. They left behind a beautiful ranch that we still call home. John is the Triangle-M Voight Ranch Manager who carries on our stewardship of the land, making sure the pastures are never over-grazed! He has two daughters and four grandchildren. Jaren lives in Montreal with her children, Lilu and Arlo. Josie lives in Laramie with her husband William Winkler and their sons, Clay and Cory. John continues to be involved in ranching, mining, real estate, archaeology, and music.

Teresa and Dennis are semi-retired organic-wheat farmers who live on their farm east of Chugwater. Known as “the occasional baker,” Teresa works part-time in her on-farm bakery to create a variety of breads, cinnamon rolls, and especially her original granola-bar invention, the Prairie Pie. This scrumptious well-known “Made-In-Wyoming” product comes in five delicious varieties. Along with Mom and Dad, Teresa and Dennis also were founding members of the Chugwater Chili Corporation. They have 3 children, Lori Kennedy (husband Andy), Dianne Parker (husband Andy), and Doug Baker (wife Lacey), and 8 grandchildren: Karli, Brady, Quincy, Finnley, Asher, Oscar, Natalya, and Victoria.

Lucinda and Alan have retired and live in Wheatland. Lucinda savors trips to the Triangle-M Ranch for experimental gardening projects, dog-training activities, musical extravaganzas, and just to enjoy the scenery!

--Lucinda Houtchens



Louis and Carl ready for the school bus, 1928.



Viola (Wilhelm) and Louis, honeymoon bound, 1949.



Voight Ranch house, 1949.



Louis holding John on Kate; Lucinda and Teresa on Ribbon, ca. 1957.



Cowboy Hats at Christmas: (L-R) Lucinda, John, Teresa, ca. 1958.



Viola and Louis at the ranch, ca. 1996.



May and Albert Voight, ca. 1960.



(L-R) John, Lucinda, and Teresa with their ranch-raised 4-H projects, ca. 1964.



Fourth Generation Cooks: (L-R) Jaren, Dianne, Doug, Lori, and Josie, ca. 1991.



Louis Voight at Albert's homestead site, ca. 1998.



Teresa and Dennis Baker (center) with their family, 2018.



John Voight and his family, 2016.



Lucinda and Alan Houtchens with Aoife and Brodie, 2019.



The Voight Family with U.S. Senator John Barrasso, U.S. Representative Liz Cheney, First Lady Jennie Gordon, Governor Mark Gordon, U.S. Senator Mike Enzi at the Centennial Farm and Ranch Ceremony, August 2019.

Towns Family Farm, 1908

The Towns Family, Laramie County



Barn and homestead house.

John Towns came on the train to the depot in Burns, Wyoming where he met the land agent. They spent all day in a Model T bouncing around the prairie looking at different homestead sites. After arriving back at the depot he had to make his choice on the parcels that he was going to homestead. He returned to Iowa and proceeded to get things ready to make the move out to Wyoming in 1908. They began gathering supplies for the homestead, which consisted of lumber, canvas, and other essentials that would be needed.

Roy Towns, the eldest son, Glen, and Harold, age 8, rode in the immigrant car with a few head of Hereford cows, chickens, and a hog or two, while John rode in the train.

The three sons and John immediately set up the barn out of the lumber and canvas for the livestock and other critters.

Roy returned to the homeplace in Iowa, where he and his family operated the family farm, which he did until he retired at which time his son took it over.

Glen operated a farm 5 to 6 miles west of the homestead site, later moving to California.

Harold attended the Towns School that was located in a pasture south of the homestead for 5 years until the eighth grade. He met Helena Steege and her six siblings at the Towns School. Harold went to Cheyenne to work for a feed store, riding the train on Sunday afternoon and coming back on Friday evening by train and living in a boarding house during the week. He did this while avoiding the cost of boarding his horse all week. His goal was to save enough money to buy the parcel of land across from the family homestead. This was a goal that he reached and then asked Helena to marry him and that was the start of the next generation. They had a son, Marion, and two daughters, Ramona and Nancy. Nancy is the surviving 3rd generation. Marion Towns was the last to attend the one-room schoolhouse and finished school in Hillsdale.

They soon found out the high plains wasn't Iowa land. Different crops needed to be grown and winters were harsher. Potatoes, corn, flax and several other various crops were raised. As my grandpa Harold



1929 Model AA Truck that Harold Towns used to haul farm products, household goods from Casper, WY to Denver, CO helping people out.



Loading hay after a horse pulled buck rake early 1920s.



Marion Towns on his old tractor finishing the hay after all the new equipment broke down and he dug "old reliable" out and finished his last hay baling ever.

said about potatoes: "You either had a lot of them or none at all and you never knew till you got them dug." More land was available over the years and they settled on Hereford cattle and wheat.

My dad, Marion Towns, followed my Grandpa's example after getting married, moving to Cheyenne with the goal of earning enough money to live on for at least a year and having a down payment on the farm down the road a piece. My parents, in about a year and a half, accomplished that goal. They raised wheat and sheep. Later on they had a caged egg factory that had about 1200 laying hens. I am Don Towns, son of Marion and Phyllis Towns, with an older sister, Judy. Our job was to gather the eggs.

Then in the early 70s, Marion Towns put in an irrigated circle which in the first few years allowed us to return to raising potatoes and convert over to hay operation. The sheep were sold and a Hereford cow operation took their place. The genes of this herd still have some of the original breeding in them today.

One time they were shocking oats after binding them with a binder, when they went in for the noon meal. It suddenly got dark in the house and all the hands looked out the window to see why and soon discovered a swarm of locust had hit the farm. After the swarm passed, the hands went out to see what was left. All the grain was out of the shocks and the handles were eaten out of the pitchforks. My dad said: "It was a once in a lifetime thing." We hoped he was right.

One time, Mr. and Mrs. John Towns (my great grandparents) were sitting on the porch right after my parents Marion and Phyllis got married - they were living in Cheyenne to make or save enough money to move back out to farm. When Marion and Phyllis pulled into the yard to say hi, John asked my dad if he would hitch up horse to buggy so they could go for a ride. My dad did this and with the help of my mom got the two elderly folk in the buggy. This was around 1946-47 and my great grandparents passed away in '49 and '50 at 90 or so. They were gone for about half hour and my mom said you could hear them laughing coming down the road and turning the corner up to the house with Great Grandmother's head

on John's shoulder and with great big smiles. They unloaded and my dad was going to put the horse and buggy up when Great Grandpa said "No, you should take your bride for a ride and do it as I taught you. Matter of fact, go get the mail." The post office was at Hillsdale, some 10 miles away. Great Grandma handed Mom a blanket and told her sit real close. When they got to Hillsdale, folk came up to them and said how they remembered that nice buggy. Upon returning, they sat with Mr. and Mrs. John Towns on the porch grinning and holding hands. That was the last ride in the buggy for all and the horse.

One of the things I am most proud of as the operator now is that there are still five generations alive and living in Laramie County, and a total of seven generations with the farm, and hopefully more generations to follow.

We consider this as a family a great honor to be part of the Centennial Farm and Ranch.

Thank you,
Don Towns



Marion Towns - son of Harold Towns - holding sister Ramona.



John and Sarah Towns - the homesteaders - late in life.



The three sons of John and Sarah Towns: (L-R) Harold, Glen, and Roy.



Picnic on the creek.



Harold and Helena Towns' home across the road from his parents.



Two lovely birds in a tree on a picnic.



The Towns Family with five of the seven generations in Laramie County. The Towns Family with U.S. Senator John Barrasso, U.S. Representative Liz Cheney, Governor Mark Gordon, First Lady Jennie Gordon, U.S. Senator Mike Enzi at the Centennial Farm and Ranch Ceremony, August 2019.

Lewis Ranch, 1916

Lewis Family, Campbell County



The Lewis Family with U.S. Representative Liz Cheney, U.S. Senator John Barrasso, Governor Mark Gordon, First Lady Jennie Gordon, U.S. Senator Mike Enzi at the Centennial Farm and Ranch Ceremony, August 2019.

McNutt Ranch, 1917

McNutt Family, Platte County



The McNutt Family with U.S. Representative Liz Cheney, U.S. Senator John Barrasso, First Lady Jennie Gordon, Governor Mark Gordon, U.S. Senator Mike Enzi at the Centennial Farm and Ranch ceremony, August 2019.

Other Families

Five Diamond Ranch, 1883

Kimble Family, Sheridan County

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