

ROUTE OF OLD TIME RANCH TOUR
 SWAN LAND & LIVESTOCK COMPANY ROUNDUP

Sunday, July 19, 1953

LARAMIE--Courthouse Square
 (Via U.S. Highway 30)

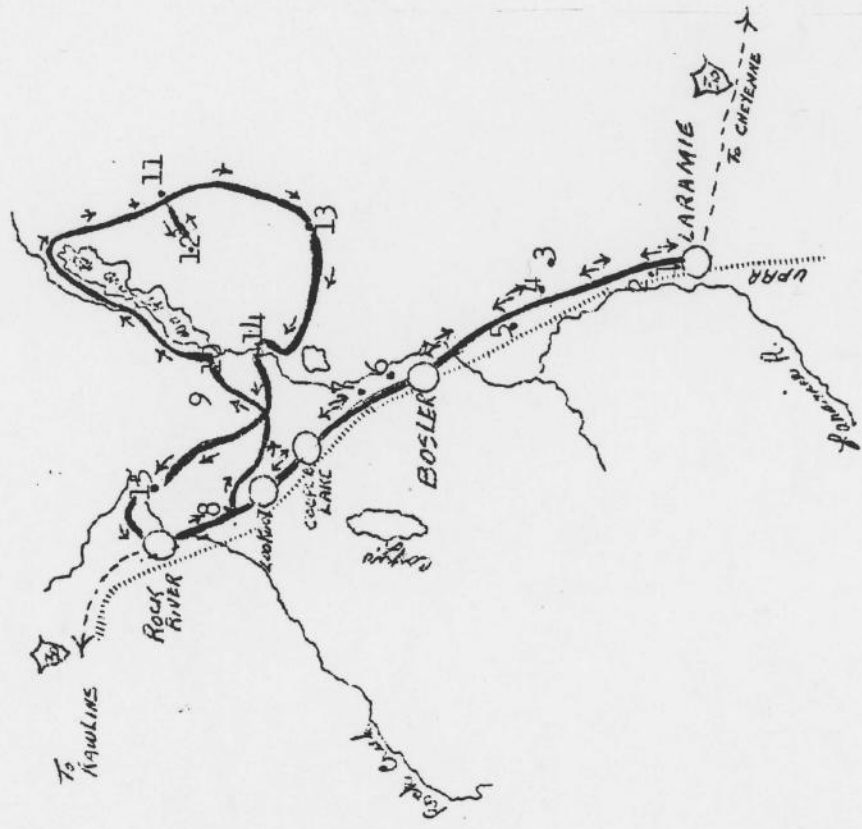
1. Diamond Horseshoe
 2. Mary Earhart's Ranch
 3. King Bros. Ranch Turnoff
 4. Howell Turnoff
 5. Wyoming Station
- BOSLER
6. Ghost Ranch
 7. Log Cabin Filling Station
- COOPER LAKE
 LOCKOUT
8. Kite Ranch Turnoff (TAKE THIS ROAD)
 9. Bell & Hirsig Cattle Corrals.
 10. Wheatland Reservoir Dam
 11. Junction--Blue Grass Well
 12. Blue Grass Well (RETURN TO JUNCTION)
 13. Sibille Springs

LIBRARY
 OF THE
 UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING
 LARAMIE

SITE FOR LUNCH

14. Laramie River Crossing
15. Rock Creek Station

ROCK RIVER
 LARAMIE



Old Time Round Trip

HISTORICAL TOUR ON ROUTE OF SWAN COMPANY ROUNDUP

Sponsored by the Albany County Historical Society, the University of Wyoming Summer School and the Kiwanis Club. Tour arranged by Bud Gillespie and Bob Burns.

Bring your car, your family, friends and lunch and be at the COURT HOUSE SQUARE in LARAMIE at 9:00 A.M. Sunday July 19, 1953.*

* * * * *

Today we are following the route of the round-up wagon of the Swan Land and Cattle Company. This Company was one of the largest cattle companies in the west and had probably the longest life of any of the British companies. It was organized in 1883 by Alexander H. Swan with stockholders in London and Edinburgh and was capitalized at three million dollars. The Swan holdings were sold out in 1947 except for the home place at Chugwater. So this company operated for sixty-three years. At the peak of its operations the company controlled more than 600,000 acres of Wyoming range and owned over a hundred thousand head of cattle.

In 1926 the company was reincorporated in Delaware as the Swan Company with the late John Clay as president. Frank H. Connor of Chicago and James T. Craig were elected vice presidents and Curtis Templin manager. The last cattle roundup was in 1905, when some 27,000 beeves were sold. They went into sheep at that time and ran up to 80,000 head which in 1947 were sold.

One hears much about the hard winter of 1885-86. The annual report of the Swan Land and Cattle Company for 1885 published on March 12, 1886, as reported by Pelzer in his book *Cattlemen's Frontier*, shows the effect of the hard winter on that outfit. The outfit had 109,893 head of cattle on January 1, 1885. A total deduction of 18,775 head was made for strays, sales and deaths. On December 31, 1885 the books showed 123,460 cattle valued at \$3,176,793.85. The natural increase of the herd was reported as 9,571 calves at \$179,545 which was placed in a reserve fund. The dividend reduced to six per cent was payable in March 1886. A "special deduction of 3,000 for steers" seemed like a penance alongside the solemn declaration that "our range count should tally with our book numbers".

The shipment of 1,834 steers and bulls to Omaha to be fattened on distillery grains at the Willow Springs Distillery seemed like more evidence of an overstocked range. . . . A dismal report for the year 1886 records the loss by death and strays at 10,371. Only 4,800 cattle were sold and the inventory of cattle, horses, lands and-----future hopes-----was set down as \$3,819,000 on December 31, 1886. It had been a disastrous year according to the report. The moist autumn of 1885 had interfered with the natural curing of the grass, and other territories and states had felt the scarcity of feed and water. Enforced sales and crowded markets naturally resulted. The Chicago yards alone received two million cattle. The lessened demand, due to industrial inactivity, strikes, the dry summer and resultant small corn crop, a lack of ready money and commercial failures caused a loss of \$135,000 to the company.

After this chapter of lamentations the stockholders were prepared for the news that no dividend was to be paid in 1887. But optimism and penance appear in another part of the report. The hotel and store had brought a profit of \$3,199 and the irrigation outlay of \$30,520 since the year 1893 for barns, corrals and houses was henceforth to be "largely reduced" and the necessity for the strictest economy had been impressed on the new manager.

* An old time chuck feed will be available for 75¢ a head. Tickets bought in advance.

A.H. Swan failed in May 1887 and Finlay Dunn, one of the directors and sadly inexperienced in handling cowboys, cattle and vast pastures was sent out as manager. He attempted to check the book count of cattle by a tally and instead of using branding irons he tried to use paint which was applied liberally to some 29,008 head of terrified cattle before the farce had run its course.

The entire story is found in John Clay's book "My Life on the Range". That fall Mr. Dunn gave up and went home and his report brought home to the directors the seriousness of the situation. Eventually they hired John Clay as their manager in March 1888.

John Clay served for eight years and the company then was under the managership of Al Bowie and more recently Curtis Templin, who still takes care of the small acreage and the ranch headquarters at Chugwater.

(See Laramie Plains Chronicle, July 16 and 30, 1952)

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LOG OF THE SWAN ROUNDUP TOUR

At the left as we leave Laramie by U.S. Highway 30 going north, we see to the left the sprawling stockyards which today is one of the important feeding points for livestock shipments on the Union Pacific Railroad. Just across the Laramie River and lying along the railroad tracks is the Pacific Fruit Express ice plant one of the largest artificial ice plants in the world. We pass next to the Diamond Horseshoe, one of Laramie's popular eating places, and elsewhere in the country, it is a rendezvous for truck drivers and that speaks for the food available there.

		Local	Trip
DIAMOND HORSESHOE	9:15 A.M.	3.1 miles	3.1 miles

Continuing on our northward way with Laramie Peak always in the northern horizon, we note to the left an old rock building. This location is one of the small leaseholds of the early days and is noted for its proprietor Aunt Mary Earhart who lived there for many years and kept a dairy and set a fine table for visitors. Her hospitality was famed among all ages and classes of people, and is probably best illustrated by the fact that the boys of yesteryear used to stop there for "eats" after spending some time with "Windy Jim" Williams who let them ride horses. Jim's place was originally filed on by James Vine, pioneer furniture dealer in Laramie.

AUNT MARY EARHART'S RANCH	9:16 A.M.	0.5 mile	3.6 miles
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(See Laramie Plains Chronicle for January 2, 1952)

We next pass on the right a famous ranch of the west, the King Brothers Ranch, world famous for its fine-wool sheep established with the best blood from Vermont and Germany in the 90's and mecca for sheepbreeders from all parts of the world. This ranch was sold to settle the estate in 1950.

Entrance to King Brothers Ranch at right.	9:21 A.M.	3.8 miles	7.4 miles
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(See Laramie Plains Chronicle, March 12 and 26, April 9 and 26 and May 7, 1952)

On the left is Wyoming Station and just west of the station are several ranches. About two miles to the west is the old Oasis Ranch, formerly headquarters for

Ora Haley at the time when the railroad route was changed in 1900. The other places are more recent and were settled by the Riederfels, who came west from Ohio with other settlers to colonize the land about 1908.

Wyoming Station to the left. 9:27 A.M. 5.0 miles 12.4 miles
(See Laramie Plains Chronicle, December 19, 1951 and June 18, 1952)

After passing Wyoming Station you will see extensive meadows on the west side of the railroad track to your left. These are the so-called Latham Bottoms named after Dr. H. Latham, a Laramie Plains booster of 1871. He was the surgeon for the Union Pacific Railroad and on the side was interested in a number of ranching operations.

Latham Bottoms to the left. 9:29 A.M. 1.3 miles 13.7 miles
(See Laramie Plains Chronicle, February 18, 1953)

The Oasis ditch runs under the highway and is marked on the standards of the bridge. This is one of the early ditches carrying water from the Laramie River to lands along the eastern bench land.

Oasis Ditch. 9:32 A.M. 2.1 miles 15.8 miles

The Boughton canal is the next to be crossed and this ditch is named after M.V. Boughton a pioneer rancher who settled the present Iron Mountain Ranch owned by Wallis Brothers.

Boughton Canal 9:35 A.M. 1.9 miles 17.7 miles

Wheatland Cutoff Junction, Highways 30 and 14. 9:36 A.M. 0.4 miles 18.1 miles

Laramie River Bridge 0.1 miles 18.2 miles

Bosler 9:37 A.M. 1.8 miles 20.0 miles

When the railroad was changed in 1899-1900 a station was erected and railroad officials asked Mr. John C. Coble, local ranch operator (Iron Mountain Ranch) for an appropriate name for the new station. He suggested the station be named Bosler after his partner Frank C. Bosler. East of Bosler is the Ghost Ranch, which received its name from many tragedies which happened there. (See Laramie Plains Chronicle, June 18, 1952). North of the Ghost Ranch which Mr. Bosler used as a headquarters for his land colonization scheme is the Schmidl farm, which produces a grain crop second to none.

Homestead Filling Station on right. 9:39 A.M. 0.8 miles 21.8 miles

To the right and north of the Ghost Ranch there are large meadows and a number of haystacks. This is the old Boughton Ranch now owned by Miller and Wallis and at one time the headquarters of the Iron Mountain Ranch of Coble, Bosler and others. (See Laramie Plains Chronicle, June 18, 1952)

The next railroad station north of Bosler is Cooper Lake, which received its name from the lake some three miles west of it.

Cooper Lake Station, on left. 9:42 A.M. 4.1 miles 25.7 miles

Cooper Lake was named after one of the partners of the pioneer cattle outfits owned by Marsh and Cooper, who had large holdings on Three Mile and Rock Creek. They had a herd of some 9,000 cattle at the peak of their operations. (See Laramie Plains Chronicle, April 1, 1953)

The next station is Lookout, a large cattle shipping point today and formerly the shipping point for the large wool clip of the Swan Company who had a wool warehouse there on a spur of the track. They loaded about ^{1/2} million pounds of wool there, annually shorn from around 50,000 sheep at the shearing pens, know as the Two Bar Pens, located on the Laramie River some ten miles north and east of Lookout.

Lookout Station on the left.	9:45 A.M.	3.0 miles	28.7 miles
Gillespie Ranch on the right.	9:46 A.M.	0.9 miles	29.6 miles

After leaving Lookout you can look back to the right and see the Laramie River Valley and the Gillespie Ranch buildings gleaming white in the morning sun. This ranch is now owned by the Schmale Brothers. (See Laramie Plains Chronicle, June 18 and July 2, 1952)

After passing Lookout you will notice a group of high knolls to the right. The one the furthest to the right or to the east is where a fourteen year old boy was found dead by Luttie Dunn in June 1890. No clue was ever found to solve the mystery of the boy's death and he was buried where he was found.

KITE RANCH ROAD. Turn right over cattle guard

Entering Malmquist Ranch.	9:48 A.M.	0.9 mile	30.5 miles
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Soon after entering the Malmquist land you will see Harper station, some three miles to the west. After following the Kite Ranch road for about three miles in a northerly direction you will come to a cattle guard in a fence running north and south which marks the edge of the Gillespie Ranch.

CATTLE GUARD. Into Gillespie Ranch.	9:55 A.M.	2.6 miles	33.1 miles
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CATTLE GUARD. Into Bell and Hirsig lands.	10:01 A.M.	2.4 miles	35.5 miles
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CATTLE CORRALS & LOADING CHUTE. Bell & Hirsig	10:17 A.M.	5.8 miles	41.3 miles
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Left hand road goes to Boswell Springs. We take the right hand road.

Soon after entering the Bell & Hirsig lands you will notice a valley to your left and this is known as Miser Creek which will be mentioned later in this schedule as our later route goes closer to it.

CATTLE GUARD WITH STONE PILLARS. Entering Boyd Ranch	10:20 A.M.	3.8 & 45.1 miles
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While passing through the Boyd Ranch we are travelling the same route the soldiers followed from Fort Laramie to Fort Halleck. They crossed the Laramie River a few hundred yards from the south end of the Wheatland Reservoir Dam, at a point where a gulch empties into the reservoir.

WHEATLAND RESERVOIR DAM ARCHWAY. Caretaker's house to left.	10:21 A.M.	1.0 mile	46.1 miles
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This dam was started in the fall of 1899 and completed in 1902.

To the north and a little west is the Kite Ranch, settled by the late John McGill. (See Laramie Plains Chronicle, July 2, 1952)

KITE RANCH. One mile to left.	10:24 A.M.	0.5 mile	45.6 miles
CATTLE GUARD. North end of reservoir.	10:25 A.M.	0.2 mile	46.8 miles
CATTLE GUARD. Re-enter Boyd land.	10:30 A.M.	2.1 miles	48.9 miles
SPILLWAY OF RESERVOIR. Cattle guard entering Dodge land.	10:38 A.M.	3.2 miles	52.1 miles

After crossing road turn sharply back to the right and head south.
10:40 A.M. 0.7 mile 52.8 miles

WIRE GATE WITH HIGH POSTS. 10:55 A.M. 2.3 miles 56.1 miles
Entering another Dodge pasture.

FROM THIS GATE ON SOUTH OF SIBYLLE SPRINGS, A DISTANCE OF SOME TWENTY-SEVEN MILES, THERE ARE MANY HIGH CENTERS IN THE ROAD. WATCH THE ROAD CAREFULLY AND FIDE THE SIDE OF THE TRACKS TO AVOID THE GRASSY HIGH CENTERS.

Looking to the east from close to the north end of the Wheatland reservoir you will see a round shaped peak which is the highest in the locality. It is called Bull Camp Peak from the fact that at its base were some meadows which cut hay to winter some oxen that were used to haul freight out of old Rock Creek Station. Tom Dodge later took the piece of land for a homestead and developed a ranch there.

WIRE GATE ENTERING LUCY LAND. 11:10 A.M. 3.1 miles 59.2 miles

This new road is one that crosses from the late J.T. Dodge's Ranch over to Halleck Canyon.

WIRE GATE. 11:15 A.M. 1.7 miles 60.9 miles

WIRE GATE. 11:25 A.M. 1.2 miles 62.1 miles

CROSS ROAD. Turn sharp to right. 11:28 A.M. 0.4 mile 62.5 miles

Just west of this junction and over the brim of the hill is the vicinity where Mike Tichac became lost and perished during the hunting season of 1951.

STOP FOR TEN MINUTES. 11:28 to 11:38 A.M.

GATE INTO GILBERT SMALL FIELD. At foot of hill. 11:41 A.M. 0.4 mile 62.9 miles

JUNCTION WITH GRADED ROAD. Cross it and continue to the West. 11:49 A.M.
1.8 miles 64.7 miles

BLUE GRASS WELL. STOP FOR TEN MINUTES. 11:52 A.M. to 12:02 P.M. 0.4 and 65.1 mi.
(See Laramie Plains Chronicle, August 13, 1952)

This is known as the largest water hole in the world and has sufficient water coming in from underneath to water two or three thousand cattle and some five-hundred

head of horses during a 24 hour period without lowering the water level. It is located on land belonging to Gilbert Small, state legislator from Platte County.

We retrace our trail now to the junction where we turned sharp to the right and now cross directly to the east.

CROSS NEWLY GRADED ROAD LEADING TO LUCY CAMP WHICH CAN NOW BE SEEN TO THE NORTH.
12:05 P.M. 0.4 mile 65.5 miles

WIRE GATE AT FOOT OF HILL. 12:13 P.M. 1.8 miles 67.3 miles

CROSS ROAD FROM DODGE & HALLECK CANYON AND PROCEED TO THE EAST. 12:16 P.M.
2.2 miles 69.5 miles

BLUE GRASS CORRALS. STOP FOR LUNCH 12:25 to 1:25 P.M. 2.2 miles 71.7 miles

This branding corral also known as the Two Bar Pens is the location of an old branding corral and campsite of the Swan Roundup. A good sized spring near the cabin to the east runs westerly and empties into Blue Grass Creek coming from the south. This is the place where the Swan Land and Cattle Company started their roundup. They would circle and drive the cattle in from as far north as Dodge's Ranch and west to the big lake (now the Wheatland Reservoir) east and north down to the fences. The herd would be held here and two pairs of men would go into the herd and cut out the cows and calves. Then the beeves were cut out. The cows and calves were taken to the corral where the calves were branded, altered and turned loose. At this time they had the start of a trainload of beef. The next morning the camp was moved to Sibylle Springs and the south country was covered.

JUNCTION. Take trail to left up Blue Grass Creek. 1:30 P.M. 0.6 mile 72.3 miles

WIRE GATE. 1:48 P.M. 3.4 miles 75.7 miles

WIRE GATE. 1:55 P.M. 2.2 miles 77.9 miles

WIRE GATE 2:06 P.M. 3.1 miles 81.0 miles

WIRE GATE 2:11 P.M. 1.1 miles 82.1 miles

SIBYLLE SPRINGS. STOP 15 MINUTES. 2:17 to 2:32 P.M. 1.1 miles 83.2 miles

All of the country which we have been travelling through is called the Blue Grass flats. The cattle were gathered from the head of Halleck and Tower Canyons and School Creek and driven to Sibylle Springs. The country clear down as far as the Fitzmorris Ranch at the north mouth of Bear Creek and Long Canyon was covered. The largest bunch of cattle ever seen by the writer (ASG) gathered in one drive was brought into Sibylle Springs in 1900 when the Two Bar and Coble wagons were working together. There were 3,500 head in the bunch gathered at that time. At another time 3,000 head were in one bunch which were dipped at Rock Creek but they were gathered from a much larger territory.

Leaving Sibylle Springs we turn to the right and enter the Laramie Plains proper.

WIRE GATE. Take right hand trail. 2:38 P.M. 0.6 mile 83.8 miles

We run across a dim prairie trail which is as smooth as a billiard table and go almost straight west. To our north is the south rim of the Blue Grass Ridge.

BLUE GRASS KNOLL. To our left. 2:48 P.M. 4.2 miles 88.0 miles

This is quite a landmark and the school teacher and the Gillespie children at one time climbed it and put the American flag on a pole at the summit---in fact, they had quite a time packing the pole to the summit. Now there is a geological tripod on the summit.

Turn left at creek towards Gillespie Reservoir. 2:56 P.M. 2.7 miles 90.7 miles

WIRE GATE 2:57 P.M. 0.4 mile 91.1 miles

WIRE GATE. Into Gillespie Horse Pasture. 3:02 P.M. 1.1 miles 92.2 miles

WIRE GATE. Out of Gillespie Horse Pasture. 3:07 P.M. 0.6 mile 92.8 miles

Ione Lake, now a vast meadow to our right, in the early days was quite a land mark and the edges of the former lake can be identified by the high bank. There are many interesting things in connection with that lake in the early days. The old timers claimed it had no bottom and even claimed to have seen sea serpents in it according to the drinks furnished. Lawrence and McGibbon of the Red Ranch (Laramie Plains Chronicle, June 18, 1952) lost a band of sheep on the ice during a bad winter. After the lake dried up, Sam Gillespie, the writer's (ASG) father, farmed it and raised tremendous crops---as much as 5,000 bushels of oats. Now you can see it is a hay meadow which produces nearly a thousand tons of hay. You will notice a group of white buildings between the lake bed or meadows and the Laramie River and this is the ranch which Sam Gillespie settled in 1883. Sam Gillespie killed the last buffalo on the Laramie Plains in July 1881 about a mile and a half south of Sibylla Springs, just out of the mouth of Plumbago Canyon.

SWAN ROUNDUP CAMP ON LARAMIE RIVER. 3:12 P.M. 0.4 mile 93.2 miles
STOP TEN MINUTES 3:12 to 3:22 P.M.

By this time a trainload of cattle had been gathered and were ready to be taken to Rock Creek for shipment. We are not able with modern cars to ford the river, but in the olden days there were no willows on the west bank of the stream and it was easy to ford it at this point. In fact, a person on foot can walk across the shallow ford now at low water. So we will retrace our way east to the gate where we hit the north and south road.

Back to road near gate we just came through and turn left to the north. 3:27 P.M.
0.4 mile 93.6 miles

WIRE GATE. 3:32 P.M. 1.1 mile 94.7 miles

WIRE GATE. Just east of Swan or Two Bar Shearing Pens. 3:36 P.M. 0.9 & 95.6 miles

STEEL BRIDGE. Across the Laramie River. 3:38 P.M. 0.9 mile 96.4 miles

This bridge is one of the first steel bridges built across the Laramie River and was put in when John McGill was county commissioner in the early 1900's. Harry Hannas helped mark out the route of the first Lincoln Highway which went up the Coble Lane and thence to this steel bridge and thence to Boswell Springs, south of Greasewood flats and thence to Medicine Bow from the north.

WIRE GATE. In new fence. 3:42 P.M. 0.6 mile 97.0 miles

JUNCTION. With Gillespie-Rock Creek Road. 3:45 P.M. 2.0 miles 99.0 miles

The roundup wagon after fording the river at the Roundup camp went directly westerly and followed the route we shall now retrace from where we intersect the Rock Creek Road.

Crossing Lookout-Kite Road. 3:54 P.M. 2.5 miles 101.5 miles

This is the road we came out on, on the way to the Wheatland Reservoir. Note a well-known landmark to the right called, aptly, Chalk Bluff.

MISER LAKE ROUNDUP CAMP. STOP FIVE MINUTES. 4:02 to 4:07 P.M. 2.5 miles 104.0 miles

This was the favorite camp for the cowboys to try out any "salty horses" for there was lots of smooth country for the bucking operation. As we travel on west to the west and south is a deep and dark colored valley where Miser Creek flows. One can see the old railroad grade now grass covered, and can see in the distance a deep cut known descriptively as Cannon Ball Cut.

WIRE GATE. 4:09 P.M. 0.8 mile 104.8 miles

Crossing Ft. Laramie-Ft. Halleck Road. 4:12 P.M. 0.5 mile 105.3 miles

WIRE GATE. Into Noel Hall's field. 4:21 P.M. 2.4 miles 107.7 miles

Cross graded road to Garret and the north country.

WIRE GATE. 4:26 P.M. 1.6 miles 109.3 miles

ROCK CREEK. STOP FOR 30 MINUTES. 4:32 to 5:02 P.M. 1.1 miles 110.4 miles

The old store building and dwelling of William Taylor are both still standing. The section house, pump house, and stock yards are also standing. Back of the old store is a cellar where \$5,000 in \$20 gold pieces was taken out. The section house is furthest to the east, then the pump house, while west of the house and store are the stock yards, from which more cattle were shipped than from any other point on the Union Pacific Railroad until the cut-off was made in 1899 and the C & S was completed in 1885. Before that time, cattle from the north clear to the Montana line were trailed down to Rock Creek for shipment. The late Governor Brooks in his memoirs speaks of bringing cattle to Rock Creek to trail to his holdings near Casper and found an old iron in the form of a V which served as his brand which he later recorded. The Wilcox train robbers received their shipment of dynamite here at Rock Creek in 1899, which received all kinds of shipment—bar none!!

Rock Creek was quite a shipping point to bring in supplies for freight wagons to carry north as far as Montana, and to ship out the natural resources of the new country, mainly beef on the hoof.

ROCK RIVER. STOP FOR TEN MINUTES AT STOCK YARDS. 5:19 P.M. 11.0 and 121.4 miles

During the last few years the Swan Company shipped many cattle from the Rock River stockyards, after the rails had been taken up when the cut-off was completed in 1900.

So we can appropriately end our tour of the Swan Company roundup here at the Rock River stockyards.

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Return to Laramie via U.S. Highway 30. 6:29 P.M. 40.0 miles 161.4 miles

We trust that the tour has been of interest to you as it has retraced the roundup route of a ranch name well known not only in Wyoming but throughout the West and in Scotland, home office of the famed Swan Land and Cattle Company.