



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

2012 WYOMING CENTENNIAL FARM AND RANCH YEARBOOK



ARTS. PARKS. HISTORY.

Wyoming State Parks & Cultural Resources

Table of Contents

Letter from Governor Matthew H. Mead.....	3
The Call Farm, William H. and Elvira Call	5
The Cobb Ranch, The Cobb Family	9
The Grant Ranch, The Richard & Mary Grant Family	18
Mountain Valley Livestock, Inc., The Sims and Hageman Family	22
The Hejde Ranch, Chester F. & D. Evelyn Hejde Family	29
The LEO Ranch, The Hollcroft Family	35
Fancher Inc., The Fancher/Kontour Family	41
The Kruse Ranch, The Kruse Family	42
The CP Ranch, The Ron and Sharon Lovercheck Family.....	49
Rankin Ranch, LLC, The Curtis & Mary Rankin Family	56
The Ox Yoke Ranch, The Reinecke Family.....	57
The Rutherford Ranch, The Rutherford Family	62
The Rafter L Ranch, The Larry & Bonnie Smith Family.....	66
The 4A Ranch, The J. William Sorensen Family.....	71
The Sturman Ranch, The Sturman Family	75
The 15 Ranch, The Frank Svalina Family	81
The Erland Ranch, The Williams Family	86
Other 2012 Centennial Ranch Families	87

Office of the Governor

Dear Centennial Farm and Ranch Award Recipient,

I congratulate you for being honored in 2012 for 100 years of ownership and operation. You and your family can take great pride in what you have built over the years. To work the same land for a century or more shows deep roots in Wyoming tradition, commitment to a western way of living, and care about the future. I thank you for securing Wyoming's heritage – past, present, and future - and for contributing to our state's economy.

I am proud to be a fourth generation Wyoming rancher. I remember my granddad telling the youngsters in the family about the importance of leaving the land in better condition than it was received. I remember my mother telling us kids about riding the longest loop – that is, we should not take shortcuts to get the ranch work done right. As I grew older, I realized such family wisdom about land stewardship and ranch operation had broader meaning too – it applied to developing leadership skills and work habits for life. Centennial farm and ranch families have 100 years of stories like mine to tell, and they make up the rich history and fabric of our state.

Agriculture means so much to Wyoming. It is a billion dollar a year business. It is our third largest industry. It supports all facets of our economy. Beyond that, agriculture also gives Wyoming a special look and feel. Our wide open spaces, beautiful views, abundant wildlife, and historic structures are features that you and your family have contributed to for a very long time. Thank you.

I am pleased to have this opportunity to recognize you for your hard work and abiding commitment to Wyoming. I commend you for being part of Wyoming agriculture for the long haul. Congratulations, again, on receiving the Wyoming Centennial Farm and Ranch Award.

Sincerely,



Matthew H. Mead
Governor

The Call Farm, 1912

William H. and Elvira Call, Platte County

As told by Elvira Call

William Albert Call (Will) was born in Marion County, Kansas in 1873. He married Kate Break in Marion County in 1893. She was born in 1874 in Ontario, Canada.

They came to Wyoming in 1912 with their three sons, Leonard Albert, age 18; Earl Hix, age 17; and Ora, age 16. He filed on the SW ¼ of Section 4 and the NW ¼ of Section 9 in Township 26 North Range 68 West containing 320 acres three miles west of Dwyer, Wyoming.

They built a small log house, a small barn, and a chicken house. They hauled water from a well three miles away for many years until they could drill their own years later. Ora was drafted and killed in World War I in 1918, but he wrote home that summer, "Have you drilled a well yet? I guess you don't need one as long as it rains to fill up the ponds."

In May, 1917, Will Call filed to make notice of intention to make final three year proof on their claims. A final certificate dated July 1917 shows that he has made payment in full for the 320 acres in Sections 4 and 9 of the homestead. A patent dated January 24, 1918, signed by President Woodrow Wilson, does give and grant the 320 acres to Will and Kate Call.

Will purchased 400 acres in Section 8 of Township 26 Range 68 which adjoined his own pasture land. He borrowed \$650 in 1930 for the purchase. The farm increased to 720 acres which was farmed in to wheat, barley, speltz, and they raised hogs and cattle.

Will passed away in June, 1932 and Kate passed away in April, 1935. Their son, Leonard, and his wife, Myrtie, took over running the dry land farm operation. The other son, Earl Hix, moved to Florence, Kansas to find employment in 1934 and made his home there until his death in 1960.



L-R Leonard, Will, Ora, Kate, Earl on Dwyer homestead, 1918



William Call & his prized boar, 1920 or 1928



Trench silo built by Leonard Call, filled with corn and green Russian thistle, photo taken by County Agent for a report, 1932



Silver wedding anniversary, June 2, 1956. L-R Back Bill, Leonard, middle Elvira with baby Connie, Earl, Myrtie: Front Grant, David



Barbara, Earl Call's wife, runs the combine for last wheat harvest, 1987



Last wheat harvest at the Call Farm, Dwyer, 1987

Leonard worked at other employment and Myrtie raised chickens, turkeys, and geese and took in quilting, charging 10 cents a yard for the thread used. The note for the additional 400 acres purchased by Leonard's parents was paid in 1938.

William (Bill) Harry Call, eldest son of Leonard and Myrtie, moved with his wife, Elvira Green Call, to the farm in 1952. He rented the farm ground and also worked at the CF&I Iron Ore Sunrise Mine, and construction on off seasons, even working on the Interstate 25 Highway. His mother, Myrtie, died suddenly in 1960, leaving two young sons, Earl Robert Call, age 14, and David Leonard, age 12.

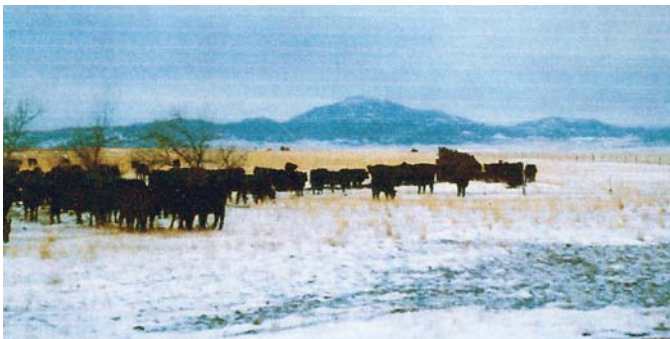
Leonard was 67 years old and so retired to care for his young sons and sold his one-half of the Will Call Estate to Bill, and his Uncle Earl Hix gave up his right to the estate. Bill was able to buy 801 acres in 1963 from Ed and Mary Clark, and in 1972 purchased 1,000 acres of grass land to the west, making the farm total 2,561 acres. The Interstate 25 took out 77 acres, leaving Bill and Elvira with 2,484 acres.

Bill and Elvira raised three children: Grant who died in 1976; Connie Courmier, and Cindy Balzan. They have five grandchildren: Casey James Courmier died in 2011 of cancer; Brady Grant Balzan, the lead draftsman of J.W. Williams Inc.; Chelsea L. Courmier lives and works in Yuma, Arizona; Dr. Jaime A. Balzan Hazen, Optometry; and Lindsey K. Balzan Dersham, graduating in 2013 with a MS at the University of Wyoming; and to date, one great-grandson, Samuel James, son of Casey.

Our family does not want to give up ownership of the farm. It has been free and clear of indebtedness since 1995. Dr. Jaime and her husband, Matt Hazan, purchased the local Vision Center in Wheatland and renamed it the Mud Springs Vision Center after a spring on the farm, in keeping with the honor as a Wyoming Centennial Farm and Ranch recipient.



The William & Elvira Call family



Earl Robert Call's herd & view of Laramie Peak from Bill's home, 1989



Bill & Elvira Call, 2009



Dr. Jaime Balzen Hazen with her new sign for Mud Springs Vision Clinic, 2013



Sen. John Barrasso, Call Family, Gov. Matthew H. Mead, Rep. Cynthia Lummis, and Sen. Mike Enzi

The Cobb Ranch, 1889

The Cobb Family, Carbon County

As told by the Cobb Family

The William and Mary Prosser Morgan family came to America from Wales in 1851. They had five children when they came: Joseph (Joe, who was Tom Cobb's great-grandfather), Dave, Charlie, Mary, and Sarah. When they arrived in America they settled in Mineral Point, Wisconsin. In Mineral Point they had four more children. They were Milcha, Ruth, Tom, and William Jr. In 1863, William traveled out to Denver. He stayed there for a year and then sent for his wife and children. Mary, her sister Hannah, Mary's children Edward and Mary Prosser, and the eight Morgan children came to Colorado in a prairie schooner, drawn by two yoke of oxen. Some of the children walked and drove their milk cows. They met William in Denver and stayed there. In 1865, their last child, Ben Morgan, was born. After Ben was born they moved to a homestead at the Marshall Ranch on Clear Creek (it is now known as Westminster).

At Clear Creek, the kids attended a rural school about a mile from their homestead. Jim Baker (a mountain man and a guide from Wyoming) and his Indian wife, along with their eight children, also lived there. The Morgan and Baker children all attended school together.

Joe Morgan married Margaret (Maggie) Morgan (her maiden name was Morgan also) in 1869. In 1872, the two oldest Morgan brothers, Dave and Joe, came to northwestern Colorado where they thought there would be more opportunities for them. Joe established a trading post east of Craig, Colorado near Elk Head Creek. His only customers were a few trappers and the Ute Indians. He got along well with the Utes. In 1877, they moved to Savery, Wyoming and ranched there.

In 1878 when the Meeker Massacre and Indian uprising was going on, Joe's family moved to Rawlins for safety. They stayed in Rawlins for over a year and during that time two of their sons, George, age nine, and Jona, age one, died of



Joe Morgan



Maggie (Morgan) Morgan



Morgan cabin



Joe Morgan, July 4th

diphtheria within five days of each other. They moved back to Savery and in 1889 Joe bought the John Kelly Ranch, trading horses for it. Joe and Margaret later donated three acres of this land for the Savery School which is now the Little Snake River Museum.

Joe and Margaret were early day pioneers of Snake

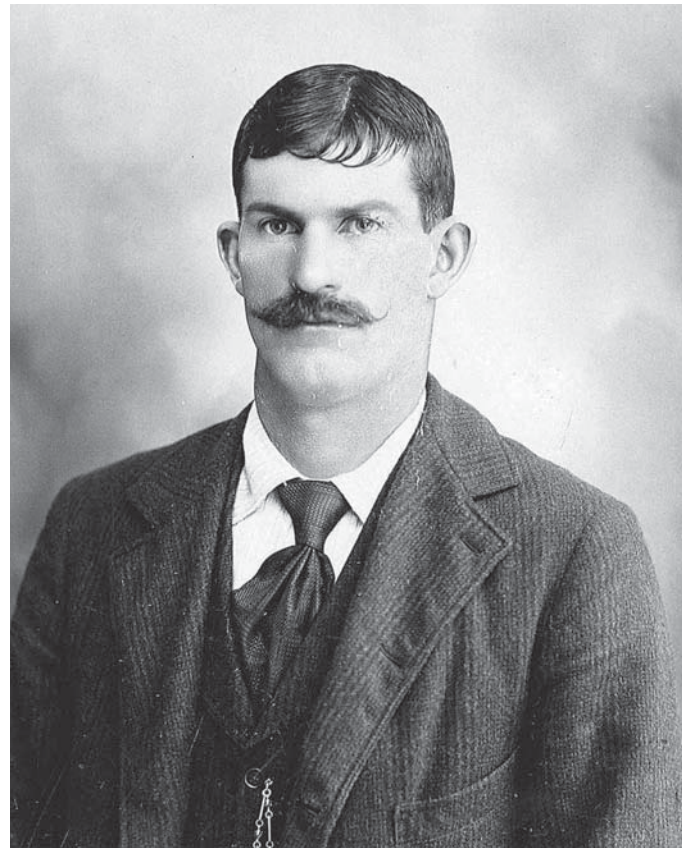
River and lived in the valley for the rest of their lives. All of their 12 children were raised here and all are buried at the Reader Cemetery at Savery.

On May 19, 1900, their fifth child, Jessie Morgan, married Thomas Kilgore. They were the parents of their daughters, Margaret (Anderson), Marie (Cobb), Musetta, and an adopted son, Isaac

(Buster). Musetta died at age two of an unknown illness that also caused the death of several other toddler girls.

Tom and Jessie were a real asset to the Snake River Valley; Tom had migrated from Ireland during the potato famine to the United States when he was seventeen. In 1886, he moved to the Valley and lived with the Alfred McCarger family above Slater, Colorado. He worked at the mines at Hahn's Peak in the summers and carried mail on skis from Slater to Hahn's Peak in the winter. Tom decided to establish himself with land and property. He purchased a small bunch of cattle and pastured them on Battle Mountain. The winter was hard and the loss was heavy so he sold his cattle the next fall and from there on did not attempt to winter cattle without feed.

In 1902, Tom and Jessie purchased land from her Uncle Charlie Morgan. At Savery there was a small log cabin on the banks of Savery Creek which they



Tom Kilgore



Maggie & Joe Morgan



Jessie (Morgan) Kilgore



Old cabin



The Kilgore home & family

lived in. They had a new house built in 1908. Here they raised their family. He gradually increased his cattle herd and bought more land. At one time he owned land up and down the valley. In 1929, during the Depression, he lost \$35,000 at the First State Bank of Baggs where he was a director and about \$5,000 at the Dixon Bank.

Tom was one of the substantial and progressive citizens in the valley. He was one of those who built the first telephone line, opened the first coal banks, established the Savery Store, and was director and heavy subscriber of the First State Bank of Baggs.



Tom Kilgore on horseback

Jessie was also an asset to the community. She furnished a home for many of the schoolteachers and also presented a home away from home for many students who attended Savery School. Jessie also provided a helping hand for many illnesses, catastrophes, and other misfortunes that befell them. She was also very active in the Episcopal Church and Guild.

In 1927, John Clifton Cobb and Marie Kilgore were married and in 1936 they had their only child, a son, John Thomas Cobb. They leased part of the ranch and then in 1946 they purchased part of the family ranch from Tom and Jessie. John used to be very happy if he could “make a hundred” when branding calves in the spring. John and Marie bought several small more pieces of land on upper and lower Savery Creek. They operated the ranch until they turned it over to their son Tom and his wife Rusty.

John Thomas Cobb and Rusena (Rusty) Ellis were married and had three children; Christine Lee in 1957, Cynthia Lynn in 1960, and John (Jack) Russell in 1964.

The ranch now owns what used to be Jim Baker’s



Marie Kilgore graduation



The big house, 1908



John & Marie Cobb home



John & Marie Cobb wedding



Cattle at old cabin



Kilgore barn, 1908



John and Marie, Christmas



John & Marie with kids



John & Tom haying

Homestead. Jim Baker had used excellent judgment in homesteading this tract, most of which did not require irrigation to raise a bumper crop of hay. This is still true today. Jim Baker's two-story log cabin that used to be in our meadow years ago is now at the Savery Museum. Cottonwood trees still stand at the home site.

John Thomas Cobb also bought the Strobridge-Groshart-Hayes place in 1962. It was a great addition to the ranch. In 1994, the family donated the deteriorating two-story log cabin to the Snake River Museum. It was really something to watch it being moved in one piece. The movers said that it was very well made. This was the first two-story log house on Snake River and was quite a showpiece in its time – red velvet curtains and a grand piano.

Christine Lee Cobb married Bob Stocks in 1978. They had three children, Bo, Kody, and Stacy. Bo and his wife Kristin have a little daughter, Katelyn. Kody and his wife Codey Jean have a daughter, Kaylee, and Stacy and her husband Brandon have two sons, Kash and Kase.

Christy is the administrator of the Carbon County Higher Ed program in Baggs. Bo started a construction business building houses; he also has an outfitters business. Kody works with Bo with these and is starting a fishing business on Savery Creek. Stacy works part-time at the Beauty Salon and enjoys staying home raising her two boys.

Cynthia is a third grade teacher in Baggs. She has two sons, Corby who works for General Electric in Nevada, and Brice who works for Bo building houses and guiding hunters. Brice also started his own business, providing snowboarding guides on the local Battle Mountain.

Jack and his wife Diana live in Savery and manage the ranch. Diana works as a Special Ed Para at the school in Baggs. They have three kids, Ashley, Jacquelyn, and Tyson. Ashley currently lives in California. She received her Master's degree from the University of Wyoming. Jacquelyn is currently 17 and a junior at the Little Snake River High School. She has been active in the 4-H and FFA, being an officer in both. She won the 4-H Dress



Tom & Rusty wedding, 1955



Tom & Rusty, kids at church



Tom & Rusty, 50 years



Tom & horses



Last time



Christy on first swather



Tom & Jack



Branding

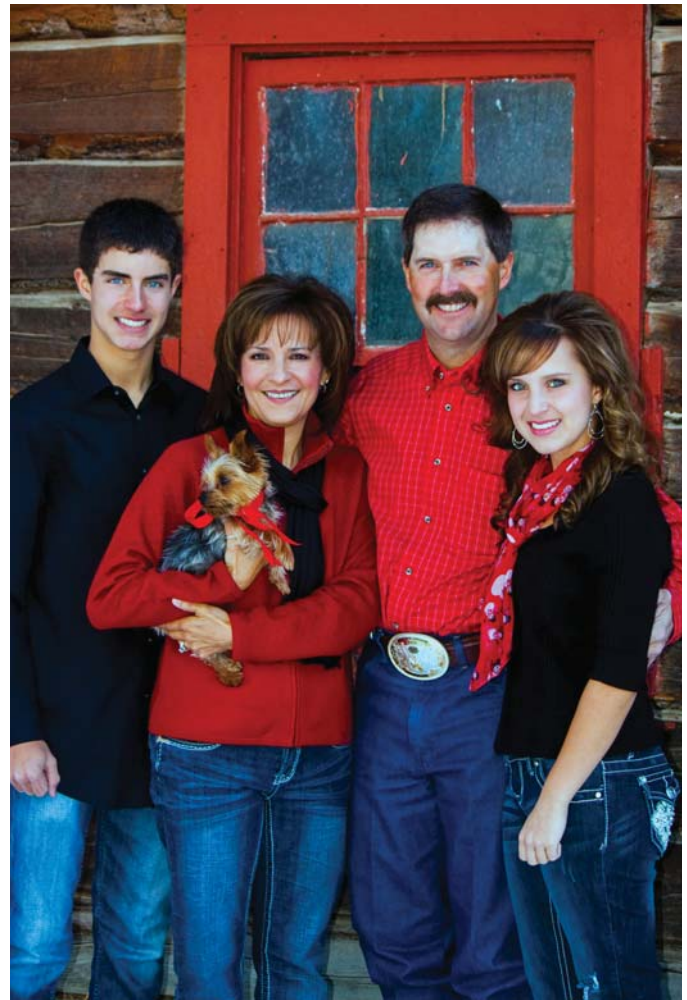


Tom & grandkids branding

Revue at State Fair in 2012. Tyson is 15 and in his freshman year at the Little Snake River High School. He is active in the 4-H and FFA, football, and basketball.

The whole Cobb family pitched in and built the new log cabin up Savery Creek. Bo and Kody are able to use it for their outfitting business. The family also snowmobiles up to the cabin for Christmas and New Year's. Tom and Rusty still live in the two-story Kilgore home. They spend about four months in Lake Havasu, Arizona during the winter. They make it home in time for Tom to help with calving and other spring work and for Rusty to help at the museum. She has been on the board since 1973 when the school district gave it to the community.

The Cobb family is proud to continue the tradition of ranching at Savery. Tom and Rusty are the



Jack Cobb family



Cobb family Deadwood, SD

fourth generation to run the ranch, and now Jack and Diana are the fifth to come up with dreams of continuing on to the sixth, and possibly the seventh, generation in years to come.



Cabin up Savery Creek



Sen. John Barrasso, Gov. Matthew H. Mead, Rep. Cynthia Lummis, Cobb Family, and Sen. Mike Enzi

The Grant Ranch, 1900

The Richard & Mary Grant Family, Converse County

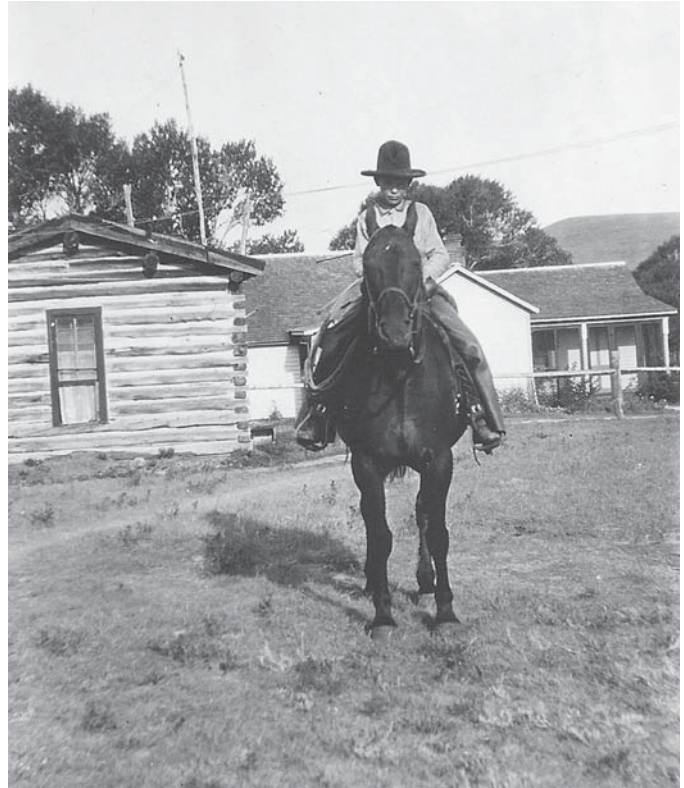
As told by Richard C. Grant Jr.

Charles Willard Grant came to Wyoming in 1892 to ranch with one of his brothers, Ulysses Simpson Grant. Charles worked with and for Ulysses for seven years. During that time he took out a homestead and a desert claim on the north side at the base of Bucks Peak. In 1900, Charles sold his homestead claims to Ulysses and bought the Mart Smith ranch. On May 27, 1903, Charles married Sara Margaret Hiser. On July 9, 1904 in the Boxelder Park area, Frederick Daniel Grant was born and was the only child.

The brothers Ulysses and Charles continued to work together raising cattle and acquiring more land. In 1920 Charles sold part of the Mart Smith place to Ulysses and moved down Boxelder Creek a couple of miles and bought the Ed Smith place. This is where Charles and his son Fred ranched until March 29, 1931 when Charles died of a heart attack.

On June 12, 1928, Fred married Evelyn Wray Stoddard. The two continued to ranch and raise two children, Donna Wray Grant, born November 20, 1934, and Richard Charles Grant, born March 12, 1937. Donna spent most of her life on the ranch with her mother and father and was never married. She has lived in Glenrock for the past 25 years. Richard married Connie Cover in 1959. He then served in the Air Force for four years before returning to the family ranch. They had four children, Richard Charles Grant Jr., Lori Hoyt, Kristy Grant, and Rebecca Wray Grant.

Ranching has always been the main focus of the Grant way of life. In February of 1970, Richard and Connie bought a small ranch closer to Glenrock. Fred and Richard continued to ranch together until March of 1976 when Richard was killed in an auto accident. In 1980, Connie decided that she wanted to sell the lower ranch. It was at this time that I, Richard C. Grant Jr., decided to buy the ranch from her. Through the course of time, my wife Mary and I bought most of the lower ranch from my



A young Fred Grant ready to go to work



Young Fred Grant on horseback



Fred Grant



Fred Grant branding as a young Richard Grant watches



Charles, Sarah, & Fred Grant



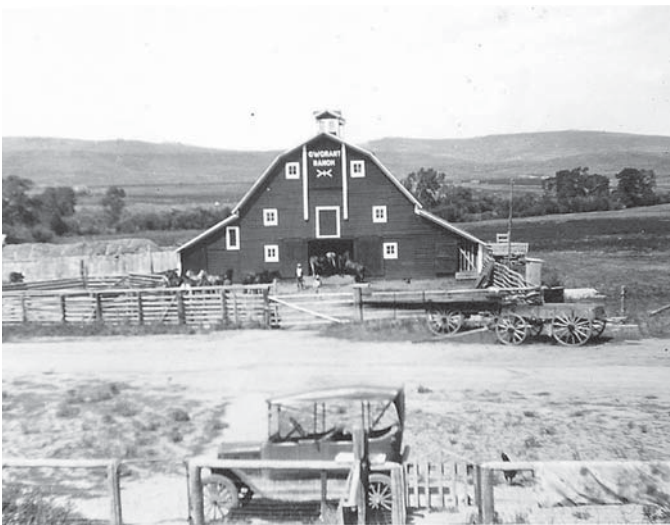
Fred & Evelyn Grant



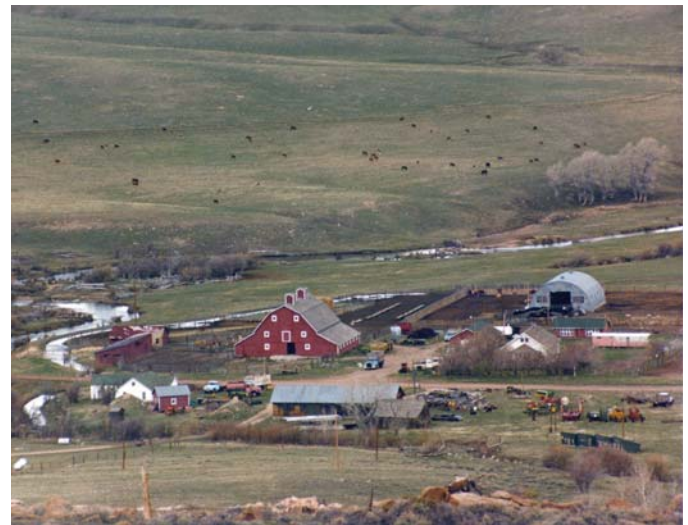
Branding calves with the Double Bootjack brand



The big red barn, 112 years old, started in 1900, finished in 1902



The big red barn in the early years



Overlooking the Grant Ranch in the spring

mother. This is where we live and have raised our three children – Brendon, Andrew, and Whitey. As history repeats itself, we continued to ranch with my grandfather Fred up to the day he died in October 1995. To this day, my oldest son Richard Brendon Grant and I continue to ranch both the upper Grant Ranch and the lower ranch. In all, the Grant family

has endured the test of time for 120 years with five generations calling the Grant Ranch in Boxelder Park our home.

Throughout time the ranch has raised and sold horses, cattle, sheep, pigs, hay, potatoes, eggs, and milk.



Sen. John Barrasso, Grant Family, Gov. Matthew H. Mead, Rep. Cynthia Lummis, and Sen. Mike Enzi



Horseback, L-R, Andrew Grant, Richard C. Grant Jr., Brendon Grant, Jordann Hoyt, trailing cows to mountains

We have a big, red barn that was built starting in 1900 and finished in 1902 at a cost of \$2,000.00.



Grant family, L-R, Brendon 5th generation, Rick 4th generation, Ayden 6th generation, wife Mary, Andrew 5th generation, Whitney 5th generation, little Oakley 6th generation

Mountain Valley Livestock, Inc., 1911

The Sims and Hageman Family, Converse County

As told by Judy Sims Hageman, Tracy Hageman Dilts, and Tiffany Hageman

Mountain Valley Livestock, Inc. and Hageman Sisters Rambouillets originated in Texas with the births of Dr. James H. Sims and his wife, Susan Hardcastle Sims. They had seven children and with the death of Dr. Sims from a horse and buggy accident, Mrs. Sims moved to Douglas, Wyoming with five of her children. Chester (age 17), Albert, and Arthur rode the trains from Texas in 1901 and looked the country over, then sent for the rest of the family. These three brothers worked for the Mountain Valley Sheep Company, owned by O.P. Witt, George F. Goodwin, and George Harry Cross, and purchased the business in 1906.

The sale of the Mountain Valley Sheep Company to the Sims Brothers was completed when they assumed the loans at the First National Bank. In the word of George H. Cross, "It was such a relief to get rid of those 'woolies' that I told them to forget about the interest. The Sims boys were such fine gentlemen, I hated to think they were burdened with those miserable sheep."

1906 ASSETS OF MOUNTAIN VALLEY SHEEP COMPANY

Livestock:

1543 yearling ewes @ \$5.00.....	\$ 7,715.00
3448 two to six year old ewes @ \$4.00 .	13,292.00
1737 lambs @ \$3.00	5,211.00
1738 wethers @ \$4.50	7,821.00
61 buck lambs @ \$3.00.....	183.00
100 old bucks @ \$5.00	500.00
100 young bucks @ \$8.00.....	800.00
9 saddle horses	315.00
1 stallion.....	175.00
10 range mares with colts @ \$30.00....	300.00
<hr/>	
Total Livestock.....	\$36,812.00

Feed and Equipment

2 work teams with harnesses.....	\$600.00
2 sets harnesses	66.65
2 saddles.....	30.00
5 sheep wagons and equipment.....	625.00
1 freight wagon with chains & L bars.....	50.00
1 buckboard.....	40.00
Corn.....	13.00
2 dipping pans	75.00
4 lots in Douglas	300.00
<hr/>	
Total Feed and Equipment	\$1,799.65

Property:

Cost of Corrals on lots in Douglas	\$549.77
Shed & corral north of O.P. Witt's Homestead	50.00
O.P. Witt's Homestead on King Creek	800.00
Shearing corral head of Bed Tick.....	243.70
<hr/>	
Total Property.....	\$1,643.47

TOTAL ASSETS..... \$40,255.12

The Sims boys also ran several hundred head of horses. The sheep and horses were run "on the open range" in addition to some land purchased on the Laramie Plains and on King Creek, south and east of Downey Park. In 1912, when blizzards and loss of livestock forced them out of business, they sold properties including lots in the town of Douglas, a warehouse they built in 1907, land they had purchased, and 4800 head of sheep sold to John Morton for \$5.50 per head. Each of the brothers then went into the ranching business on their own having homesteads in Downey Park and a few miles northeast of Douglas. At one time, Mountain Valley Sheep Company inventory was over 12,000 head. Evidence in old ledgers indicates that in 1907 Rhea

Tillard helped Mountain Valley Sheep Company with shearing and lambing for \$40 per month. Wolves were a continual problem, as were coyotes, bobcats, and mountain lions.



Chester, 1911



Chester Sims around 1912



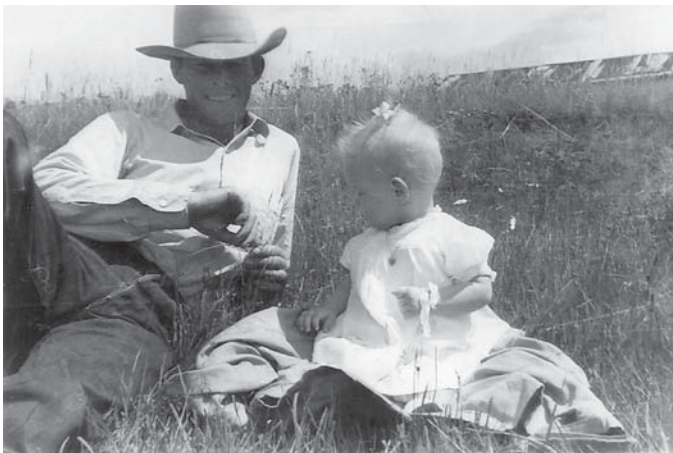
Nelle Sims with Art & George, 1919



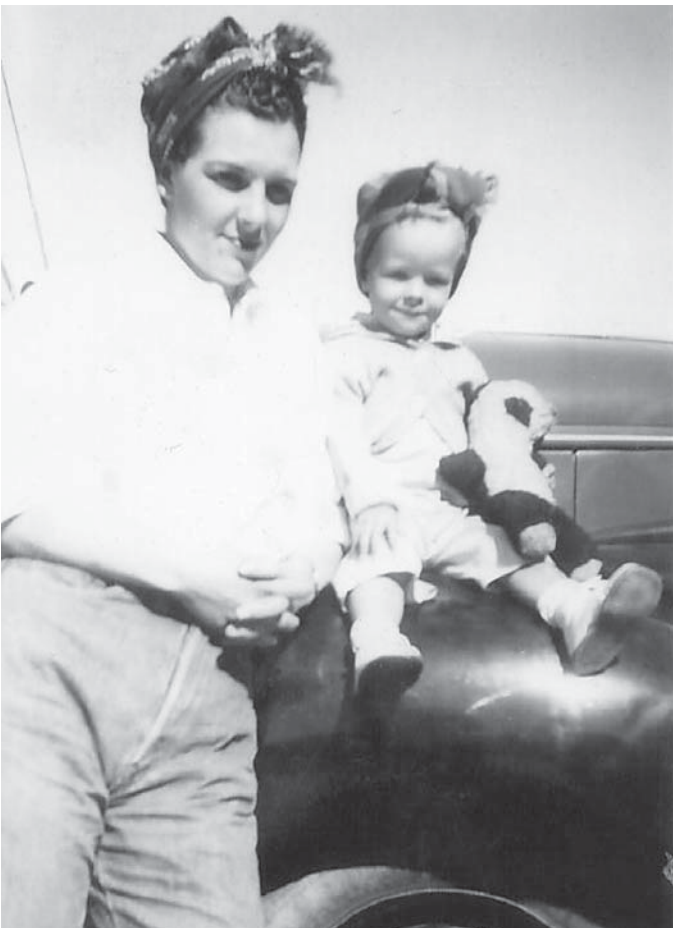
Chester & Nellie Sims original house, ca 1930. Chester sawing wood.



Art & Judy Sims, 1952



Art & Judy Sims, 1943



Hope & Judy Sims, 1944

Chester Arlington Sims (whose family originated in France) married Nelle Jeanette Prill, daughter of Otto G. (son of immigrants from Prussia) and Elizabeth Clifton Prill (whose family came from England to Canada, and to Iowa), at the Episcopal Cathedral in Laramie on June 9, 1911. Chester and Nelle homesteaded in Downey Park south of Douglas in the Laramie Peak Range. Prill Draw in Downey Park is named after her. Her father homesteaded on Sheep Creek on the Laramie Plains. After her father died, his cattle (23) head went to Nelle. Chester and Nelle had two sons, George Chester and Arthur Claude. George was a career military man and Art stayed on the ranch.

The mountain ranch buildings are at the headwaters of Wagonhound Creek at an elevation of 7200 feet. Legend has it that, "Joe Flagother built a cabin and opened an 'oasis' at Rocky Ford Creek in Downey Park and sold liquor to stagecoach passengers, freighters and cowboys". A few miles from Joe's oasis was the Downey Road Ranch (formerly called the Point of Rocks Road Ranch), a popular stop for the stagecoach. In 2010, the Converse County Historical Society placed a rock plaque at the site of the old 1886 Downey Post Office, about ½ mile east of the mountain ranch headquarters. We were fortunate to have three generations there for the ceremony. Evidence of old buildings is still there.

In the years following the disbursement of the Mountain Valley Sheep Company, Albert Sims became associated with A.D. and Jenne Chamberlain and continued to run sheep, while Arthur and Chester chose to run Hereford cattle. The brothers' land was divided into thirds, each one receiving land northeast of Douglas, and in Downey Park. During one very difficult year, Arthur was said to have carried a weed burner on his back, burning the thorns off the cactus to provide feed for his cattle. Most of the brothers' land is now owned or leased by Mountain Valley Livestock.

Art Sims married Hope Ireland and together they leased land and raised Hereford cattle. When he borrowed money to buy his first five cows, Hope was sure they would never get paid for. She was working as a waitress at the Kandy Koop in Douglas and helped Art trap beaver for extra cash.

Art didn't think she was much help as she went to sleep on her horse!! Art worked for Dr. A.L. Hylton for 12 years, and winters were spent east of Douglas, and trailing to the Laramie Plains in the summer. Hope used to say, "Art, you are going to wear the legs right off these animals, trailing them around so much!" During this time, Art participated in the aerial gathering of wild horses some of which he rode himself. Art was a stockman through and through, knew his cattle, and was a man of few words. Hope was his dedicated camptender, trailing up and down the roads for years, with not just "lunches", but delicious meals at every stop. Art was so glad to have a camptender along and not have to sleep under a hay wagon in all kinds of weather with a soggy lunch in his pocket. Hope was an active member of the Episcopal Church in Douglas and was instrumental in getting it placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Hope Hall, the fellowship hall, was named after her. Chester and Nelle lived on the main place northeast of Douglas until ill health forced them to move to town. Chester lived with Art and Hope after Nelle died in 1959 until his death in 1964.

In 1953, Albert Sims sold his sheep to Art and Hope Sims, leasing them the land to run on. This property joined Chester Sims', and Art took over the operation of Chester's cattle with his own, in addition to running the sheep. In the 1960s Art Sims changed the program from selling calves to keep them over as yearlings. In Chester Sims' era, the steers were sold at two years old. Now the calves are weaned the end of October and put into a local feedlot for the winter, and returned to grass pasture in the springs and sold as yearlings. Because of improved genetics and other management factors in the herd, now the yearlings are marketed the first part of August, weighing in excess of 1000 pounds. The lambs are sold off the ewes the end of September. Historically, the calves and lambs were loaded on the trains at the Converse County public stockyards. Now everything is done with semi-trucks. It is always a challenge to outguess "Mother Nature" as to when to plan to take trucks to this elevation. Laramie Peak, which is visible from the winter pastures north of Douglas, has always been considered the "weather bureau".

If it is covered with clouds, it means wind and storms; if clear, it will be a nice day.

Art and Hope had one daughter, Judith Arlington, who married Robert (Bob) Larry Hageman, son of Carl and Marie (Edwards) Hageman from a ranch north of Douglas. In his grade school years Bob went to rural Walker Creek School, and at times he and his brother were the only students. His grandmother, who spoke only German, was the director of the Sunday School at Walker Creek. Bob's mother and Judy's mother were lifelong friends, having roomed together in Douglas when they were in high school. Bob and Judy moved to the main Douglas place in 1972 and started upgrading and making repairs and continued the cow/calf/yearling operation. Mountain Valley Livestock was incorporated in 1974. Art died in 1989 and Hope in 1999. Bob and Judy live in the same house her dad was born in, and together they raised two daughters, Tracy Dilts and Tiffany Hageman. Bob, Judy, and their girls have continued to purchase more property and lease private lands to pursue their love of raising Angus cattle and Rambouillet sheep.

In 1986, Hageman Rambouillets was formed; the girls started showing registered sheep in 4-H, and that project turned into selling Rambouillet rams to commercial and registered breeders. Hageman Sisters has, over the years, acquired numerous awards both at the state and national levels for their sheep and wool exhibits. The commercial sheep herd is essentially a "closed" herd, having brought no outside ewes to the program. Rams are supplied by Hageman Sisters. The cattle and sheep are wintered northeast of Douglas, and summer pasture is in Downey Park. Until recently, the cattle and sheep were trailed through town into the mountains. Progress has hindered that movement, and the livestock are now trucked to the mountains in the spring, and trailed down in the fall when the calves and lambs have been weaned. The trailing is still a viable part of the operation due to the foresight of Chester and his brothers in purchasing small pastures along the route so the animals could water and rest each night.

We introduced llamas as guard animals initially



Steve & Tracy Dilts during shearing



Trailing sheep down from the mountains



Bob Hageman with granddaughter Makayla Porter, 2010



Docking lambs at mountain ranch barn built in 1923



Judy Hageman with granddaughter Makayla Porter

then changed to dogs as our main source of predator control, with occasional aerial hunting and the use of Peruvian shepherders. The dogs are nocturnal which provides better protection. Each night, the sheep return to the same bedground, usually the highest point in the pasture.

Tracy has one daughter, Makayla Porter, who is also a partner in these operations. Makayla is majoring in accounting at Colorado State University and helps when time allows. Tracy (a graduate of the University of Wyoming) is married to Steve Dilts, lives on a ranch 60 north of Douglas, and travels back and forth to help. Together, Steve and Tracy have provided Bob and Judy with four grandchildren. Tiffany (a graduate of Colorado State University) is a working partner on the ranch. Managing the guard dogs is almost a full time job for her. She keeps them all accounted for, well-fed, and in good health.



Downey Park summer range

Bob has been active in 4-H, showing sheep and helping kids, Wyoming Wool Growers, Wyoming Stock Growers, was on the Wyoming Livestock Board for six years, the Converse County FSA Board for 12 years, on the Converse County Weed & Pest Board, the Converse County Predator Board, and just recently retired after 30 years as manager of the Wyoming State Ram Sale. Over the years, Bob has engineered several Wyoming State Fair Championships with Angus heifers.

Judy has the love of the land in her soul and has been, along with her husband, a driving force to keep this dream alive. She was also a 4-H leader, was active in High School Rodeo when the association was new, riding horses that belonged to the Tillard family, was Wyoming High School Rodeo Queen in 1959, and Miss Rodeo Wyoming in 1960.

The Sims and Hageman families continue to enjoy the benefits of “having everyone close” to share in the day to day activities and decisions, and upon reflecting over the last 100 plus years would, in the words of Chris LeDoux, like to “Thank the Cowboys for the Ride”.

INTERESTING FACTS:

Wool Prices:

1911 – 13 cents per pound

1912 - 18 cents per pound

Sheep prices:

1907 – ewes \$4.25 (shipped to the Omaha market)

1911 - ewes \$4.50

lambs \$2.50

bucks \$12.00

A 1906 sample of cattle prices were as follows:

20 cows	22,210 @ 2.75	610.77
(\$30.54 per head)		

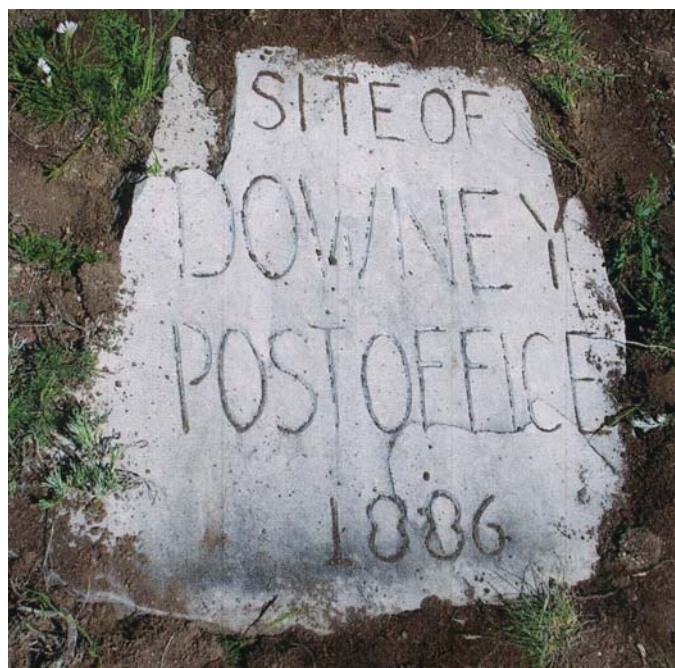
34 steers	29,230 @ 3.80	1490.74
(\$43.85 per head)		



Tracy Dilts, Makayla Porter, & Tiffany Hageman, champion fleeces at the National Rambouillet Show, 2004



Tiffany Hageman with guard dogs, 2011



Downey Post Office marker, 2010



Sen. John Barrasso, Gov. Matthew H. Mead, Sims & Hageman Families, Rep. Cynthia Lummis, and Sen. Mike Enzi

The Hejde Ranch, 1891

Chester F. & D. Evelyn Hejde Family, Crook County

As told by Chester Hejde with Wanda (Hejde) Burget

Janes A. Hejde was born in Billinge (Parish), Malmöhus Län (County) or Skåne Län, Sweden on May 21, 1864. He immigrated to America in 1883 on the passenger ship Elbe at the age of 19. Janes and his brother Carl (17) came to America as laborers in bondage to a gentleman named John Pearson. They worked out the term of bondage at the Pearson Sawmill west of Aladdin, Wyoming.

The original Hejde Ranch holdings were acquired under the auspices of the Land Act of 1820 and the Homestead Act of 1862 and were expanded through subsequent land purchases. When Janes had fulfilled the terms of bondage with John Pearson, he filed for three separate parcels of land on Hay Creek near Aladdin (1891 – 1902). Janes (27) married Hamina (Johanna) Kristina Mortensen (23) on September 15, 1891. Johanna's sister, Anna Delcher, also filed on a parcel of land in 1905 which is included in the ranch acreage today.

Johanna and Janes had 7 children. Francis (Red), the youngest child and youngest son was given the responsibility of running the ranch. He completed school through the 8th grade and then spent a year at a business school in Nebraska. He married Virginia (Virgie) Zimmerschied on September 12, 1927, the year following Janes' death. Francis and Virginia had four children. Chester, their oldest son, and his wife Evelyn are the current owners of the Hejde Ranch.

Chester was born at the beginning of the "Dirty 30s". At that time, the ranch supported a herd of Hereford cattle. Prior to the 1930s, Francis had a grazing permit for approximately 100 head of cattle with the U.S. Forest Service. This decreased to 45 head after the 1930s. Francis used some of the Hereford cows that produced "*a heck of a lot of milk*" to provide milk and cream for the family. He eventually bought a herd of 10 to 12 milking shorthorns from a nearby neighbor, Lewis Ewing,



Janes Mortensen & Johanna Kristina Hejde



Original homestead site



Francis (Red) & Virginia (Virgie) Hejde



Christmas card



Artist's rendering of house



Gracious space

when he decided to sell out and move to Sundance, Wyoming in 1933. Chester noted, *"Dad crossed those cattle with Herefords and we had some darn good cows. Even back then he was getting 500 – 600 pound calves out of them."*

Hogs and chickens were raised to sustain Francis' family as well as the extended Hejde family living in the Aladdin area. Chester recalled that there were one or two big days a year that the whole family would get together to butcher the hogs.

Dry land farming of small grains (wheat and barley) and hay made up the crops originally grown on the ranch and that practice continues today. Chester remembered only one crop that came off the ranch during the 1930s. The drastic economic conditions of the time led Francis to seek outside employment to help sustain his family and the ranch. He ran for the position of Crook County Clerk in 1935 and began his first term in office in 1936. Francis and Virginia served as Clerk and Deputy Clerk for 38 years until his death in 1974. He ran the ranch with hired help and his mother, Johanna continued to live on the ranch for several years.

Although times were hard, baseball games were a regular pastime for Chester in his early years on the ranch. *"Every Sunday in the summertime, the (Aladdin) team played baseball and we went. They were in the Black Hills League and played Rapid City, Belle Fourche, Deadwood, Lead, Sturgis. Every little podunk place had a team. Families brought picnic lunches and gathered halfway around the baseball field and that's how they got their visiting in."* The Old Settler's Picnic held in mid-June each year at the Devils Tower was another big event that everyone attended from miles around.

Chester attended the University of Wyoming from 1948 through 1951, joined the Army from 1952 – 1954. He married Dorothy (Evelyn) Engelhaupt (Sundance, WY) in June of 1955 and finished his degree in Animal Husbandry at the University of Wyoming in 1956. He initiated programs to improve the beef herd on the Hejde ranch and also established a small dairy herd of Jersey cattle, individuals of which won championship recognition at the local Crook County Fair. He took classes in



Hejde Ranch panoramas



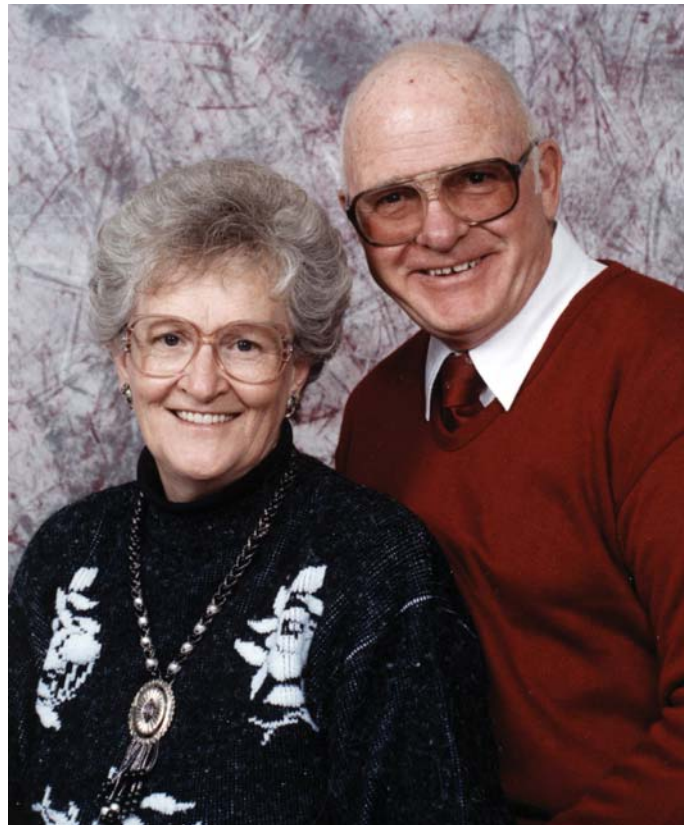
Lillybelle & her calf



Feeding time



Chester (tuba) & Black Hills Jazz Band



Chester & Evelyn Hejde

Fort Collins, Colorado and with Curtis Breeding Service in Cary, Illinois, and was one of the first people to use and promote AI in northeastern Wyoming.

Chester is an accomplished musician. He played tuba in the University of Wyoming Marching Band, the 65th Army Band out of Fort Bliss, Texas, attended the Navy School of Music in Washington DC during his time in the Army, played for area dances with a group of local musicians called the “Aladdin Offbeats” and most recently played for many years as a member of the Black Hills Jazz Band. At the end of his tour of duty in the army, Chester auditioned with the Ringling Brothers Circus Band and was considering their offer when the call came from home to come back and take over responsibilities with the ranch. Although music was then and continues to be a large part of his life, he remembers his thought at the time, *“I couldn’t see any further than wanting to ranch!”*

Beginning in 1955, Chester and Evelyn lived on and later purchased the Orin Reddinger place adjoining and thereby extending the original Hejde Ranch.

They own and manage the combined properties today. As the adage goes, “the sign of a successful rancher is one with a wife that works in town”. Evelyn worked for 31 years for the U.S. Department of Agriculture – Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service at the Sundance Office and served on the County Committee an additional 9 years. Her contributions to the ranch have always been critical to its continuing success.

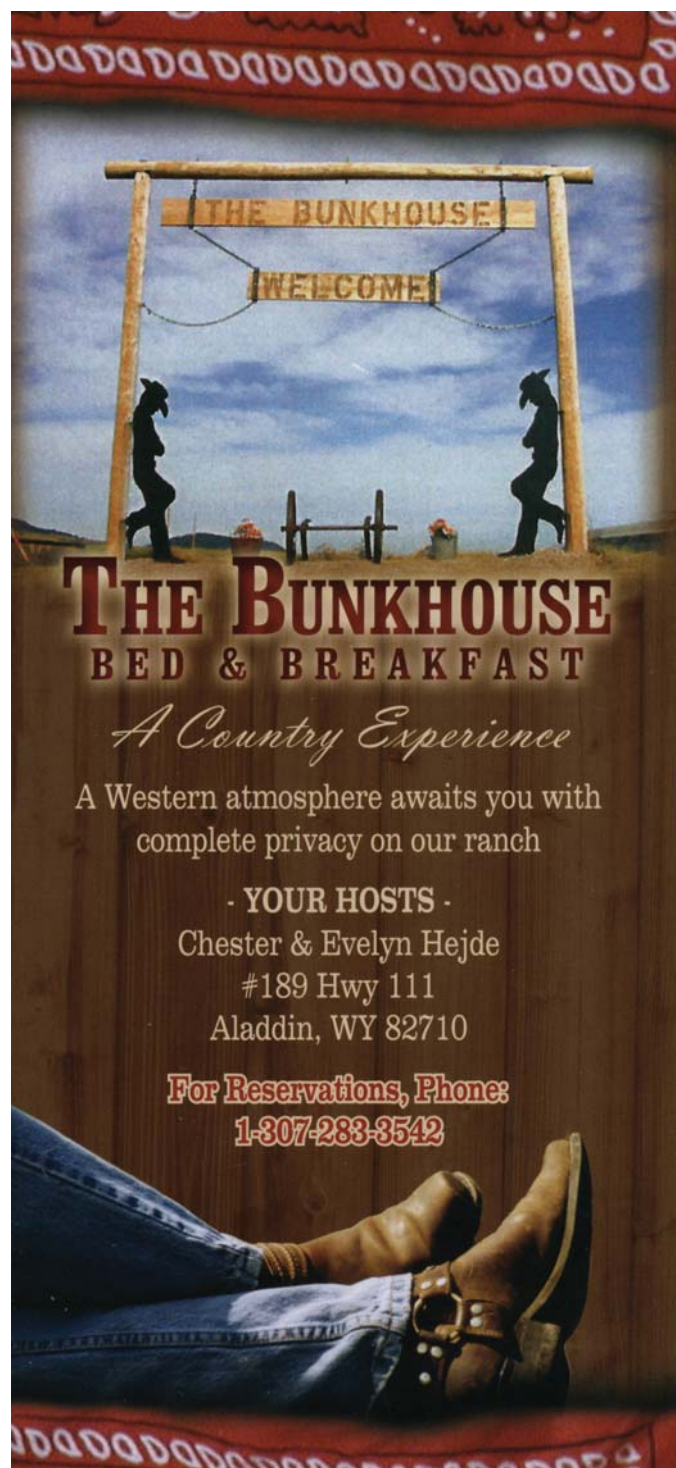
Chester and Evelyn also diversified the ranch operation by providing ranch recreation opportunities and they play an active role in advancing tourism and community development in northeastern Wyoming. Chester has been a hunting outfitter and guide since 1956 and they built a bed and breakfast – The Bunkhouse – in 1995. The décor of the Bunkhouse features vintage family furniture and many examples of Evelyn’s beautiful handiwork and mastery with the needle. Evelyn has served on the Crook County Promotion and Museum Boards and is a member of the Crook County Cattlewomen. They both were instrumental in helping to organize the Crook County Heritage Association, the mission of which is to preserve Crook County history. One of the Association’s first priorities was to renovate the historical school in Sundance known as “Old Stoney” and Chester and Evelyn are very involved in this project which is currently ongoing.

Chester and Evelyn’s interest and contributions to conserving local history is well placed as the Hejde ranch plays a role in the history of the settlement of the West. General George A. Custer explored the Black Hills in 1874 and established camp July 20 of that year on an area that is part of the present day ranch. William Illingsworth (photographer with Custer’s 1874 Expedition) took photos of the surroundings from a location on the ranch known locally as “Red Hill”. His photo point has been relocated in recent times and allows an interesting comparison of the landscape as it was then to what it is today. Custer’s Trail crosses the ranch from north to south along the bases of Little Table and Table Mountains.

With their old fashioned legacy of hard work, endless energy, open hearts, and love of history



The Bunkhouse B&B





Sen. John Barrasso, Chester & Evelyn Hejde Family, Gov. Matthew H. Mead, Rep. Cynthia Lummis, and Sen. Mike Enzi



Chester Hejde - Centennial Ranch Celebration, August 2012



Evelyn Hejde - Centennial Ranch Celebration, August 2012

and the land, Chester and Evelyn have successfully preserved the efforts of their ancestors and moved their ranching operation forward so that their family will be well equipped to undertake a second century of continuous operation.

The LEO Ranch, 1901

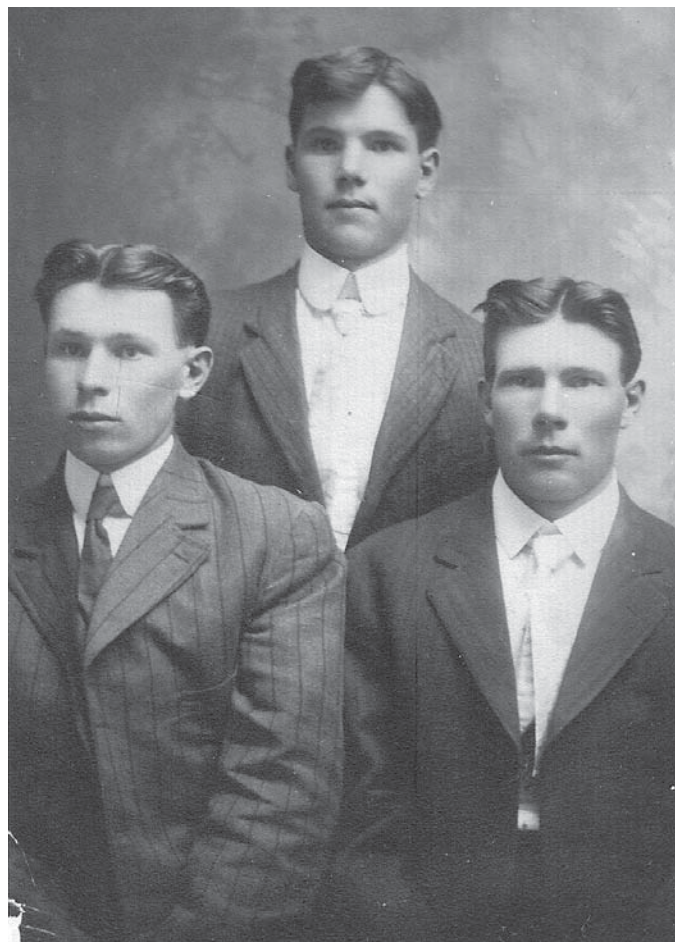
The Hollcroft Family, Johnson County

As told by Marilyn Hollcroft Vercimak

Early in our country's history, Thomas Jefferson's vision for the nation was based on a belief in the individual owning a farm. He believed democracy would be protected and would thrive as a result of families owning land on which they would be independent, free, and self-supporting. The Hollcrofts, like many others, have followed that dream.

The Hollcrofts are descended from a long line of patriotic, agricultural, risk-taking Americans. The first of our family in the United States was a John Hollcroft, a patriot in the Revolutionary War. He was in agriculture as were his descendants down through Leo Marion Hollcroft. They began on the east coast and gradually moved west. Samuel Tilden Hollcroft came to Wyoming from Missouri, looking at the land here as an opportunity to be independent, raise a family, and live a good life. He left plentiful rainfall and came to a remote area and an arid climate in search of his dream.

Samuel Tilden was born 5 August 1876 to Omer Pashe and Sarah Finer Plumlee Hollcroft, near Kirksville in Adair County, Missouri. Like their ancestors, the Hollcrofts were farmers. Called Tilden by most, Samuel was the first of 13 children. Tilden left Missouri, came to Wyoming before the turn of the century, and worked as a ranch hand for several ranchers. He came to the Arvada area and worked on the Burlington Railroad for a short time. However, homesteading was his dream. During the time he was working for the railroad and ranchers, in late 1900, a man known as "Arapahoe Brown", Andrew Stainaker Brown, formerly of Buffalo, filed to prove up on a fertile piece of ground. He filed on the meadows on the east side of Powder River, 11 miles south of Arvada, Wyoming in Johnson County. In early 1901, two of his "friends" shot him, burning his body on the woodpile. Since his demise ended his ability to homestead, it became available to others. Tilden purchased some of Rap's equipment from his estate sale and filed on the same



Hollcroft brothers Owen, Herbert, & Samuel Tilden



Hollcroft cabin



Delbert, Ruby, & Leo



former Rap Brown cabin where Hollcroft kids were born

land soon after. He bought a bay horse, a wagon, and “plunder”.

Rap had built a cabin using logs from the trees in the meadow. Tilden utilized the cabin and made improvements. He still worked for other ranchers for about nine years to subsidize his place. During this time, he worked for the Spear Ranch on the early cattle roundups in the area.

In 1910 Tilden went back to Missouri to a corn-husking social and met Goldie Ethel Phillips. She was the oldest of four children in a fatherless family. Evidently outgoing, friendly Tilden and extremely shy, but determined, Goldie (born 18 November 1895) made a great impression on each other because in December of that same year they married and in early 1911 he brought her out to his homestead. When they arrived in Arvada, they stayed at the Stead Hotel for a few days before making their way to the ranch via horse and wagon.

Tilden and Goldie had three children: Ruby Mae – 1912, Delbert Lee – 1913, and Leo Marion – 1915. The day Leo was born a hail storm totally destroyed the garden, crops, and livestock grass. As the family grew, they added additional space on to the cabin and created a home. Their home had a dirt basement under it. For some reason, Goldie was always afraid to go down there. She told of wedging a knife between the door and the frame so no one could come up, nor could she or the children go down there. It is believed that Rap Brown had a whiskey still in that basement.

With an eye towards his children’s future, Tilden and Goldie were instrumental in establishing one of the first schools in that community. It was on Leiter land at Schoolhouse Hill, about 10 miles south of Arvada on the west side of Powder River. Tilden, George Jewell, and other neighbors built it. Mrs. Jewell was the first teacher. The children had to cross Powder River twice a day to attend school. At some times of the year, that was a treacherous experience. Later they established and attended the Hollcroft School where Maggie Knudson taught. At one time, Leo attended two years of school at the Spear Ranch with Mrs. Lillian Kendrick as teacher.

In 1914, Tilden was appointed Johnson County Deputy Assessor. For some years he made his rounds and then delivered reports to Buffalo on horseback. That job and an election judge position not only brought in a little more money to the growing family, but those positions matched his outgoing, friendly personality, gave him the opportunity to meet many people, and helped create many new friendships.

When their son, Leo, was four years old, he was bitten on the foot by a rattlesnake. His Uncle Charlie Phillips, who lived nearby, performed the accepted cuts on the bite. After cutting open a live chicken, he inserted Leo's foot into the body cavity of the chicken. It worked to pull out some poison. At the time, the only vehicle on the east side of Powder River was owned by Spencer K. Smith. Spencer and his wife drove Leo and his mother to Arvada to see the lady doctor. They stayed in the Stead Hotel for several days while he recuperated.

Life on the homestead was not easy, as borne out by the number of families who called it quits. No rain, hailstorms, floods, snowstorms, grasshoppers, and searing heat made it difficult to succeed. The farmers/ranchers knew they wouldn't become rich but they'd be free and independent and were hopeful. During the 1920s, it became worse. It was no longer just the weather. Wyoming was suffering an agricultural depression. That meant their products sold for little but their equipment, feed, and seed purchases were high.

In 1923, Powder River flooded. Powder River and its meadows have no rocks in them, making it possible during high water for the river to cut through meadows and move quickly. Because their home was in the meadows, it was suddenly in danger as were all their possessions. With minimal time, Goldie managed to drag the stove out to be loaded in the wagon while Tilden moved the livestock. That was all they managed to save. They had a hovel on higher ground, the bench. Regardless of the condition of the building, they moved in, glad to have a place out of the elements.

Goldie and Tilden had relatives join them in search of their own dreams. One of Tilden's younger



Leo's amazing Boston bride, Claire



Life is different here than back east



Leo as a baby



A cabin Leo built at age 14

brothers came out to Crook County and ultimately to the Powder River area to homestead. His effort to prove up on a homestead on the west side of the river was not a success. So he gave the logs of his cabin to Tilden. Goldie spoke of the challenge of floating them across the river, from west to east. Goldie's mother, Dora Phillips Sibole, and her brother, Clarence Phillips, proved up on homesteads nearby. Goldie's cousin, Ellen Bybee, attempted to prove up but just wasn't able to finish. Homesteading was a very difficult challenge.

In late May of 1926, Tilden became ill. After nine days Goldie took him to the Sheridan Hospital against his wishes. On the way he insisted that if he went into the hospital he'd never come out again. Five days later Tilden died of Rocky Mountain Spotted (Tick) Fever. Goldie was absolutely bereft with grief. Her life with Tilden was the best she had ever had. He loved her, treated her with great kindness and respect, and provided the security and support she had never had. Unexpectedly, she was alone with three children to care for and a ranch to maintain in an agricultural economic depression and through climate changes.

Goldie went to work cooking for area ranches while the three children took a sheep wagon to the hills. At the ages of 11, 12, and 13 they lived in the hills without an adult in the sheep wagon and herded the sheep. With no adult around, they were responsible for everything: cooking, protection of the sheep, movement for more grass, laundry, and anything else that occurred on a daily basis. Later, Leo and Delbert worked for other ranchers in the area.

Life on a homestead was difficult enough for an entire family but when the man of the family is gone, every difficulty is magnified. Goldie struggled for many years to maintain and keep the great treasure that she and Tilden had earned. The stock market crash and the drought added to her difficult times. Money was scarce but hard work, frugal management, and determination meant that she and the children kept the ranch.

Eventually, Goldie met and married Jose (Joe) Otaegui in July of 1936. Joe had come to the United States from a Basque province in Spain to



Known to many in the area as Hollcroft's Peak



Leo Hollcroft



Ranch house



Leo with cows

herd sheep for the Esponda Ranch. She and Joe ran sheep on her ranch. From 1939 to 1941, Goldie bought: the Francis Alsworth place (formerly the Frank V. Moore Ranch), the Jack Lindsay place (formerly the Thad Hale Ranch and Ike Stott Ranch), a portion of the Leiter Estate Place, the Clarence Phillips homestead, Dora Phillips Sibole's place, and part of the Spencer Smith Ranch, which included the Double V Ranch buildings. Many exciting dances and socials were held there...some resulting in fights.

While Goldie was running the ranch, Leo served in the Navy from 1937-1945. During his time in the Navy, he frequented the USO in Boston where he was stationed. Each time he came to port, he would see a pretty, young, Irish girl. Her job was to make sure the sailors were involved in the activities and were entertained. After four years of courting, they married June 25, 1944 in Allston, Massachusetts. In 1945, Leo and Claire welcomed their son, Leo Junior, at the Chelsea Naval Hospital. Leo Senior was unable to be there when his son was born because he was in the Pacific on a ship.

Once Leo got out of the Navy, he brought Claire to Wyoming in 1946. With a young baby and away from all the amenities of the big city that she knew, Claire adapted and learned a new way of life. With their year-old baby, they lived on the ranch where she had no running water, no electricity, and only a very old Chevy to travel on poor, unimproved roads. Their "house" was an old one-room schoolhouse.

They worked briefly for Goldie on the ranch and then moved to Worland to work in the oilfields for Pure Oil. Daughter Marilyn Anne was born there. Within a short time, they had the opportunity to homestead a farm on Heart Mountain in Park County. Daughters Carol Marie and Kathleen Anne were born in Powell.

In 1959, Leo and Claire bought half the ranch from Goldie, and his brother, Delbert, and wife, Maureen, bought the other half. For ten years, while still farming in Powell, Leo and his family traveled back and forth to the ranch to operate it. It was 273 miles one way.

The living conditions on the ranch hadn't improved much. They had electricity but the house was a dilapidated, old portion of a mortuary from Gillette. It had two very small rooms that accommodated only a kitchen table and chairs, a warm morning stove, and two beds. The "house" was about 12 feet by 12 feet. It was extremely hard to control heat during the winter sometimes leading to sleepless nights. The only running water was what we carried from the well to the house by buckets. We washed the laundry in an old Maytag washer and then we'd hang everything on the fence to dry. The crawl space under the house was inhabited by the largest bull snake you've ever seen. He always seemed to show up when we least expected to see him. The roads hadn't improved at all. Once again, if there was any precipitation the road was impassable. That meant we often had to cross the river in a boat, on foot, or on horseback if the river wasn't too high, to get to the road on the west side of the river. In muddy weather it was common to cross the river, change into good clothes behind sagebrush, and go to town or to church. Of course, we had to change back into old clothes by that sagebrush so we could cross the river again to get to the house.

After some years, Leo and Claire purchased the other half of the ranch from Delbert and Maureen.

In 1967, the Leo Hollcroft family moved from the farm in Park County to the ranch in Johnson County to live full time. The ranch, on the east side of Powder River, was so isolated and had such poor roads the family maintained a house in Buffalo in order to send the youngest two to school.

Every year the family encountered problems because the roads were impassable if there was any precipitation. The long-ago established road seemed to follow under the bluffs. That meant rain affected it but also any draw that ran snowmelt runoff or heavy rain runoff made the road impassable for long periods of time. Getting food in and out or people in and out was extremely difficult. Emergencies were a major concern. So Leo, ever the ultimate problem-solver, set about building a 300 foot suspension bridge. He knew the highway department had even had problems keeping a bridge in the river, but he studied the river



Sen. John Barrasso, Hollcroft Family, Gov. Matthew H. Mead, Rep. Cynthia Lummis, and Sen. Mike Enzi

that he had known since he was a kid. He decided it could be done. He asked engineers for their ideas but their ideas consisted of...it won't work. At the age of 70, Leo and Claire, family, and some hired help, built the bridge and it is still there in 2013. It is great as a foot bridge and will handle a four-wheeler. Now you can get food and supplies in and people in and out.

Leo died in January of 2005 after a full life of doing exactly what he loved! He always said that if you take good care of the land and your livestock, they will take care of you. He always believed that when you do something, you do it well. He left behind

a legacy consisting of a strong work ethic and a humble attitude.

Claire Hollcroft and family are operating the ranch. Claire always regretted leaving her parents behind in Boston but she never regretted coming to Wyoming. She never wanted to move back to Boston. Claire became totally immersed in farm and ranch life, enjoying the connection to nature, the sunsets, the animals, and the peace and quiet.

The LEO Ranch is one of the few ranches in the Powder River area that is still in the same name as the original patent holder.

Fancher Inc., 1895

The Fancher/Kontour Family, Platte County



Sen. John Barrasso, Fancher/Kontour Family, Gov. Matthew H. Mead, Rep. Cynthia Lummis, and Sen. Mike Enzi

The Kruse Ranch, 1912

The Kruse Family, Niobrara County

As told by the Kruse Family

William H. (Bill) Kruse was born August 27, 1891 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to Von Wilhelm and Pauline Ebert Kruse. He was the oldest of three children. While still a small boy, he moved with his mother and some of her family to Ardmore, South Dakota. His boyhood was spent at Ardmore with his mother and stepfather, Jake Forster, on a homestead. During this period, he went to school and helped his stepfather build dykes with a slip and teams of horses.

At the age of 16, Bill and a friend left home and headed north on horseback to Montana to make their living as cowboys. Bill wintered on ranches and some years returned to Ardmore to spend the winter with his uncles, the Eberts.

In 1911, while riding south from Montana, he ran into the Shaw roundup wagon. Because his horse was lame, he hit the foreman up for a job. He was told he could have a job if he could ride the string of horses that one cowboy couldn't. He tried, hoping to last long enough to give his horses a rest. He was able to ride the horses and stayed all summer and fall. In the fall, the roundup gathered the beef to be shipped, and moved to Lost Springs, Wyoming to load them on the train. They started that night with temperatures falling to zero or below with snow and wind. During the night, the cook tent blew apart so the cowboys went into town the next morning to the saloon. They had butchered a beef the day before which they took in and traded for food, a warm place to stay, and whiskey. Bill remembered the day well as it was the 11th day of the 11th month of the 11th year.

Bill spent the winter on Big Lightning Creek with a friend, Ike (Sourdough Ike) Baker. He had a cabin on his homestead which was later purchased by the Sides family. They had very few groceries except for a hundred pounds of Navy beans. It was a long, hard winter with very little grass or feed for the horses so they were forced to cut cottonwood trees



Von Wilhelm, Pauline, Bill, & Pauline Kruse, 1898

so the horses could eat the twigs and bark to survive in the late winter. The men survived on boiled beans, three meals a day, until spring. They were glad to see the snow go off after the hard winter of 1911-12 so they could get out and go back to work.

Bill went up the creek from Sourdough's Ike's and filed on his own homestead in 1912. That fall, after the roundup, he fenced his homestead by cutting cottonwood posts on the creek and dragging them up with his saddle horse. He got enough used wire from some of the drift fences that the government had forced Richards and Comstock (of the 77 Ranch) and Jake Mills to tear out because they were fencing government land. He wintered on the creek in a sheep wagon and at times thought he would freeze to death before he could get up and build

a fire in the stove. During that winter, he built a two-room house on his homestead. The following fall, he saved enough wages to buy supplies. He borrowed a team and wagon from a neighbor, Charley Wright, to go to Lusk and buy groceries, lumber, doors, and windows to finish his cabin. The only tools he had were a cross cut saw, axe, and hammer. He spent many evenings with a pocket knife, fitting the latches into the doors.

Shortly after leaving Ardmore, South Dakota, Bill had borrowed money in Crawford, Nebraska and bought some Percheron horses which he turned onto the open range. After he acquired his homestead, he traded some of those horses for a few cows.

Jennie Lynn Flores was born in Belle Plain, Texas on October 27, 1880 to James Peter Flores and Georgianne Ricketts Flores, the sixth of seven children. James Peter (J.P.) Flores was a Confederate soldier and returned to Texas to join the cattle drives, ranch, and in later years become a lawman. The family moved north to Amarillo, Texas where J.P. was a bodyguard for the man who started the town of Amarillo. Jennie attended the first school there which was located in a tent. The Flores family had the first house built in the area, a one-room board house. J.P. ranched with his brother-in-law, Clabe Merchant, and later on his own. Jennie learned the millinery and dress-making trade. When two of her brothers moved north to Billings, Montana and later to Sheridan, Wyoming, she moved with them to ply her trades in those towns.

When her brother, A. D. Flores, sold his interest in a bar in Sheridan and bought a ranch on the Cheyenne River west of Newcastle, Wyoming, Jennie moved with him, filing on her own homestead. She met Bill Kruse at her brother's ranch and they were married in 1917 in Thermopolis.

In March 1918, a son, A.D. Flores, was born at the Kruse ranch on Lightning Creek. After a telephone call from the Rochelle Ranch, a doctor, accompanied by Frank DeCastro, made the trip from Lusk to care for mother and baby.

Later that spring, Bill went to Newcastle to receive



Charley Wright with the last grey wolf killed NW of ranch, 1924

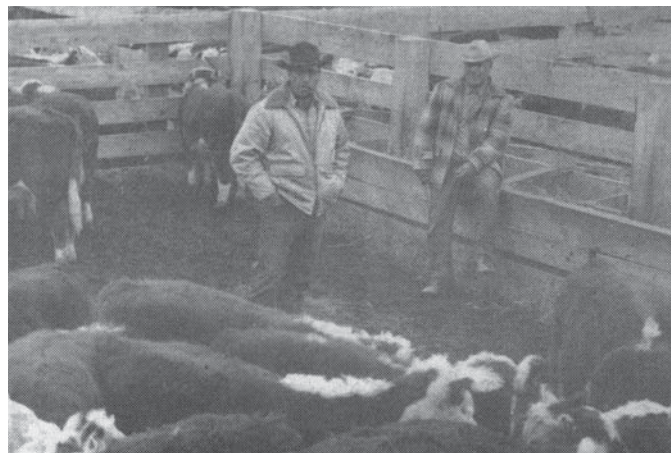


Jennie Linn Flores Kruse

a bunch of southern steers which he had purchased. He trailed them toward home and finally turned them loose on the open range on Cow Creek; however, the water had dried up until it was black in color from the mud. That fall, he gathered as many of the cattle as he could find after a dry summer and took them home. He purchased hay at one



A.D. Kruse and A.D. Flores



A.D. & Bill Kruse, 1958



Bill & A.D. Kruse



A.D. Kruse and Brownie, 1948

hundred dollars a ton, delivered, and cottonseed cake at one hundred and fifty dollars a ton but they could only be trucked within four miles of the ranch because of the snow. It had to be hauled the rest of the way with a team and wagon. Their cattle were starving but they smelled the slough grass hay from Nebraska, they would just turn and walk away.

The steers purchased were run until they were four years old and topped the market the day of the sale but lacked ten dollars a head of the initial cost for Bill.

Kruse cattle were run on the open range until it disappeared in the early 1920s, and then homesteads were leased for pasture.

In 1927, Charley Wright's ranch was purchased. Charley went to Bill and Jennie Kruse and asked

what they could give him for the ranch. They told him they couldn't give as much as the big ranches could so he'd have to sell to one of them. Charley said he wasn't asking them who he should sell the ranch to, but instead, "how much they could give him for it." A deal was made that greatly increased the Kruse ranch but then the Depression hit and Bill and Jennie couldn't make the payments on the Wright purchase. However, Charley told them to pay what they could. He said, "the Depression won't last forever and when it breaks you can catch up on the payments."

When Bill and Jennie married, they traded titles on their homesteads. They lived on Bill's original homestead on Lightning Creek and Bill mortgaged Jennie's original homestead on the Cheyenne River. Bill's cows were also mortgaged but Jennie never signed the mortgages and continued to run her cattle under her brand. During the Depression, the bank foreclosed on Bill's notes but Bill and Jennie still had the homestead on Lightning Creek and her cattle to continue ranching.

Their only child, A.D. Flores Kruse, attended grade school and the first two years of high school in Lance Creek. He then graduated in 1936 from Lusk High School and worked his way through the University of Wyoming, graduating in 1940.

He worked for the Farm Home Administration in Gillette and then Lander until he was drafted and entered into the army on the 28th of October, 1942 and served until he was released on the 13th of February, 1946. A.D. was selected for Officer



Hazel and A.D. Kruse wedding day (with Hazel's parents)



Jim Kruse, 1950



Hazel Kruse, Kathy Kruse, 1948



Jennie Kruse, Kathy Kruse

Candidate School and commissioned as a Second Lieutenant. He was then assigned to the 133rd Engineer Combat Battalion. Lt. Kruse landed on Normandy Beach immediately after the initial assault and began clearing land mines so General George Patton's tanks could spearhead the attack. He fought across Europe building bridges, roads, and clearing mines in advance of the armor. A.D. was awarded the Silver Star, Bronze Star, and the Purple Heart as well as other medals. He also achieved the rank of Captain.

After discharge, he opened a Soil Conservation Service office in Dubois. In November of 1946 he married Hazel May Rowse from Riverton. They had met earlier when both were working in Lander. Katherine was born to A.D. and Hazel in February of 1948 in Lander. That fall, the family moved back to the ranch on Lightning Creek and Bill and Jennie bought a house in Lusk, partially retiring with A.D. running the ranch. James was born in April of 1949 and Paul was born in November of 1951.

In 1957, A.D. and Hazel purchased the Nern and Baker ranch, adding to their land holdings. They lived and worked on the family ranch until their deaths, with Hazel passing in February of 1996, and A.D. in November of 2006.

James (Jim) Kruse returned to the Kruse Ranch in November 1975 after receiving a B.S. degree in Animal Science, January, 1972, and after being



Kruse homestead outbuilding, 1947



Kruse homestead, 1947

discharged from the army on October 3, 1975. He entered the army as a Second Lieutenant on February 26, 1972. Jim had a three year assignment with the 26th Signal Battalion in Germany.

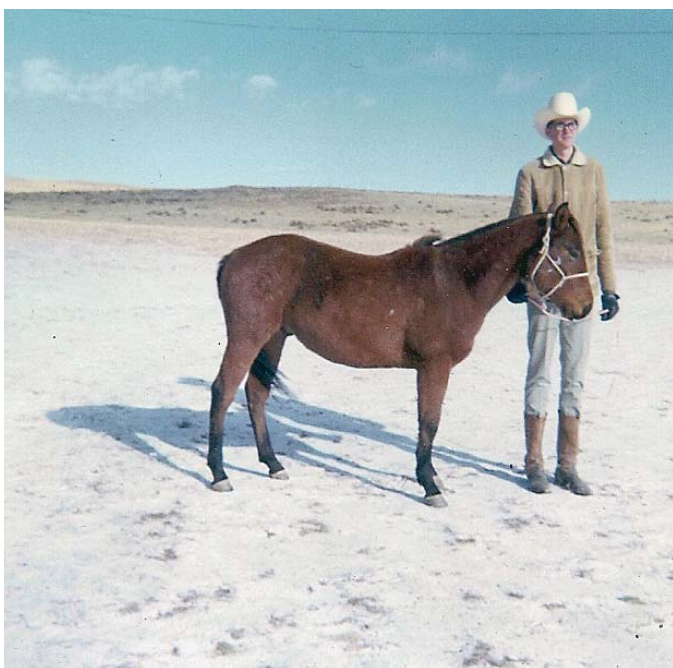
Jim and Linda Sue Dickinson, from Minatare, Nebraska, were married in March, 1978. They met at the University of Wyoming when both were on livestock and meat judging teams. Linda also received a B.S. degree in Animal Science and in 1976 became the first female Agriculture Extension Agent in Wyoming, serving Carbon County.



Jim Kruse with Mickey & Goofy



The Kruse family, Jim, Kathy, A.D., Hazel, & Paul



Paul Kruse and Kenny Tee, 1967



Paul Kruse blocking a shot

Jim and Linda had two sons, James born in March, 1979, and Joseph (Joe) born in August, 1981. Linda lost a courageous battle to breast cancer in January, 1996.

After an exciting life of being a high school and college basketball star, teacher, and attorney, Paul Kruse died of heart failure in February 2009.

The Kruse Ranch is presently owned by Jim Kruse, Kathy Kruse-Morgan, James P. Kruse, and Joe Kruse.

Kathy Kruse married David Morgan in June 1969. They have three children: Pat, married to Kim (they have two sons); Dana, married to Steve (they have a daughter); and Brian, married to Stacy. David Morgan passed away in 2012.

James P. is a 2002 graduate of the University of Wyoming with a degree in Geology and was married to Katherine Volk (B.S. in Chemistry 2006, teaching certificate 2008 University of Wyoming, 2010). They have a son, Paul Kruse, born March 2013, and they currently reside in Casper.



Kruse corrals



Pat, Brian, Dana Morgan and James, Joe Kruse, 1998



Jada Kruse



Sen. John Barrasso, Gov. Matthew H. Mead, Jim Kruse, Rep. Cynthia Lummis, and Sen. Mike Enzi

Joe is a graduate of Laramie County Community College with a degree in Equine Science and Training. In 2006, Joe became the third generation of Kruse's to earn a B.S. degree in Animal Science from the University of Wyoming. He married Katie Clay in June, 2012 and they have a son, William Kruse, born January, 2013 and they currently reside on the family ranch.

Jim also has a daughter who helps out on the ranch, Jada Kruse, born May, 1998.

The CP Ranch, 1904

The Ron and Sharon Lovercheck Family, Goshen County

As told by Sharon Lovercheck

Otis Norris Lovercheck and his wife, Nancy Edmiston Lovercheck, arrived in Goshen County in 1904. Their ranch, the CP, is nestled at the foot of Bear Mountain near the rural town of La Grange. Otis came to Goshen County from Thayer County, Nebraska to take care of the Martin Place on Bear Creek for his brother-in-law, William Sherman Edmiston. Otis and Nancy subsequently purchased homesteads on lower Bear Creek, growing the ranch during their tenure to 6,000 acres. They purchased the Graves Homestead, Badger Homestead, Robinson Homestead, and Preston Homestead. These purchases occurred during a time when many were abandoning their homestead farms for the cities. Nancy had traveled from Thayer County, Nebraska by train and then by covered wagon to La Grange with the couple's first born, Emily Nellie (born December 13, 1900). The first passenger train did not come into La Grange until 1928.

When Otis and Nancy arrived, La Grange was a bustling western town with a blacksmith shop, livery stable, bank, two lumber yards, a cheese factory, a newspaper called the *La Grange Index*, a mercantile, a one-room schoolhouse, a post office, and a Union Sunday School. A steam operated grist mill was built on the banks of Horse Creek on the present-day Andy and Stacy Mahm Ranch. The community even had a telephone line that extended into La Grange in 1904. From 1889 to 1897, the Texas Cattle Trail came through the area and cattle watered at natural springs at what is now Hawk Springs Reservoir.

Otis purchased the CP brand in 1909 but it was originally filed by W.D. Pennock in 1873, transferred to A.C. Gillett in 1882, to Edward David in 1885, and to Otis Lovercheck in 1909. The ranch has been known as the CP Ranch since 1909 and is prominently displayed on the historic cow bar.



Otis Lovercheck, 1st generation



Nancy Lovercheck, 1st generation



Flume built by Otis Lovercheck

Will Edmiston continued land purchases and partnerships with his sister, Nancy, and brother-in-law, Otis, but pursued his career as a newspaper man. He purchased the *Cheyenne Leader* which he sold in 1911 and moved to Denver to become the publisher of *Western Farm Life* magazine. In 1909, Nancy's father, Tilghmon Gill Edmiston, purchased a 360-acre homestead on Bear Creek from Burdick for \$7,000 and made a second purchase from Burdick in 1914. Tilghmon lived in a log home on Bear Creek but returned to Nebraska later in his life.

Otis and Nancy raised their six children on the CP Ranch. A country schoolhouse in the pasture just north of the ranch horse barn enabled the children to walk to primary school. Nancy served as one of the teachers in this one-room schoolhouse. Like other ranch women of the time, Nancy's life was also

filled with domestic chores.

Otis believed in ranch diversification, a strategy that has prevailed during the history of the ranch. Otis and Nancy had Hereford cattle, wheat, barley and alfalfa, and chicken and pigs. Otis also bred mammoth Jacks and Jennys that he sold to the U.S. military. Remnants of a flume built by Otis are still visible on lower Bear Creek. Otis's goal was to divert water to irrigate artichokes. The flume was not a reliable form of irrigation and Otis abandoned the project.

Otis was elected County Commissioner in 1932. He helped build the Community Church in La Grange and was a founding father of the La Grange Cemetery. Dean, Otis's grandson, remembers dragging a garden hose to help his grandfather

water the hundreds of evergreens that were planted at the cemetery. During these Depression years, Otis hitched a team of horses to his farm-to-market wagon and traveled monthly to Cheyenne to purchase coats and shoes for hoboes. These hoboes traveled down Highway 85 looking for work. Nancy served them a hot meal; they were outfitted in coats and shoes, and sent on their way. The historic farm-to-ranch wagon that Otis drove to Cheyenne and back is perched on his great-great grandson's sporting clay range and is visible from Highway 85. The potato cultivator used in the artichoke fields is also parked on Justin's sporting clay range. Otis was killed in 1938 following a propane tank explosion on the ranch. At this time, Charles and Norma, who had worked the ranch with Otis and Nancy, took over the CP.

Charles, known as C.W., and Norma continued the legacy of ranch diversification and community service. They expanded the ranch to 10,000 acres when they purchased a section of the historic Jones ranch nestled at the base of Mountain 66. C.W. installed two irrigated pivots that enabled irrigated corn and alfalfa crops. As a result they were able to expand the cattle herd, now an Angus/Hereford cross, to 500 head. Charles invested and was part owner in Stockman's Livestock Barn. He worked with community leaders to build a community hall that honors veterans. His two brothers served in World War II and his father-in-law, Tilghmon Gill Edmiston, was a Civil War veteran. His brother William was a member of the 502nd parachute regiment of the 101st Airborne that landed on the beaches of Normandy. C.W. served on the cemetery board and was a member of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association. Both Charles and Norma were active in the community and received the La Grange Community Service Award in 1983. Charles and Norma retired in Cheyenne and died in 1993 and 1998 respectively. They had two children, Norma Charlyn and Donald Dean.

Dean succeeded his father as President of Lovercheck and Land and Cattle Company. He and Donna added over five miles of underground water pipelines and stock tanks to improve the infrastructure for watering livestock. They sold the irrigated land at the base of Mountain 66,



Charles Lovercheck, 2nd generation



Charles & Norma Lovercheck wedding photo



CP Ranch



Charles & Norma Lovercheck, 2nd generation

liquidated the cattle operation, and changed the ranch operation to a cattle lease program. They stayed active in their community and received the La Grange Community Service Award in 2011. Otis, Charles, and Dean were all members of the Masonic Lodge while Donna and Norma were active members of Eastern Star. Dean and Donna had two sons, Ronald Martin and Otis Dean.

Ronald, Dean's and Donna's elder son, became President of Lovercheck Land and Cattle Company in 2009. Ron married Sharon Olson in 1969. They had two children, Raedene Edawn Messenger (1970) and Justin Scott Lovercheck (1971). The family lived on the ranch until 1977 when they relocated to Pinedale and then to Cheyenne in 1985. Raedene and Justin participated in high school rodeo and graduated from Central High School in Cheyenne.

Ron and Sharon returned to the CP in 1991. At that time, Ron started a game bird farm on the ranch and opened a real estate company. He embarked on a ranch conservation initiative, planting shelter belts and thousands of trees. A riparian project on Bear Creek enhances the creek bottom for habitat and conservation. Hay meadows were rehabilitated and his grazing rotation program doubled cattle grazing capacity. Ron and Sharon continued the family ethic of community service, Ron as a Game and Fish Commissioner and president of the local cemetery board. He is also a Commissioner for the Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources. Sharon was elected trustee for Eastern Wyoming College and was a member of the Eastern Wyoming College Foundation Board. Sharon was re-appointed to the Wyoming Community College Commission by Governor Matt Mead in 2013 and was appointed to Governor Mead's Complete College America committee. Sharon has a BSN from the University of North Dakota and a master's in public administration from the University of Colorado at Denver. Her career is as a Registered Nurse and as Administrator of Health Programs.

Otis's great-great grandson, Justin, and his wife Brenda have lived on the ranch since 1997. Justin assumed ownership of the game bird farm and greatly expanded it to include big game hunting and



Dean & Donna, 3rd generation



Ron & Sharon Lovercheck, 4th generation



Raedene Lovercheck Messenger Wedding on CP Ranch



Lovercheck Ranch Panorama, 2012

a 10-station sporting clay range. He also works on the ranch. They have two children, Chase (1999) and Kelci (2001) who are the 6th generation of Lovercheck's to live on the ranch. They live on the site of the original ranch house owned by Otis and Nancy. Brenda has a bachelor's degree and master's in social work from the University of Wyoming. She is employed by the Goshen County School District. Brenda served on the advisory board for Banner Health and Justin serves on the local predator board.

Family Tree

First Generation rancher: Otis Norris Lovercheck (1875-1941), married Nancy Gill Edmiston (1874-1974) in 1900. Had six children: Emily Nellie, Harry Albert who was killed in 1929 in a horse accident on the ranch, Lois Marie, twins Otis Wayne and William Sherman, and Charles William.

Second Generation rancher: Charles William Lovercheck (1910-1993), married Norma Bostwich (1910-1998) in 1928. Had two children: Norma Charlyne and Donald Dean.



The CP Ranch



Horse barn



Cattle barn

Third Generation rancher: Donald Dean Lovercheck (1932) married Donna Neifert in 1951. Have two sons: Ronald Martin and Otis Dean.

Fourth Generation rancher: Ronald Martin Lovercheck (1947) married Sharon Olson in 1968. Had two children: Raedene Edawn Lovercheck Messenger and Justin Scott.

Fifth Generation rancher: Justin Scott Loversheck (1970) married Brenda Bastion in 1997. Had two children: Chase Scott Lovercheck and Kelci Ann Lovercheck.

Four generations currently reside on the CP.



Lovercheck Family Portrait, 2010



Sen. John Barrasso, Gov. Matthew H. Mead, Ron & Sharon Lovercheck, Rep. Cynthia Lummis, and Sen. Mike Enzi

Rankin Ranch, LLC, 1912

The Curtis & Mary Rankin Family, Weston County



Sen. John Barrasso, Gov. Matthew H. Mead, Curtis and Mary Rankin Family, Rep. Cynthia Lummis, and Sen. Mike Enzi

Robert C. Rankin moved to Upton, Wyoming in 1912 from western Iowa. He came to Wyoming on an immigrant car which was a railroad car that all his belongings were in. Crops raised were wheat, barley, oats, corn, sheep, cows and calves. All farming was done using horses. The ranch had (2) 4-horse teams. Today the ranch runs yearlings. We employ cell grazing.

The bunkhouse on the ranch was actually an uncle's homestead shack. The original log house on the original homestead was donated to Upton Old Town for historical preservation.

The Ox Yoke Ranch, 1889

The Reinecke Family, Crook County

As told by *The Deadwood Pioneer Times* and the Reinecke Family

The following story was told in a clipping from the Deadwood newspaper, November 26, 1880.

Elopement – Romance and Love vs. Shotgun and Locked Doors

“Yesterday a PIONEER reporter hearing that a young couple had been married early in the morning hung around until the following facts were elicited.

Mr. William Mathews, who is a very fine looking young man and bears an excellent reputation, had an adjoining ranch on Hay creek to Mr. Richards, formerly of Centennial park. For three years Billy Mathews and Miss Dora Richards have been lovers. Dora a sparkling brunette, nineteen years of age. Her father and mother have repeatedly frowned upon the suite of Mathews, and have done their best to show up the advantages of wealthier suitors who were anxious to barter their wealth and cattle for the hand of the “Belle of the Valleys.”

Recently Mathews sold his ranch to Messrs. O.H. and E.B. Miller, and had in stock and money about \$1,000. He thought this was enough for himself and Dora, so he made a proposal to the mother and father, and urged his suite. But the parents indignantly rejected his suit and forbade all communication. They hustled Miss Dora off to Hay creek, but Mathews went out and stopped on the ranch below, waiting for a chance to communicate with his love, but the watchful eyes of the parents precluded all chances of obtaining a meeting. Every scheme was outwitted by Mrs. Richards, who had five dogs and an armory of shotguns and rifles.

Mrs. Richards is a determined woman, and noted for being a crack shot, frequently shooting birds on the wing, and Mathews knew that force would result in bloodshed either to the girl or himself and consequently determined to resort to strategy. In vain the daughter pleaded the fact that she was



Eldora & Billy Mathews wedding portrait, 1880

of age, and had a legal right to act for herself, so finally she told her hard-hearted mother that she would avail herself of the first opportunity to escape. Meanwhile, Mathews schemed and planned; friends tried to obtain leave for the girl to visit an adjoining ranch and have some music, but the suspicious mother was up to snuff and would not let the girl out of her sight. Finally Mathews found a member of the house to hand Dora the following.

“I will have my ponies 200 yards east of the house Thursday night; will wait from 7 until 9. If you can get out, run 200 yards east of the house; never mind hat or shawl.”



Billy & Eldora Mathews' 50th wedding anniversary;

Thursday evening, as the old man was picking his teeth after eating the Thanksgiving turkey, Dora obtained leave to go out for a moment, and at once ran for the ponies, where Mathews was waiting with only a nubia and a light cloak. They made Spearfish, fifteen miles distant, in an hour and a half. There they obtained a buggy and soon arrived in Deadwood, where Justice Clark soon pronounced them man and wife.

The happy couple are now stopping at the Wentworth house, receiving the congratulations of their friends, for both are well and favorably known, and the earnest wish of all their friends is that their lives may be long and happy, and that they will never have cause to regret their midnight ride of thirty miles through the bitter cold. Thus far the parents have not been heard from.”

After moving to the Montana Lake ranch, at least one of the Mathews family or their direct descendants served on the Beulah School Board until the school was discontinued.

After their oldest daughter, Mable Reinecke, died in 1904, Billy and Dora assumed the raising of two of Mable’s children, Vera and Emerald Reinecke. Irene was raised by Mabel Mathews.

Billy and Dora Mathews rented their ranch to their grandson, Emerald Reinecke, from 1927 until selling it to Emerald in 1936. After retiring to Beulah, Billy fished Sand Creek nearly every day the weather was decent.

Although it was apparent from her letters, that Billy’s mother was a well-educated woman, Billy Mathews was illiterate in that he could not sign his name or read. Yet he could figure! He was renowned for his ability to tell how much crop a field would make, the tons of hay in a stack, the number of acres in a field, the value of his crops or portions of crops. He could figure the acres in a partitioned field. He had a keen sense of geometry and knew how to build fence and irrigate without survey instruments.

Building up the Ox Yoke

In the late 1920s Ed and Mabel were divorced and Mabel retained the Sand Creek Ranch which had grown to about 1600 acres. She operated or rented it, ultimately selling it to Emerald Reinecke in 1946. In the late 1940s Myrtle Mathews began renting her ranch near Tinton to her nephew, Emerald Reinecke and in the early 1960s sold it to him.

Leon Reinecke (son) joined Emerald Reinecke to operate the ranch after he graduated from college. He and his family worked the ranch for ten years; Leon left to acquire a master’s degree and started working as an engineer. Spencer Eugene Reinecke (son) came to the ranch to help operate it after he graduated college and worked as an engineer for two years. In 1990, Joseph Julian (grandson) came to help operate the ranch. Before Emerald died he distributed shares of stock in the Ox Yoke to his children and their spouses. Mathew Reinecke



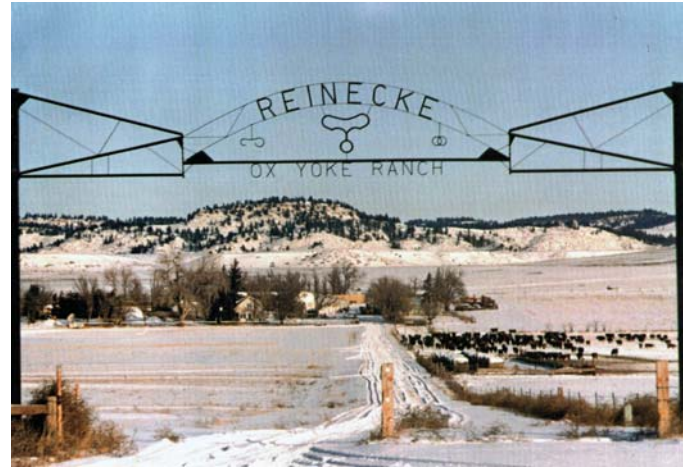
Reinecke family, ca 1938



Reinecke family, 1940

(grandson) joined the operating group in 2009.

At this time the Ox Yoke is owned by Spencer Reinecke, Sylvia Wederquist, Richard Wederquist,



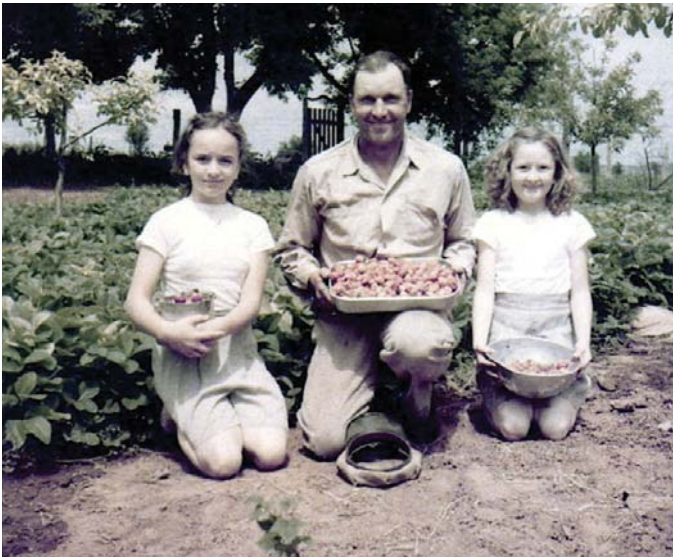
Ox Yoke Ranch gate with cattle



Reinecke Family, 1948, L-R Back: Leon, Emerald, Howard, middle Sylvia, Eldora Mathews, Elaine; Front: Spencer, Nancy

Nancy Julian, John Julian, Joe Julian, and Mathew Reinecke.

The Ox Yoke raises Angus beef.



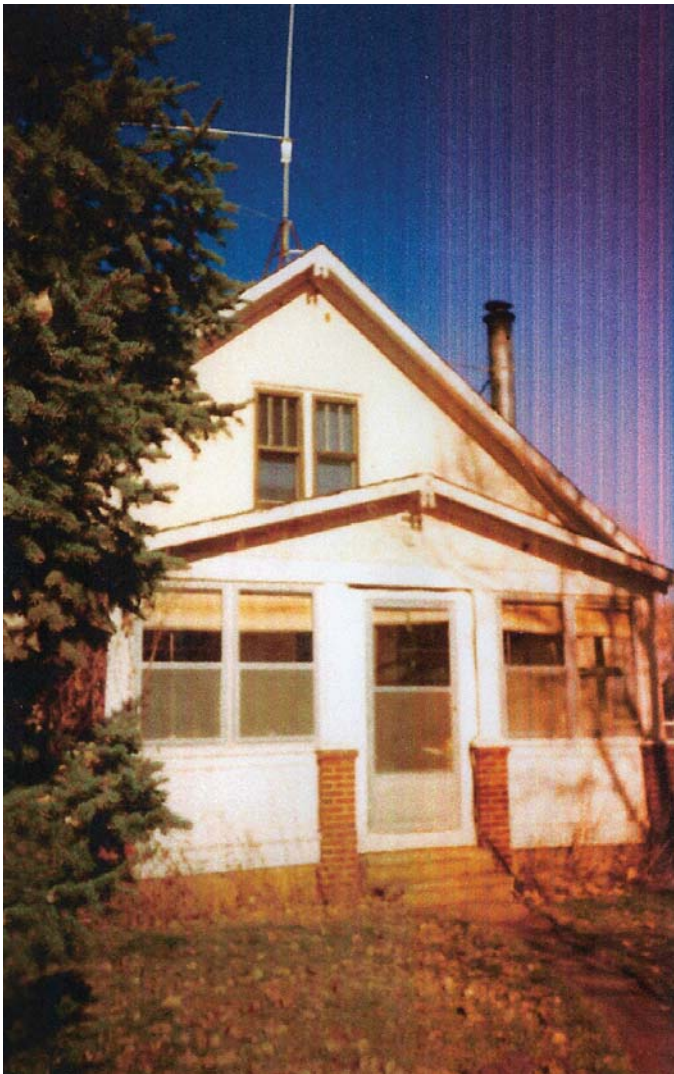
Ranch garden in the 1940s



Spencer, Nancy, Leon, & Sylvia



Emerald's 80th birthday with Spencer, Leon, Sylvia, & Nancy



Reinecke ranch house



Ox Yoke Ranch



Sen. John Barrasso, Gov. Matthew H. Mead, Reinecke Family, Rep. Cynthia Lummis, and Sen. Mike Enzi



Haying as done now

The Rutherford Ranch, 1910

The Rutherford Family, Platte County



Harry and Lillian



Harvest, 1910s

As told by Gale Rutherford

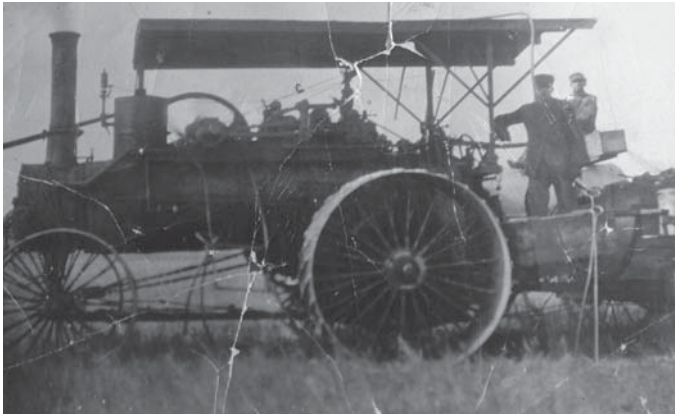
Harry Tilden Rutherford came by immigrant car to central Platte County in March of 1910. His wife, Lillie, and young daughter, Myrtie, came later in the spring by train. The family settled near Buckhorn which was later named Dwyer. In the fall of 1910 their second child, Earl, became the first baby born on the Buckhorn Flats. Harry was one of the first homesteaders in the area and the family had one of the first wells in the community, which was used by many other early homesteaders. Using his steam engine and threshing machine, Harry supplemented the homestead by doing harvesting, breaking sod, and moving buildings for others.

Four more children were born in the next several years: Florence in 1912, Leva in 1913, Carl in 1915, and Erma in 1917. The Depression and Dust Bowl years caused most homesteaders to move on which allowed Harry the chance to purchase several adjoining homesteads. Sons Carl and Earl, upon returning from Europe and World War II, purchased the farm from their father.

The farm raised wheat, oats, barley, triticale, beef, and pork. A few milk cows were kept on hand for milk, cream, and butter. Strip farming and crop rotation revolutionized the operation in the early years. In the 1960s and 1970s Carl and Earl installed the two Harvestores silos and a feedlot, quite a rarity for this part of the country.

Earl never married. Carl married his wife, Helen, in 1950 and had three children: Kurt in 1952, Linda in 1954, and Gale in 1959.

Gale and his new bride, Silvia, both received Geology degrees from the University of Wyoming in 1982 but decided to move back to Dwyer while job hunting. The allure of self-employment and the agricultural life has kept them here. Gale has moved the operation entirely to ranching, installing wells and pipelines, cross fencing, shelterbelts, and solar power plants.



Harry and steam engine



Earl, left, & Carl Rutherford



Rutherford kids, 1930s

Elyse, born in 2000, Gale and Silvia's daughter, loves helping brand, checking wells, and fence, and exploring the ranch. When asked, she says she wants to be the next generation on the homestead.



Carl and Helen wedding



Last wheat harvest, 1988



Dwyer Christian Church, Depression-era; we remodeled it into our home



Gale & Silvia Rutherford wedding



Looking west through homestead at Green Mountain and Collins Mountain area, south of Laramie Peak



Elyse Rutherford



Sen. John Barrasso, Rutherford Family, Gov. Matthew H. Mead, Rep. Cynthia Lummis, and Sen. Mike Enzi

The Rafter L Ranch, 1906

The Larry & Bonnie Smith Family, Johnson County



Guy built this 2-room log house about 1910; in 1953 the house was remodeled. The original part is our kitchen & dining room.



Guy Smith home



Guy Smith original homestead

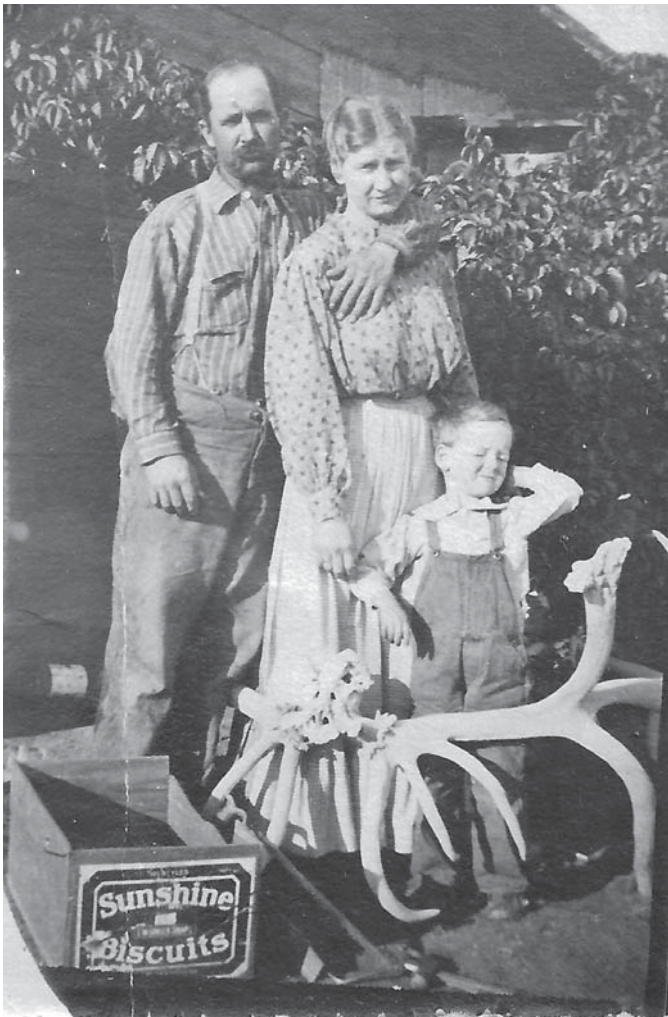
As told by the Smith Family, especially Josephine Smith in 1980

Guy L. Smith came from Nebraska to Johnson County, Wyoming in the mid-1890s. On May 19, 1898, he left Buffalo to enlist with the Big Horn detachment of the Second Volunteer Cavalry. He was assigned to Troop "E" of Torrey's Rough Riders at Fort Russell at Cheyenne. He went by train to Florida where he remained until the Spanish-American War ended in August. His troop returned to Fort Russell and was discharged in late October, 1898.

He worked on various ranches in the Muddy Creek area south of Buffalo. In 1901, he homesteaded on 160 acres that surrounds the area where our house now stands. He built his 14 foot by 19 foot home near a good spring on the head of Willow Creek. He was an enterprising young man and was never afraid of hard work. Realizing the need for lumber, he operated sawmills in various places on the Big Horn mountains which served the dual purpose of supplying him with lumber for building and sale. Some of the buildings he built at the time are still in service.

In 1902, Mr. Smith married Lenore (Nora) Taylor and brought her home to Willow Creek in the Mayoworth community. Life on a beginning Wyoming ranch must, undoubtedly, have had its difficult side but old photos are proof of the pleasures and satisfactions. Community gatherings at school and Sunday school, roundups, hunting and fishing trips, picnics, and horseback rides were spiced with merriment. Families and neighbors enjoyed togetherness.

In 1907, Leroy, the Smith's only child, was born in Buffalo. When Leroy came home at the age of one month, it was for keeps. He spent most of his entire life developing the outfit and was truly a native son. As the years went by, Guy and Nora accumulated some livestock, put up some hay, and raised some grain and bountiful supplies of



Smith Family



Guy & Leroy in grain field



Leroy homestead cabin



Smith sheep camp

foodstuffs. Guy recorded his brand: quarter circle cross quarter circle for sheep, cows, and horses in 1909, which today is used on our cattle. They built a larger home, fenced a yard, and encouraged native trees and shrubs to grow. Realizing the need for supplemental water, Guy put a dirt fill across the creek to store water for irrigation. By so doing,



Leroy & Jo Smith

it may be that he was among the county's earliest conservationists.

A second Homestead Act of 1909 enabled the Smiths to file on an additional 640 acres and eventually to buy other homesteads from neighbors. In 1935, Leroy married Josephine Skiles. She

had also grown up on a Wyoming ranch and they continued to make ranching their way of life. Leroy was primarily a sheep man and ran sheep continually from the time he was twelve years old. For many years, the younger Smiths lived wherever the sheep were – lambing at the ranch in the spring, on the mountains in the summer, and on winter range the rest of the year.

As the years passed, Guy and Nora spent increasing amounts of time away from the ranch and during the summer of 1945, the younger Smiths began settling at the home ranch. By that time their family included two sons, Harold and Larry. Sandra's birth in 1947 completed the family circle. They were capable children and at a very early age learned to be good hands.

In keeping with changing range conditions, Leroy bought additional winter range and enclosed all of his holdings with woven wire fence. He developed several efficient water systems to supplement natural water supply. In some instances, he used existing springs but he also built reservoirs and drilled wells where needed.

The old ranch house was again remodeled and enlarged making good use of the phenomenal new conveniences made possible by the development of propane. Running water in the house made a modern bathroom possible and a gasoline engine provided a limited amount of electricity. When the pioneer grandmother made a visit to the ranch when the children were small, she could hardly believe that such modern innovations were possible.

While all of this was happening at the old farmstead, the community was growing up. New roads were built, a new telephone line became functional, and the magic of the Rural Electrification Administration provided enough electricity for countless conveniences. Larger schools were constructed and school buses replaced horses as a mode of travel for the community children.

Time marches on – the people change but the eternal hills remain much as they have always been. The pioneers have long ago gone to their well-



Guy, Leroy, Larry Smith home



Guy Smith built the washroom (right), now used as storage



Larry, Sandra, & Harold Smith



Larry at the cutting gate, 1981



Sheds & barn built by Guy Smith



Leroy's homestead cabin. We still use it.



Shearing the sheep, 1995

deserved rest. Leroy and Josephine began to seek warmer weather during the winter. The ranch was incorporated in 1964. In 1966, the brand we now use on our sheep, Rafter L, was transferred to the Rafter L Corporation.

Larry Smith married Bonnie Graves in 1971. She had grown up on a ranch on the Red Fork of Powder River in Barnum. They continued to make ranching their way of life. They had two children, Travis and Tyler Smith. They grew up doing all the jobs we expected them to do and more.

In 1979, Leroy and Jo sold Larry and Bonnie their shares in the ranch corporation and moved to Buffalo. We continue to run Charolais-Angus cross cattle and Rambouillet sheep. We winter the livestock at Salt Creek pastures each winter, trail the sheep home to shear and lamb in May, haul the cows home in June, and summer them all on the mountain. Each fall after the lambs are sold, the



Cows & sheep on the mountain

ewes are trailed back to their winter pastures and after the calves are sold, the cows are hauled to their winter pastures.

Just like previous generations, we have had our share of hard winters, drought, grasshoppers, floods, great grass years, fluctuating livestock and wool market, and blizzards. The worst blizzard arrived in April 1984, killing 60% of our sheep. Twenty to



Sen. John Barrasso, Larry and Bonnie Smith Family, Gov. Matthew H. Mead, Rep. Cynthia Lummis, and Sen. Mike Enzi

thirty feet of snow filled the draws where our ewes were desperately trying to get out of the howling wind to find shelter from the driving rain that began falling, soon turning to wet snow. The brutal wind and freezing swirling snow lasted for three days. Neighbors came to help us walk the draws to try to dig out the sheep. Only a few were still alive. The second ewes, in each pile we dug out, were barely alive and too weak to live longer than the next day. Luckily, our cows were in a much rougher pasture and it was on the edge of the storm so we only lost a few of them. Keeping the predators away from our livestock will always be extremely challenging. Coyote populations are hard to control with all the regulations one must follow. We have had yearly predation from the mountains lions and black bears since they became trophy game. Their numbers are steadily increasing as our deer populations are steadily decreasing.

Travis married Laissa Reznicek July 2011. They are living at the ranch doing more and more of the many jobs there are to do each year. Tyler lives in Puerto Rico where he and his significant other, Helen Kallis, own Natural Health Chiropractic.

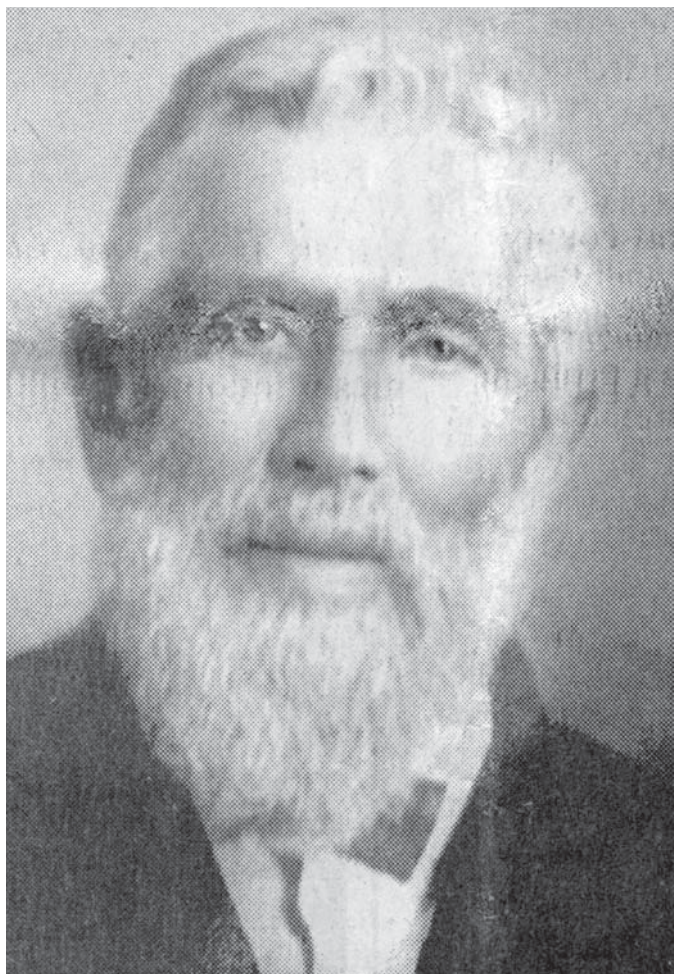


Larry, Tyler, Travis, & Bonnie

We cherish our ranching heritage. It's been a satisfying privilege to be entrusted with the ranch's operation. We are in awe of the dedication and persistent spirit of Guy, Nora, Leroy, and Josephine. We hope and pray future generations will continue this inspiring Wyoming ranching legacy of providing food, leather, and wool to the nation while remaining good stewards of the land.

The 4A Ranch, 1882

The J. William Sorensen Family, Goshen County



Philip Yoder

As excerpted from the *Torrington Telegram*

Phillip and Cinderella Yoder moved their family from Iowa to Cheyenne in 1881. Phillip and Cinderella had nine children: Benjamin Franklin (Frank), Oscar, Jesse, Amanda, Clara, Ida, Sadie, Nina (who died at 16 of typhoid fever), and Alan (who died at 16 months).

Phillip began making a name for himself in the area immediately as a successful rancher, raising cattle and horses. In 1884, he moved his family to the Bear Creek area near the town of La Grange, Wyoming. For years the family lived in a log house on their Bear Creek property, supplemented by a tent to make room for the lot of them. Phillip built a large stone house, using rock quarried on their



Cinderella Hattery Yoder

ranch, in 1898-99.

Phillip died in 1910 at the age of 74, and Frank, Oscar, and Jesse went on to become active and successful in the southeastern Wyoming ranching and business scene. But it was Frank who, many believe, left the greatest legacy of all the Yoders.

Frank and Oscar operated the Yoder Brothers Company and a store in La Grange. Frank had become a respected community leader, serving as La Grange postmaster from 1893 to 1895. He moved into western Nebraska for a few years, but returned to Wyoming, with his young son Oscar, after the unrelated deaths of his wife, Edith, and son, Bennie.



Marion Yoder Sorensen, Miss Cheyenne 1919, granddaughter of P.J. Yoder, mother of present owner Bill



Original barn built from lumber from 1893 World's Fair



Old trees near ranch house



4A grass lands where predominantly cattle were raised

Once back in Wyoming, Frank began to expand his ranching operation. He operated the Fox Creek Ranch with the Griffin brothers before purchasing the Stemler Ranch in La Grange, which became known as the “KJ” and served as the headquarters of his ranching operation. He also leased a good chunk of the Lincoln Land ranches in the area – the Herrick, the 66 pasture and meadow, and the Rock Ranch.

In 1909 he married the widow Myrtle Edwards, who had a daughter Marian. Frank and Myrtle later had two sons – Frank and Jack. The family lived for a time at the Dollar Ranch, then at the 4-A Ranch at Bear Mountain – which is owned by descendants today. In 1914, the family moved into the Torrington area.

Throughout the first two decades of the century, Frank became one of the area’s most active citizens. Besides being a successful rancher and active in the rodeo, he was one of the area’s pioneering politicians. He was an organizer of the Hawk Springs Development Company, then was appointed by the governor to the Goshen County Organizational Board. He was Goshen County’s first House representative in the state legislature, serving from 1910 to 1917. He also served a term-and-a-half as Torrington mayor, from 1915-1918.

During his term as mayor, Frank showed his foresight in many ways. He oversaw implementation of the town’s first light plant. He helped Torrington acquire a power plant that had been built by the Bureau of Reclamation during the construction of a canal south of Lingle. That acquisition proved beneficial to Torrington, as the ensuing retailing of electrical power helped Torrington maintain a strong financial position for years.

Frank’s business interests weren’t limited to agriculture. He took risks – and more often than not, he prevailed. He helped build the Trail Hotel and the Torrington National Bank. He helped create the Bear Creek and Goshen Hole Stock Association.

Frank’s aggressive nature led him south to Cheyenne in 1921, when he purchased property

in Cheyenne and moved his family there. He continued his ranching operation, as well as various investments, in Goshen County. By then, the Yoder name was well established.

In 1921, the town of Yoder was incorporated south of Torrington. The Yoder family remained prominent for many years in Goshen County.



Oscar Yoder, grandson of P.J. Yoder, Gloria Yoder, & granddaughter Lisa Yoder



The 4A raised a herd of 300 bison for a time



Present owner Bill Sorensen



Original house built in 1899



1994 house built with original stone and some woods from original ranch house



New ranch house built in 1994



New house interior, fireplace of stone from original house, quarried at the ranch



Sen. John Barrasso, Gov. Matthew H. Mead, Rep. Cynthia Lummis, Sorensen Family, and Sen. Mike Enzi

The Sturman Ranch, 1912

The Sturman Family, Goshen County

As told by Janice Podolak Sturman and Erle Britton

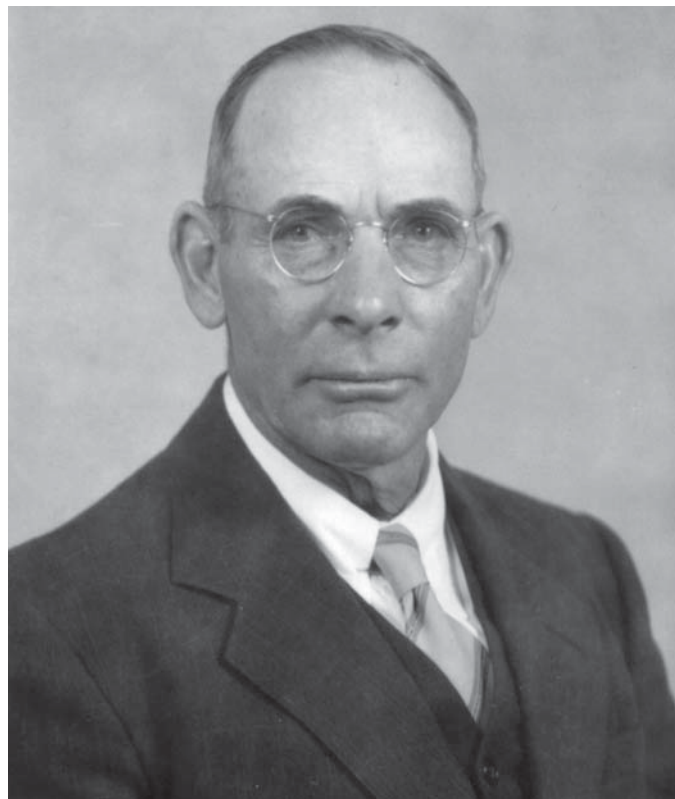
Erle Royce Britton, youngest son of Howard and Helena Britton, wrote this account of the settling of the homestead in the fall of 2011 after we talked about the family ranch turning 100 years old. He was looking forward to attending the celebration but passed away within the month so I wanted to include his story as the beginning of our ranch history.

The Howard C. and Helena C. Britton Homesteading Saga as remembered by their youngest son, Erle Britton

There are more questions available than answers about the nuts and bolts of this era. We know the result but not the basics of the beginning and the challenges and how they met them during this period. Facts: These newlyweds (married April 14, 1909), lived in the area of Marsland, Nebraska. Howard worked for his father operating a grain threshing machine and later in the family sawmill. Howard met Helena during the threshing era. They were married April 14, 1909.

It was about 50 miles from the Marsland area (direct line) to this homestead site. The railroad existed from Crawford, Nebraska through Van Tassell, Wyoming. It was about 14 miles from Van Tassell to the homestead. It was probably that far or farther from their home at Marsland to the railroad in Crawford. Howard rode a horse from Belmont, Nebraska to Van Tassell in 1912 where he met a land man who took Howard into the area with a horse and buggy. Howard picked out his 320 acre allotment. He then filed for this homestead.

The decisions Howard made about selecting the actual homestead site he reminisced about years later. When he first started this process, he found that the choices were limited in the area. Most of the flat open half sections were already taken. Remember, these homesteaders were lowlanders that were orientated towards farming. Also, the



Howard Britton, original homesteader



Helen Britton, wife of Howard



Britton Family, back Lester, Charles, Ruth, front Alice, Helena, Howard, & Erle



Britton Ranch after blizzard, April 1927



Britton homestead after April 1927 blizzard

majority was taking advantage of the Homestead Act to acquire some free property, put up a “livable” shack, live on it for one year, then they could move back home and have rental property or sell it for income.

Howard’s vision was different. He thought if he could find a way to stick it out, he could in time acquire these neighboring homesteads and have a real ranch. The one available that intrigued him had a gradual slope to the southwest with a few sandstone buttes embedded in the higher ground on the northwest portion.

Remember that at this period in time, electric power was unheard of in this area. So he made the following decisions: drill the water well on the highest point among the buttes (the well had to be pumped by a windmill, so get it up high to catch the most wind), dig a cistern about 8’ x 14’ x 6’ deep (concrete it even with a concrete top) adjacent to the windmill, install it underground (below frost level), and water pipe it to the house, corrals and garden area. He had the only gravity fed water system in the whole area at the time. Most of the homesteaders had a pitcher pump in the kitchen for domestic water.

Howard located the house on a slight rise on the southeast slope so it was above the corral level; therefore, there was no run-off from the corrals towards the house area. The garden area was just below the corrals. The small amount of run-off, on occasion, into the garden presented no problem. The house was built out in the open with an unobstructed view to the southeast. The sandstone buttes became part of the corrals and windbreaks.

After homestead selection, Howard sawed lumber at his dad’s sawmill near Marsland and transported it to the homestead site with teams and wagons. With the help of his brother-in-law Ben Siekert, who was a carpenter, he built a sturdy (still standing) two-room house. He never touched a power tool in his life but he was unbelievably accurate and clever with the hand saw, he planned on and did split the pencil mark with his hand saw every time. And he always made the cut square! He had to develop a water well because the nearest surface water

was eight to ten miles from the homestead. The framing of the house was “rough sawed” (slightly oversize, not planed smooth). The house was set on a concrete foundation and had lathed and plastered interior walls. There was no mobile concrete back then. He put on a cedar shingle roof and cedar “lap siding” exterior siding which required painting.

Sometime in mid-1914, Howard moved his wife and nearly three-year old daughter Alice Marie in a covered wagon from Marsland to the complete (livable) house on the homestead in Wyoming. Alice remembers an overnight stay with a homesteader on the Nebraska state line, by the name of Con Parsons.

How all of this was accomplished over a two to three year period while also making a living, having a new baby girl, numerous trips of 50-plus miles each way with horses and wagons or on a horse is sure worth a lot of admiration. Howard was a very intelligent young man that was not afraid of hard work. He had the equivalent of about a seventh grade education. His personality was “think it through with care then do it with confidence.” He was a well-respected person and was totally honest and trusted by everyone who knew him. Early in his life he lost his mother and a younger sister when he was just 12 and 14 years old.

During these early years, Howard and Helena farmed and milked cows, sold cream and butter, raised a big garden, and anything to obtain some cash for existence. The family may have been “poverty-stricken” but no one ever told us that! The family was never hungry or without decent, clean clothes. They were patched frequently but never ragged. I don’t think his family ever experienced “true poverty” but they certainly were not wealthy either.

For nearly 30 years Howard farmed with horses, breaking all the sod with an eight-horse hitch. In the 1930s he bought his first tractor.

Also during these years, Howard developed a close business relationship with Erle Reid, an attorney, and Royce Tibbets, the owner of Citizens National Bank, both in Torrington. These three gentlemen



Britton Ranch, 1936



potato fields on Britton Ranch, 1930



Howard Britton driving tractor with hired man Charles Davis, 1936

had a relationship with each other that was based on total respect, trust, honesty, and integrity. In fact, Howard and Helena named their youngest son Erle Royce (the author of this account) after these two gentlemen.

Over many years, Mr. Tibbets approved several loans for Howard when he had the opportunity to



Britton Ranch after 1949 Blizzard



Ranch after 1949 blizzard

purchase an adjacent homestead but didn't have the collateral or money available at the time. Mr. Reid was always available for the necessary legal work. He might have been paid with beef or chicken, I don't know. Both were fine gentlemen that had a lot to do with Howard's lifetime goal of raising a family and obtaining a ranch in an area that was only good for ranching.

The last time I saw my dad was in late September, 1959 when I drove him from Wyoming to Baker, Oregon where he planned to spend the winter with my two older brothers and their families. We had a wonderful, memorable trip and a lot of good talk and stories. I wish we could have covered this homestead period on this trip.

Another thought about the real challenges of establishing the homestead and making it a home in this time period: Howard had a younger brother by the name of Charlie. He was killed in a horse and

buggy accident just after the time period in which this homestead was built. They were very close as brothers so Uncle Charlie certainly may have aided some in the building of this ranch. Charlie was married and lived in the Crawford/Marsland areas of Nebraska until his death.

And now the rest of the story by Janice Sturman

After spending several years raising corn and potatoes as main crops, the Britton's acquired some neighboring homesteads whose owners gave up or had made the decision to sell and move on. They began raising sheep and a few cattle and had about 20 milk cows. Grandpa Britton had also raised draft horses when they were farming and he broke and sold them.

They raised a family of five and remained on the ranch their entire lives. In the early 1950s Grandpa retired and leased the ranch to his daughter and son-in-law, Alice and Frank Podolak, later selling it to them. They raised registered Polled Hereford cattle. Their granddaughter, Janice Podolak, was married to Gerald "Jerry" Sturman in June, 1958 and moved onto the Britton place. Grandma Britton passed away in the summer of 1958 and Grandpa Britton in the fall of 1959.

Janice and Jerry Sturman worked with Frank and Alice Podolak until the 1970s when they resumed operation of the ranch on their own with their three sons Mark, Kent, and Cody. They continued with the registered herd of cows, selling feeder calves, herd bulls, and replacement heifers. They later installed a pivot irrigation sprinkler system to raise hay and other grain crops for the cattle. Jerry passed away in 1984 due to a brain tumor. The three boys assisted their mother in operating the ranch.

Mary and Cody remained on the ranch and Kent began working for the National High School Rodeo Association as the organization's Executive Director in Denver, a position he held for 22 years. Mark married Heidi Abbott and remained on the original Britton homestead, working the family ranch today. Cody married Amy Helzer and worked the family ranch for a few years before moving to a ranch in the Pinedale area.



Sturman Ranch, mid-1990s

Mark and Heidi have planted some natural windbreaks and supplies water to them with a drip system, which has been a wonderful improvement to the ranch. He and Heidi have three children who all assist with the operation, today raising commercial cattle. Their daughter Jessie is attending college in Chadron, Nebraska; son Bryce is in high school, and daughter Sadie is in middle school, both attending in Lusk.

Cody and Amy have three children as well. Daughter Alison was born when they lived on the Sturman ranch and is now in high school in Pinedale. Son Guthrie is also in high school and daughter Susanna is in elementary school, both in Pinedale.

After brain tumor surgery, Janice has moved to Lusk but enjoys her grandchildren and going back “home” to the ranch whenever she can.

Three original barns still remain on the ranch, along with the shop and granary. The homestead house, after a couple of additions over the years, and following Grandpa’s move to Oregon, was lived in by Janice and Jerry and their sons until 1983 when a malfunction of the floor furnace caused an explosion that did not burn the home but due to the damage was unlivable. The house did not collapse in the explosion due to the quality of construction Grandpa Britton provided when he built it 71 years prior.



Sen. John Barrasso, Gov. Matthew H. Mead, Sturman Family, Rep. Cynthia Lummis, and Sen. Mike Enzi

The 15 Ranch, 1912

The Frank Svalina Family, Campbell & Crook Counties

As told by Virginia Svalina, wife of Frank Svalina

Peter (Pete) Svalina immigrated to America via Ellis Island into New York from Austria. This was around 1907 and he was only 17 years old at the time. His older brother Anthony had come prior to that and his younger brother Jack came last. They left behind in Yugoslavia their parents and two brothers, Steve and Matthew.

It is not known how he got to this part of the country from New York but he first worked at the Homestake Gold Mining Company in Lead, South Dakota.

Next he worked at the Belshea Ranch near Sundance, Wyoming. It is now the Chatterfield Ranch. There he worked in a mine that operated on their place. Mr. Belshea helped Peter establish a homestead which is now the 15 Ranch. He worked at the Tipple Mine at Aladdin while getting the homestead up and running. Frank recalls that his father drove a stagecoach. Frank laughs about a story told to him by his father: one day a lady on the stagecoach was continually complaining about his hitting every bump in the road. So he turned the stagecoach around and hit a really big bump that he had previously missed.

Peter Svalina courted Margaret Noonan, a schoolteacher, and adjoining homesteader. They married May 7, 1928. They were married at Newcastle. Margaret was raised in Moorcoft by her parents, Thomas and Daisy Noonan.

Margaret's grandparents helped establish the Catholic church and started the Noonan Hotel. They were Jeremiah and Anna Katherine Noonan; he was a section boss on the railroad and although he was not a Rough Rider, he did ride with Teddy Roosevelt a few times.

Frank and Margaret had five children: Ellen (Thompson), Mary Ann (Woods), Jack, Tom, and Frank. Peter Svalina died on November 13, 1971.



Peter Svalina, ca 1912



Peter Svalina & Margaret (Noonan) Svalina, Frank's parents



Peter Svalina putting up hay



Peter Svalina at homestead



Peter Svalina, Frank's father



Margaret Noonan Svalina & Anna Noonan helping with haying



Peter & Margaret Svalina & children, Mary Ann, Ellen, Frank, Jack, & Tom



Frank as a youngster



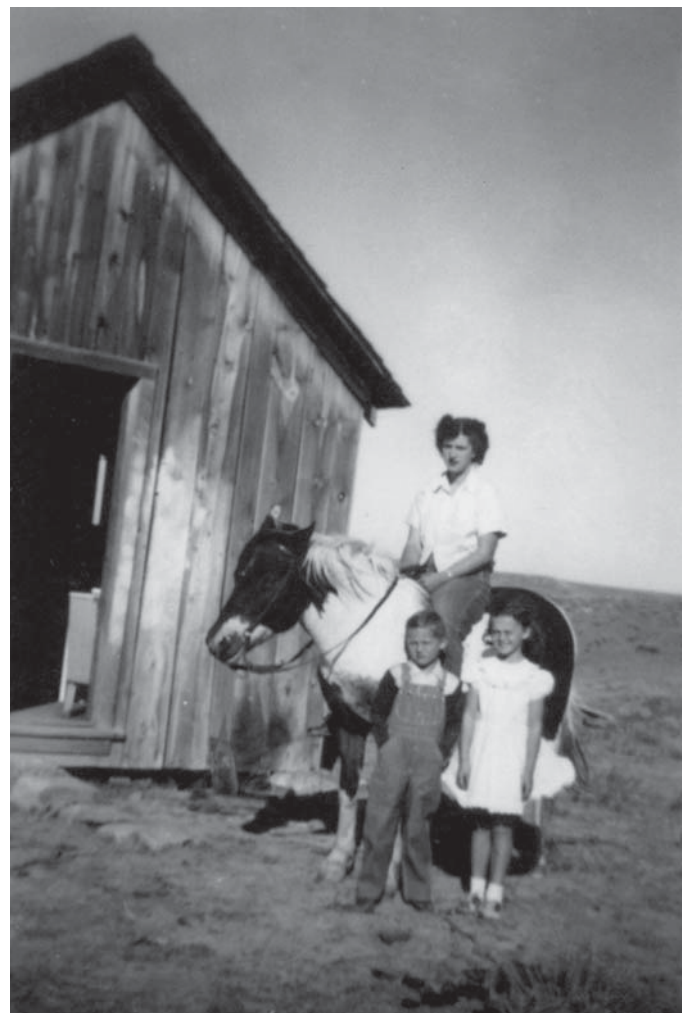
May 1945 students, back - Shirley Rush, middle - Elvin Rush, Bill Woods, Frank Svalina, Tom Svalina, front - Jack Svalina, Ellen Rush



Frank with calves

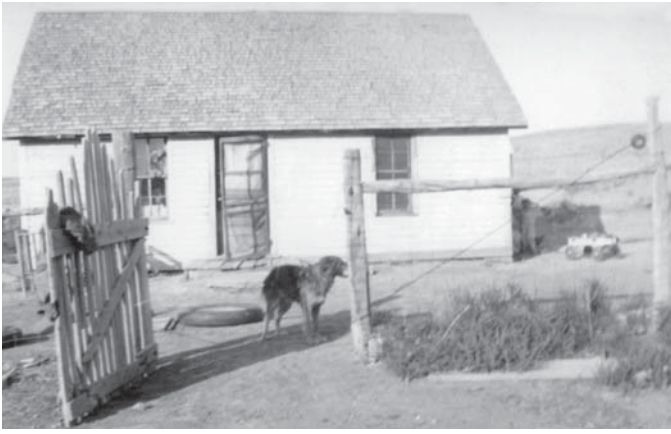


Family vehicle, after 1945



Ellen Svalina taught school, students Max & Gail Burch, ca. 1950

Frank, as a young boy walked two-three miles to school at the Hahn School; he also went to school in his mother's homestead house. The old schoolhouse and his mother's homestead are both on the 15 Ranch.



Updated homestead house



The 15 Ranch, home of Frank Svalina



Margaret (Noonan) Svalina's homestead house was also used as a school at times



Frank on Andy



School house where Frank went to school



Frank pulling ASCA float in Sundance fair parade

Frank attended St. Martins Academy in Sturgis, South Dakota until Christmas break. He never got a chance to return to school because he helped his father on the ranch. Frank did finish high school through correspondence

At the age of 22, Frank was drafted into the army. He took his first training at Fort Carson, Colorado, and his second – eight weeks – at Fort Lewis, Washington, before going to Ellison Air Force Base in Alaska. Fairbanks was near the base. Frank



Sen. John Barrasso, Frank Svalina Family, Gov. Matthew H. Mead, Rep. Cynthia Lummis, and Sen. Mike Enzi

worked communications, putting up telephone lines and doing radio work. Later he got the job of driving the Captain around in a jeep. He also hauled a lot of the laundry about 25 miles to where it was done, in a deuce and one-half.

Frank returned home and has been ranching all these wonderful years.

Frank married Carolyn Reid and they had one daughter.

The Erland Ranch, 1909

The Williams Family, Crook County

As told by Thomas Williams

Granddad, Mikel Erland, lived by himself from 1909 to 1921 when he married my grandmother, Alma Williams. In 1921, a new home was built and is still used by family. From 1923 to 1937, seven homesteads (320 acres each) were added. The total ranch was then approximately 2000 acres.

In the early days wheat was grown, and cattle and hay. Today it is only used for hay and cattle.



Erland Ranch house



Original homestead cabin, 1909-1922: the addition was put on for the school teacher.



The house as it was in 1922 is unchanged



Ranch house with homestead cabin in foreground



Erland Ranch house today

Other 2012 Centennial Ranch Families

The Ondriezek Ranch, 1912

The Joseph Jr. & Beverly Ondriezek Family,
Crook County

Wyoming State Parks & Cultural Resources
Historic Preservation Office

Barrett Building, 3rd Floor

2301 Central Avenue

Cheyenne, WY 82002

Phone: (307) 777-7697

Fax: (307) 777-6421



Front Cover Photo: Prager Ranch, 2009 Centennial Ranch, Converse County

Back Cover Photo: Kuhn Barn, 2011 Centennial Ranch, Johnson County

Photographs by Richard Collier, Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources