

THE 44th OLD TIME RANCH TOUR

STOPS ON THE 44TH OLD TIME RANCH TOUR

Saturday, July 15, 1995

1. **Rock River** *“Wagons, Ho!”*
2. **Rock Creek**
Host: Leola Hall Cordingly
Speakers: Leola Hall Cordingly
Eleanor Mullins
3. **Kite Ranch**
Hosts: Edie and Warren Ryff, Owners
Speakers: Warren Ryff
JoAnn McGill Benson
Mike McGill
Jim Pugh
4. **Dodge Creek Ranch**
Hosts: Evelyn and Jerry Kennedy, Owners
Speakers: Evelyn and Jerry Kennedy
George Dodge
5. **Double Four Ranch**
Host: George Portwood, Manager
Speakers: Dick Riley
George Portwood
6. **Hubbard’s Mountain Cupboard**
Hosts: Steve and Sarah Andra, Owners
Speaker: Sarah and Steve Andra
Lawrence Prager

Sponsors:

The Laramie Kiwanis Club

*The Albany County
Historical Society*

THE FORTY-FOURTH OLD TIME RANCH TOUR
Saturday, July 15, 1995

The Old Time Ranch Tours were conceived and promoted by Dr. Robert Burns. The series has continued annually since 1951, except 1982.

The 1995 Ranch Tour Co-chairpersons: Maurice Wear and Henry Bauer

Committee Members:	Bob Bacon	Ken Faulkner	Jim Hand	Arlowe Hulett
	Brian Lane	Ike McKay	Bob Nelson	

Ike McKay is the master of ceremonies.

Annotated maps of the tour are on the front cover of this booklet. The projected tour log follows the narrative.

Rest rooms are available for each stop at the trailer carrying the outhouses.

Safety: Safety is a primary concern. Tour marshals will coordinate the caravan. Be careful making turns on and off US 30. Please follow the directions of the traffic controllers. Please keep children and pets with you at all times. Neither the committee, individually or collectively, nor the sponsoring organizations accept any responsibility for accidents. A trailing car will inform the lead vehicle of any delays.

Keep a safe distance between cars. We will travel at 15 to 35 miles per hour on gravel roads. Drive carefully. Respect the other fellow. Enjoy the scenery and have a good trip.

Parking: Your cooperation is appreciated at the parking sites. Parking is accomplished so that cars need not use reverse gear for entering or leaving a site. If you have difficulty walking, please inform the first parker at entry to each site so a close-in parking place may be found. Please allow the numbered cars to leave a site first so tour personnel may direct traffic.

Courtesy: WE ARE GUESTS OF THE RANCHES AND HISTORICAL SITES. PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE ANY ITEMS, INCLUDING ARTIFACTS FOUND ON THE GROUND.

If you smoke outside your vehicle, please be careful and take your cigarette butts with you. Fire is an ever-present danger, and the dry grasses and old timbers of some structures offer excellent kindling.

Thanks: Many persons helped to organize and to promote this year's tour. In particular, we thank the to the tour by the Laramie Daily Boomerang, TCI Cablevision of Wyoming, and the Laramie radio stations KOWB, KCGY, KLDI, KRQU, KIMX and KUWR. We also thank the Wyoming Recreation Commission and Dick Strom's Rambouillet for lending the equipment for the rest room facilities. Finally, we thank the members of the Laramie Kiwanis Club who helped.

During your next visit please thank the fine people at these Laramie businesses that supported this Tour.

The Bank of Laramie	Albany County Public Employees	Brian Broderson Realty
First Interstate Bank	Federal Credit Union	Century 21 Real Estate Center
First National Bank of Wyoming	Laramie Plains Federal Credit Union	Duane Toro Real Estate
Key Bank of Wyoming	Security First	RE/MAX Realty of Laramie
	UNIWYO Federal Credit Union	

Today we visit historical sites in Northern Albany County. We are indebted to Arlowe Hulett for his help in arranging our visits.

The following narrative relies on the writings of Minnie A. Rietz concerning Rock Creek, Mark Harvey's *The Rural Community Centers of Northern Albany County*, Julie A. Long's *The Kite Ranch: A Symbol of Wyoming's History*, Murray Carroll's article entitled *Rock Creek, Wyoming Cattle Town*, and *Wyoming's Pioneer Ranches* by Robert Burns, Andrew Gillespie and Willing Richardson. Harvey's report was written in 1994 for the Albany County Historic Preservation Board and the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office. It is available in the University of Wyoming's Coe Library and in the Albany County Public Library. Long's report is available at the University of Wyoming's American Heritage Center. Carroll's article appeared in the September 1991, issue of *True West*, which is available in the Albany County Public Library.

Readers of the *Laramie Daily Boomerang* may remember a section of photographs and descriptions of Northern Albany County in the May 26, 1995 issue. This section relied heavily on Mark Harvey's research and is available on the tour today courtesy of the *Laramie Daily Boomerang*.

Stop 1. Rock River

The history of the Town of Rock River includes millions of years ago when dinosaurs roamed the land and the colorful Old West past when the pioneers first settled the area. Readers of the *Laramie Daily Boomerang* contained a page of photographs and descriptions of the Rock River Museum in the May 28, 1993 issue. Information also appeared in *The Forty-Second Old Time Ranch Tour* booklet of 1993.

Horse back riding, the Union Pacific Railroad, and automobiles have been important parts of the history of Rock River. The railroad pushed westward in 1868. From Laramie the railroad went to Rock Creek, eleven miles north of the current location of Rock River; to Wilcox, six miles northwest of Rock Creek; to Como, six miles west of Wilcox; and then to Medicine Bow. (The Old Time Ranch Tour visited Medicine Bow in 1991 and Rock River in 1993.) Because of the bad winter weather, the railroad abandoned the towns of Rock Creek and Wilcox on April 1, 1900, and Rock River replaced Rock Creek on the Union Pacific line.

The population began to decline in the 1960's as younger people sought jobs elsewhere. US 30 was the main east-west highway until I-80 was opened in fall of 1970. Tourists then passed by the town and the hotel closed. Clive Jones in [*A Profile of Rock River, Wyoming: Resources, Needs, and Potential*](#) wrote in 1976:

The history of the Rock River area points to a loss of economic function over time. In the early decades of the century, cattle and oil were shipped at the Rock River depot. Later, in the 1950's, timber was cut in the forests of the mountains west of town. This timber was made into lumber at the Rock River sawmill and was transported to market by railway and truck. Within the last two decades, however, the oil field has continued to pump less and become more automated, the sawmill has been removed from its site as cutting operations farther and farther away from town became excessively expensive, and the train depot has been removed. . . . Additionally, trends in the ranching and farming sectors provided fewer customers for Rock River businesses and little demand for seasonal labor.

Stop 2. Rock Creek

Murray Carroll's article and Minnie A. Rietz's writings are the basis of this account. Rock Creek was built on a section of land beside the Union Pacific Railroad (U. P. R. R.) in 1867. General Grenville Dodge was the Union Pacific's chief engineer for building the railroad and planned the route west of Cheyenne. Silas Seymour was a consulting engineer who decided that the railroad should go through the Rock Creek and Medicine Bow River valleys instead of following Dodge's route. The new route was twenty miles longer, required an eighty-five-foot deep Cannonball Cut, but needed about half the grading of the original plan. Since the new route would be quicker and less expensive to build, grading and construction began. However, the controversy continued. Murray Carroll wrote:

The dispute was settled in a meeting at Fort Sanders, Wyoming, on July 26, 1868, in what was one of the most notable gatherings of Civil War heroes since the end of the war. Generals Ulysses S. Grant, William T. Sherman, Philip H. Sheridan, John Gibbon, William S. Harney, August V. Kautz, Joseph H. Potter, Frederick T. Dent, Lewis C. Hunt, and Adam J. Slemmer met with Dodge, [Thomas C.] Durrant [vice-president], and Sidney M. Dillon of the Union Pacific. Grant decided the new route would be used since most of the grading was complete. He also decided that Dodge would remain as chief engineer and his route would be followed for the remainder of the line. Thus the hero of the Civil War--the man who would be elected president in less than four months--decided the location of Rock Creek.

The decision was lucrative for Union Pacific. The railroad received a \$48,000 federal subsidy per mile. Building time and costs were reduced. The railroad received additional sections of land along the route. An eight foot thick vein of bituminous coal was found during the construction. The coal could replace more expensive wood as a fuel for the trains, and the coal or the coal field could be sold. Mr. Carroll continued:

As the railroad pushed past Rock Creek, workers left behind a typical section town. The railroad ran close to Rock Creek, so a diversion dam was built and an intake pipe run into the creek. A steam pump drew water from the creek into a storage tank for watering locomotives. The pump and boiler occupied one end of a pump house, while the pump-tender's quarters occupied the rest. There was a small station with a platform that served both passengers and freight. At the far west end of the settlement stood a two-story section house to shelter the section workers assigned to the station.

Initially, Rock Creek was a quiet town on the railroad and twenty miles downstream from the Overland Trail. Railroaders, hunters, and prospectors lived here. The activity increased considerably in early summer after Charlie Bussard built a tie boom on the creek. He floated ties to Rock Creek where workers stacked and shipped them. These workers lived in a transient tent city. Because the road to Fort Fetterman started at Medicine Bow, supplies were shipped from there. Murray Carroll wrote:

However, in 1877 a substantial change occurred. During the Centennial Campaign against the Sioux the previous summer, the military road between Medicine Bow and Fort Fetterman was not adequate to meet Gen. George Crook's logistical needs. In May 1877, a party of soldiers from the Fourth Infantry and the Third Cavalry from Fort Sanders laid out a new route from Rock Creek to Fort Fetterman. The new road was only two miles shorter, but it eliminated four river crossings and used a better pass through the Laramie Mountains. It was . . . faster and safer . . . and open year round. . . .

The Rock Creek route joined the old Bozeman Trail at Fort Fetterman, becoming the first link of a four-hundred-mile road extending from the Union Pacific north to Terry's Landing, Montana.

By 1878, the town began to grow to accommodate the shipments of freight and cattle. In busy seasons, 175 or more freight outfits operated out of Rock Creek. Even the closing of Fort Fetterman in 1882 did not significantly reduce the traffic.

Beginning with the fall of 1883 a hundred carloads of cattle a day were shipped from Rock Creek. Murray Carroll reported that one cowboy said he saw 15,000 steers awaiting shipment in Rock Creek at one time.

Minnie A. Rietz reported that no more than twenty families lived in the town which boasted five saloons, two hotels, two general merchandise stores, the post office, depot, stage station, blacksmith shop, government warehouse, section house, a U. P. R. R. pumping plant, schoolhouse, U. S. Quartermaster's headquarters, big stockyards, and about fifteen dwellings. The town was a government freight depot for stores designed for the northern military posts that were freighted out by horses, oxen, and mule teams. Carroll wrote:

The beginning of the end for Rock Creek came in 1887 when the Fremont, Elkhorn, and Missouri Valley Railroad reached Fetterman. Cattle from the north were no longer driven down for shipment, the stage line became local, and the freighting business dropped away. The final blow came in 1900 when E. H. Harriman rebuilt the Union Pacific along Dodge's original route, moving the railroad eleven miles southwest of Rock Creek. Most of the residents moved to the new town of Rock River, and in a few years, Rock Creek was abandoned and all but forgotten.

Vandals burned most of the remaining buildings in the late-1970's.

Stop 3. Kite Ranch

Bud Gillespie and Bob Burns described the Kite Ranch in *Wyoming's Pioneer Ranches*. Julie A. Long updated the history of the ranch in her 1991 paper, *The Kite Ranch: A Symbol of Wyoming History*. This account is taken from Gillespie and Burns' writings and, with permission, from Ms. Long's report.

Mr. and Mrs. John McGill settled on this ranch where they spent their lifetimes. The ranch's name derives from the brand John McGill bought and registered in May 1878. The brand was shaped like a kite.

John McGill was born in Scotland in 1846 and came to Wyoming in 1868. Initially, he worked at a tie camp on French Creek. Long reported, "John McGill was an expert in breaking up tie jams, and loaded 18,553 ties and 1,632 culls onto railroad cars at Red Buttes in November 1876."

In 1875 McGill married Hellen Patrick Owen in Laramie. Hellen was born in Rickerton, Ayrshire County, Scotland in 1845 and came to America at the age of 9. She lived in Illinois, Fort Collins, and Tie Siding. The couple continued to work in Tie Siding until 1876.

The McGills had four children: Daughter Helen was the first homesteader on Sand Creek, the wife of T. E. Yarbrough, and later lived in Laramie. Daughter Jessie remained in the area as we will read below. Daughter Margaret Irvine lived in Laramie. Son Tom owned a ranch in the Sybille-Wheatland area.

John McGill filed on a section of land in 1875 on the Laramie River. Later he bought land in the railroad grant and leased school sections. The size of the ranch increased to 2500 acres. Because a large part of the land was bottom land, he constructed ditches and a dam of the Laramie River. It was a large task he understood well and could carry to completion. Eventually, he cut about 350 tons of hay and raised about 4,000 head of cattle. In the early years the cattle ran at large throughout the year resulting in a significant losses and thefts. Later the cattle were placed in the meadows for the winter and fed the hay. Long reported an interview with Owen McGill:

[In 1875] . . . John and his wife Hellen, built a two-room log house on their land near the Laramie River. The house was a "shot gun" type that as rooms were added, they were lined up one next to the other with a door in the center of each room....The logs came from the old Forty Mile Stage Station and Ranch, some forty miles away on the Rock Creek-Fort Fetterman Road. The logs had to be hauled by teams and wagons making the process difficult, as the terrain today is not friendly on the tree-barren, wind-swept prairie. The McGills built a rock wall 2-3 feet out from the west end of the house. This area was then filled with dirt to provide wind protection. The roof was composed of poles with dirt laid on top. This didn't provide for much protection from the rain. It rained for ten days inside, after a day of rain outside! The only dry place in the house was under the kitchen table, where they placed boxes, and on top of those the McGills stored sugar and other supplied they wished to keep dry.

The winter of 1886-87 was devastating to the cattle industry. Only 200 head of McGill's 4000 head of cattle survived!

Whether McGill first bought sheep in the 1870's or in the 1890's is unclear. However, he eventually began raising both sheep and cattle with success.

McGill bought additional ranches: the Coughlin, Vail, Mertz, Roe, and Cramer ranches. He also took leases on State lands on streams and water holes. It is estimated that he controlled about two square townships of land. (A township is a unit of measure equal to 36 sections or 36 square miles.) There was adequate land to run 1,800 cattle, three or four thousand sheep, and 250 horses. Long reported:

In 1879-80, McGill began the expensive building of fences around the ranch headquarters. The posts and wires had to be hauled a long way. That was just the beginning of his endeavor. In 1901, the McGills started construction on new barns, sheds and a blacksmith shop that replaced the old log buildings. In addition, the McGills had a magnificent stone home built.

The McGill ranch house was one of the best houses in Albany County at that time. The building is still standing and observable on today's tour. This house was quite modern with steam heat, hot and cold water, and a bathroom. A coal furnace provided heat; lighting was provided by carbide.

The house is made of yellow sandstone. The fourteen rooms, seven on each floor, were plastered throughout. The first floor rooms have ten foot ceilings. The floors are tongue and groove pine strips about two and one-half inches wide. Long's report has a detailed account of the construction of the house and its appearance in 1991. She also reported,

John's son, Tom, and a companion hauled the stones from Duck Creek Hills with four-horse teams and wagons. The two each had a wagon and hauled the stones approximately 7-8 miles to the site of the new house, which is located 68 mile N. E. of Laramie. . . .

There are five out-buildings associated with the house including a well house near the northwest corner. Originally, the well house was made of logs which are now covered with stucco. There is also a wooden addition to the house on the east side.

John McGill's wife, Hellen, died in 1902. Around 1907 John married Mrs. Fannie Settele, whose husband had died. They had two children, Francis and John. Fannie died thirteen days after John was born in February, 1910. John, Sr. died in 1918, a year after he had a leg amputated due to a blood clot on the instep of his foot.

The lives of the McGills are intertwined with those of the Mertzes and Sowards. John Soward and family settled on Duck Creek in 1885. His family consisted of three daughters and three sons. One daughter, Ida, had married John Mertz, and the couple had come with the Sowards to Wyoming. Shortly after settling here in 1885, the Sowards and Mertzes moved to the West, and only John and Ida Mertz returned to Duck Creek and settled on a homestead. The Mertzes lived there many years, improved the hay meadow and raised cattle. Oscar Soward, Ida's brother, lived with the couple for the time he was working for the 7L Ranch in Rock Creek. Oscar married Jessie McGill and soon took charge of the Kite Ranch. Oscar operated the ranch until his tragic death in a roping accident in 1915. He was caught under a horse while roping cattle during a branding operation.

In 1901 John and Ida Mertz sold their ranch to John McGill. McGill sold all his holdings to the Toltec Livestock Company in 1915 and died in Laramie in 1918. That company operated it about one year when it sold the ranch to the Cameron Brothers and M. D. Lewis. Lewis withdrew from the firm in 1917. The Camerons operated the ranch for about five years and lost it during the first depression. Eventually, all the land went back to John McGill's Estate. Later owners included Frances Parks, James Morton, and Frank Boyd.

The ranch was owned in 1991 by Isreal Roter, Charles Luckoff, and Warren Ryff and is still a working ranch. The ranch is about 33,000 acres in size.

John McGill, Sr. also had a political career. He was elected as the Albany County delegate to the constitutional convention on July 8, 1889. That convention met on September 2. The Wyoming voters adopted the constitution on November 5, and Wyoming became a state on July 10, 1890. McGill was also a member of the last Territorial Council in 1890. He went on to be in the first State Senate and to gain reelection in 1894, 1898, and 1902. Senator McGill was the president of the State Senate for the fifth legislative session which began in January, 1899. One accomplishment was the successful passage of his anti-gambling bill. McGill was also an Albany County commissioner for twelve years. He worked in that capacity to reduce spending.

Stop 4. Dodge Creek Ranch

Cherry Creek is an important tributary of Duck Creek which it enters from the south watershed. Duck Creek runs into the Laramie River a few miles before the Laramie River passes out of the canyon on the Wheatland side of the mountain.

The Dodge Creek Ranch was founded by W. H. Kennedy, who filed on a homestead along Dodge Creek. After proving up that homestead, he moved east and was on the Cherry Creek watershed near his brother John's land. The Kennedys built three houses near one another and raised cattle and sheep. The Kennedys added to the land holdings until it was among the largest in Albany County.

One piece of land added was that of Charley and Aubrey Vail. In the late 1880's, the Vails had homesteaded on what is know as the "Big Meadows," the largest on Cherry Creek. Although the Vails were highly educated people from Pennsylvania, they were not practical ranchers or stockmen. They continued in the cattle business until the late 1890's when they sold to John McGill. The Kennedy brothers purchased the land from the McGill Estate. The Vails returned to Pennsylvania where Aubrey studied for the ministry.

North Albany Clubhouse

The North Albany Club was built in 1928. Throughout the years, it has been used for social dances, general elections, non-denominational Sunday schools, Laramie Dell Club functions, 4-H meetings, County Commissioners' meetings, wedding anniversaries, birthday celebrations, and school Christmas programs. Mark Harvey gives a detailed account of the building and the operations of the local club. Those writings were used as the source here.

In 1926, the local ranch women formed the Laramie Dell Club, a social organization. They needed a meeting place, several men wanted a political center, others wanted a dance hall, and still others wanted anything but a dance hall. They finally agreed upon a large community hall. The land was donated by William I. Palmer, whose homestead was just northeast of the Clubhouse.

The building of the Clubhouse was a true community effort. Cash contributions were used to buy the lumber. George Dodge with help from Charley Johnson and Bill Kennedy transported the lumber from Archie McCauley's sawmill twenty miles north-northeast of here using a four horse team and wagon. Fred Gibbs, Sr. hauled maple flooring from Cheyenne. The building was slow because the ranchers involved had their own duties to attend to first. But by November, 1928, the structure was completed, and a Thanksgiving dinner and dance celebrated its completion. Thus began the tradition of a pot-luck supper which still continues today.

Several renovations have been made over the years. In 1949, the Clubhouse was stuccoed and the tin roof added. In the early 1960's the floor was re-laid. The bicentennial branding party in 1976 was the event at which the underside of the fold down, wooden stage was branded by everyone in attendance using their ranches' branding irons.

Social events have been varied. Annually, there is the rural school Christmas program. Dances were held at the Clubhouse from May to November until the late 1970's and are now held occasionally. A strict rule is that no alcohol may be consumed.

Ranchers nearby include Budd and Darlene Palmer on the Palmer Ranch; Jerry and Evelyn Kennedy on the Dodge Creek Ranch; and Gene and Joyce Kennedy and their sons, daughter-in-laws and grandchildren on the Vail Ranch.

The Cozy Hollow school, located on the Vail Ranch, is one of the remaining rural schools in the Northern Albany County area. The school was built in 1932 and used in the 1932-33 school year. The building itself has been moved several times and now stands in disrepair.

Stop 5. Double Four Ranch

Most of the land and historic ranches from Duck Creek north to Hubbard's Mountain Cupboard is owned by True Ranches, Inc. It now owns the old McFarlane Ranch, the Sturgeon Ranch, the Newkirk Ranch, the Parker Ranch, and several of the old Atkinson Ranches. The foreman now lives on the old William Atkinson Ranch, known today as the Double Four. The accounts below are taken from Bud Gillespie's writings in *Wyoming's Pioneer Ranches*.

McFarlane Ranch

John McFarland was of Scottish descent. The Scots were some of the earliest settlers in the area and arrived as early as 1866. John McFarland and his family settled The McFarlane Ranch prior to 1887. They had moved to the area from Chugwater Creek. The site was on what is called McFarlane Creek, a tributary of the North Laramie River.

John bought cattle in Oregon and trailed them into Laramie Peak country. These cattle were Shorthorns which he bred to Herefords to produce a high grade of cattle. His brother-in-law, Dan McIllevain, furnished John and his brothers with high grade Hereford bulls. These cattle roamed the open range both in summer and in winter. The losses, therefore, were great. As a result, McFarlane reduced the number of head of cattle and began to provide winter feed. He had secured a water right out of McFarlane Creek to irrigate 117 acres of land. The meadows produced sufficient hay to allow him to run a large number of cattle. The McFarlanes had six children, John, David, Jennie, Kate, Alamanda and Agnes.

Sturgeon Ranch

William Sturgeon was an early settler on Duck Creek. He took possession of a claim a man named Frank Clark had made. The section was across the Duck Creek valley from the John Mertz homestead. Clark was a detective by profession but did not practice his trade here except for amusement.

Sturgeon married Cicely Atkinson in 1894. They lived on Duck Creek for a couple of years before moving to Rees Creek, a tributary of McFarlane Creek. He settled there as a squatter. He proved up on the land in 1906 and gradually built up the ranch and stock. For some years Sturgeon raised sheep and cattle. Later he disposed of the sheep. Sturgeon obtained a water right out of Rees Creek to irrigate 37 acres of meadow.

The Sturgeons had seven children, Robert, George, Sidney, Alma, Katie, and Cecelia. A fourth son was dragged to death by a horse at the age of 14. Mr. Sturgeon survived well into his 80's and still operated in the ranch in the 1950's with his daughter Cecelia and her husband Stanley Wilson. William retired a short time before his death in 1954.

Newkirk Ranch

John Newkirk filed on a section of land in 1915. He raised a few cattle. During the first outbreak of Spanish influenza after World War I, the Newkirk family contracted it. The entire family was deathly sick, and the father and oldest son died in the same room.

Parker Ranch

George W. Parker and his family settled on a homestead on what is known as the Snow Water Gulch. Mr. Parker built a reservoir which impounded 266 acre feet of water which he used to irrigate his hay meadows. He raised cattle and also at one time raised sheep. The Parkers had a large family.

William Atkinson Ranch

William Atkinson filed on a homestead in the early 1900's. The site was in what was later known as Brandle Draw. Williams father, James Atkinson, Sr., had squatted on land in the same area in the late 1880's. William lived there with his family until about 1912 when he sold out to a young man from Maryland named Bill Brandle. Brandle had been working for Atkinson and had asked what William would sell the ranch for. Atkinson told him. Then Brandle made a trip back home and returned to buy the ranch for cash. He took immediate possession.

William Atkinson used two brands. One was a four H reversed Four connected used on the right ribs of cattle and left shoulders on horses. The second was called Hanging Fours, two fours connected and one below the other. The latter is the brand used today by the Double Four Ranch.

Bill Brandle started a horse ranch there. He bought a very large Shire stallion. He operated the ranch until he sold it to A. Flake Hall, uncle of Bud Gillespie. Hall eventually added land to create a solid 16 section block. This land included a piece upstream on another creek and ranches owned by Mrs. Theodore Tregoning and Jim Donnelly.

Stop 6. Hubbard's Mountain Cupboard

Hubbard's Mountain Cupboard is located along Cottonwood Creek. The site was homesteaded by Joe Rutherford. Joe came to the area in the 1880's as a cowboy for Hubert Teschemacher's and Frederick DeBillier's Duck Bar Ranch. That ranch was located in what is now Platte County again along Cottonwood Creek.

Mark Harvey quotes James A. Shaw's description of Joe Rutherford:

Joe was "an expert on the mouth harp and I remember he played for lots of the dances. Joe always took in most of the dances as he loved to visit and he liked to dance and was very good at doing the old dances."

In 1942, a few years before his death, Joe sold the ranch to Victor White. Vic and his wife Jennie Garrett White started a small grocery store on the ranch. In 1948, they sold the ranch and store to Carl "Dutch" Hubbard, a retired swimming instructor from Omaha, Nebraska. Dutch and his wife Bunny (Hart) added a dance hall and bar, sleeping rooms, and cabins.

Hubbard's Mountain Cupboard became the place to go on Saturday nights. The original dance hall does not exist. In 1951, a disastrous fire destroyed all the property except the ranch house. The community responded with donations of lumber, money, and labor to build a new dance hall.

Lawrence Prager, our speaker today, was a regular performer at the dance held here every Saturday night. Again, we quote from Mark Harvey:

"Everyone danced with everyone" recalls Sibyl Prager, noting that the most popular dances were those involving the changing of partners. Dutch was the caller for the dances, and enjoyed yelling out: "Round Dance," or "Tag Dance," or "Whistle Dance," or "Broom dance." In the case of the "Whistle Dance," whenever Dutch would blow a whistle, everyone would have to change partners quickly. The "Broom Dance" was similar; someone was given a broom and he/she would join the crowded dance floor. At any given time, the person with the broom would snap it on the floor, which signaled the change of partners. Whoever ended up without a partner got the broom, and dance went on accordingly.

About 1960, Bunny began selling hot dogs and sloppy Joes. People paid a dollar for the dance and a chance for the door prizes awarded at midnight. The regular musicians were Cliff Hubbard, son of Bunny and Dutch; Lawrence Prager, Larry Prager, Bobby Garrett, Frank Schreyer, and Johnny Walker. Many other functions were held at the Hubbard's: school Christmas programs and meetings of the school board, county commissioners, fire zone boards and public land users.

In 1973 Dutch and Bunny Hubbard retired to Wheatland and sold to Clinton and Carl Nicks. The Nicks sold to absentee landowners. Gradually, the social events came to a halt and ended in 1986. In 1989, Dan and Jill Lilly from Hawaii bought the property and brought back the dances in 1993.

To Return To Laramie From Hubbard's Mountain Cupboard

To return to Laramie you may follow our route in reverse our route. However, that would be a slow journey for most of the way. There are two alternative routes to return to Laramie listed below which take you east to I-25. We may have more advice about the road conditions at the last stop. The trip will take at least 2.5 hours.

Via Harris Park Road

- 0.0 Continue north on Albany County Road 71
- 3.0 Bear right to remain on Albany County Road 71, Harris Park Road
- 6.0 Bear left
- 6.3 Held Creek
- 14.8 Fish Creek Road
- 16.4 Pavement !!
- 22.9 Turn onto I-25 South toward Wheatland
- 44.4 Leave I-25 onto Wyoming Highway 34 west toward Bosler (Construction may cause delays.)
- 97.2 Left onto US 30 toward Laramie
- 113.8 Third and Curtis Streets in Laramie

Via Fletcher Park Road

- 0.0 Reverse direction and retrace our path on Albany County Road 71
- 5.9 Left onto Albany County Road 716, Fletcher Park Road
- 17.5 Pavement !!
- 32.0 Wheatland
- 35.6 Right at Grange Hall onto Wyoming Highway 34 toward Bosler
- 82.5 Left onto US 30 toward Laramie
- 99.1 Laramie

A fourth option is to continue on the interstate highway from Wheatland to Cheyenne and then to turn onto I-80 west toward Laramie from Cheyenne. This route is substantially longer, but posted speed limits are higher.

Old Time Ranch Tour Videotapes

VHS videotapes of the 1992, 1993, and 1994 Old Time Ranch Tours are available for purchase at \$20 per tape. If you are interested in ordering videotapes, please contact

Mr. Robert Dudley
6245 W. Wolf Street
Phoenix, AZ 85033

The 44th Old Time Ranch Tour

Saturday, July 15, 1995

<u>Locations and Stops</u>	<u>Tour Time</u>	<u>Local Distance</u>	<u>Tour Distance</u>
Third & Curtis Streets	07:30 am	0.0	0.0
Bosler	07:50 am	18.4	18.4
Rock River	08:11 am	19.1	37.5
Left onto Avenue C	08:12 am	0.6	38.1
Stop 1. Rock River Museum	08:13 am	0.7	38.8
Leave Rock River Museum	08:30 am	0.0	38.8
Turn left onto US 30	08:31 am	0.2	39.0
Monument alongside US 30	08:33 am	1.5	40.5
Turn right onto Albany County 61, Fetterman Road	08:35 am	1.4	41.9
The Rock Creek	08:41 am	3.5	45.4
Old railroad grade	08:46 am	3.2	48.6
Turn left toward Old Rock Creek	08:49 am	0.7	49.3
Stop 2. Hill by Old Rock Creek	08:54 am	1.3	50.6
Leave Hill by Old Rock Creek	09:45 am	0.0	50.6
Turn left onto Fetterman Road	09:50 am	0.9	51.5
Bear right at the junction of A.C. 61 and A.C.721	10:03 am	7.7	59.2
Right toward Kite Ranch	10:13 am	5.8	65.0
Turn left toward Kite Ranch	10:22 am	5.4	70.4
Stop 3. Kite Ranch	10:23 am	0.7	71.1
Leave Kite Ranch	11:20 am	0.0	71.1
Back to Albany County 721	11:29 am	6.0	77.1
Look back at the view!	11:35 am	3.5	80.6
Turn right onto Albany County 727	11:38 am	1.5	82.1
North Albany Hall	11:42 am	1.5	83.6
Stop 4. Dodge Creek Ranch	11:50 am	3.4	87.0
Leave Dodge Creek Ranch	01:15 pm	0.5	87.5
North Albany Hall	01:21 pm	2.5	90.0
Right onto Albany County 713	01:22 pm	0.1	90.1
Right onto Albany County 721	01:26 pm	1.5	91.6
Left onto A. C. 71 at junction with A. C. 721	01:42 pm	9.2	100.8
Turn right into Double Four Ranch	01:57 pm	8.6	109.4
Stop 5. Double Four Ranch	01:58 pm	0.6	110.0
Leave True Ranch, right onto A. C. 71	02:55 pm	0.2	110.2
Pass Fletcher Park Road	03:03 pm	3.5	113.7
Cottonwood School	03:16 pm	5.7	119.4
Stop 6. Hubbard's Mountain Cupboard	03:17 pm	0.4	119.8
Leave Hubbard's Mountain Cupboard	04:10 pm	0.0	119.8