

TWENTY-FOURTH ANNUAL TOUR

July 20, 1974

OLD TIME RANCH TOUR, INCLUDING RANCHES AND POINTS OF HISTORICAL INTEREST IN ALBANY COUNTY SOUTH OF LARAMIE AND EAST OF HIGHWAY 287.

The idea of these tours, which have provided so much enjoyment for many people, was conceived and promoted by Dr. Robert Homer Burns. Dr. Burns was an agriculturist by profession and had gained international recognition for his contributions in the area of wool research. He was an historian, author, lecturer and a friend of mankind, especially the Wyoming ranchers. His untimely death occurred in an automobile accident shortly before the 1973 tour.

This tour is respectfully and affectionately dedicated to the memory of Dr. Robert Homer "Bob" Burns.

Bob Burns was affiliated with many organizations and served diligently and faithfully in promoting their welfare. Four of these organizations, The Albany County Historical Society, the University of Wyoming Summer School, the Laramie Kiwanis Club, and the Laramie Westerners, have in the past sponsored these tours and continue to sponsor this one. The tour has been arranged with the help and cooperation of many people, including Dr. Adrian Weaver, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Harnden, Charles Salisbury, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Williams, Mrs. Dixie Williams Mathison, Mr. and Mrs. R. S. Blunk, Oliver Ames, Mrs. Robert Burns, Leo Malody, George Shelton, George Berges, Robert Hymer, John Adams, Bill Riedl, Rev. Howard Wilson, Jack Corbett and others. A special financial grant from the Kiwanis Club is greatly appreciated. Much of the historical information has been gained from "Wyoming Pioneer Ranches" by R. H. Burns, A. S. Gillespie and W. G. Richardson; from the "Ghost Towns of Wyoming" by Mary Lou Pence and Lola Homsher; from papers from the Medicine Bow National Forest; and from the Department of Public Relations of the Union Pacific Railroad. These contributions and others are gratefully acknowledged.

Bring your car all gassed up and ready to go; your lunch, drink, your friends and some mosquito dope. Be at the Laramie Courthouse Square at 7:30 A.M. so we can make final arrangements. Transportation may be arranged for those needing it at this time. WE WILL LEAVE PROMPTLY AT 8:00 A.M.

We have arranged with the State Highway Patrol to escort us out of town and on U. S. Highway 287 South.

Keep a safe distance between cars. The speed on the paved highways is limited to 55 miles per hour and should be about 30 miles per hour on the dirt roads. Drive carefully. Respect the other fellow. Enjoy the scenery and have a good trip.

Stop 1. The Adrian Weaver Ranch.

This ranch is generally known as the old John Stevenson ranch, part of which was originally homesteaded by William Wurl in 1882. It had grown to 2,000 acres when John Stevenson purchased it in 1909, together with livestock and equipment from Mr. Wurl. Later acquisitions have increased the area to 11,000 acres. The Stevensons worked hard and diligently in building the quality of the ranch and improving the strains of livestock by improved breeding methods. For many years they were engaged in the dairy business and shipped cream regularly to Cheyenne. This was in the days before milking machines. They had two sons, John D. who became a Brigadier General in the Air Force, and Delroy who assumed the management of the ranch until he was accidentally killed when his tractor turned over on him. Mr. John Stevenson made many valuable contributions to the state of Wyoming and to Albany County, serving in the State Legislature, the Farm Bureau, the Wyoming Stockgrowers Association and was an active participant in many progressive movements in this part of the State. The Stevensons sold the ranch to Fred Phifer and it was later purchased by Adrian Weaver.

Stop 2. The Ralph Harnden Ranch.

This ranch includes the original homestead of Fredrick Bergman who filed on it in 1882. The ranch extends several miles to the East and the terrain is covered with small canyons and draws, many of which contain springs. This abundance of water, coupled with the very nutritious short grass and the protection provided from the weather by the conditions of the terrain result in the nearly ideal conditions for grazing stock. They can go thru the winter with a minimum of hay or commercial feed. The Harndens have several children who have assisted in developing the ranch. One son, Pat Harnden, is an artist of considerable reputation and has won acclaim for his pictures of western scenes and animals.

Stop 3. Old Tie Siding.

At about the time the Union Pacific Railroad reached this area Tie Siding was the center of traffic, with wagons drawn by horses and oxen traveling from this point south to Fort Collins and Denver; north to Laramie and points north and west; east to Cheyenne and west to Walden and North Park. It was also the center of a valuable supply of timber to be used as ties for the railroad and other construction. The Immigrant Springs was the source of good water for the weary traveler. These characteristics, along with the fact that for a short time it was the end of the track, for the railroad, earned it the reputation of "one of the liveliest towns in the west". It is reported that the town boasted seven saloons, three hotels, a hospital, livery stable, blacksmith shop and other business establishments in addition to the railroad station and telegraph office. It was a regular stop on the railroad.

Stop 4. Dale Creek Trestle.

The original bridge crossing this canyon was completed by the Union Pacific Railroad in April 1868. It was 125 feet high and 500 feet long. It was constructed entirely of wood and almost all of the timber was transported from Chicago (probably Michigan white or Norway pine). The files of the Union Pacific Railroad report that it was completed in 30 working days. As railroad equipment became larger and heavier it was necessary to replace the wood frame work with steel construction in 1876. This light weight steel bridge was known as the "spider web" bridge and it was replaced by heavier steel construction with iron girder spans in 1885. It is reported that fire destroyed the wooden part of the bridge in 1884. Bridge records of the Union Pacific indicate that the "Spider Web" bridge was 707 feet long and 127 feet high. The cost of this first iron bridge was \$39,450. The bridge was torn down in 1902 when the railroad track took the new route over the hill.

Stop 5. Ames Monument and the Old Town of Sherman.
(Written by Dixie Williams Mathisen)

Ames Monument was built by the Union Pacific Railroad in honor of Oliver and Oaks Ames. These two men were brothers and successful business men from Boston, Mass. It was one of Abraham Lincoln's dreams to have the railroad completed coast to coast. After construction began it became apparent that the available funds were far from being sufficient to finish. Oaks Ames was called to the White House and had a long conference with President Lincoln. Ames was a member of the U. S. House of Representatives. This resulted in the biggest political scandal of the United States history. The money was obtained and the railroad was completed May 10, 1869. On March 10, 1875 Union Pacific Railroad Stockholders voted to erect a monument in memory of Oliver and Oaks Ames. No action was taken, probably due to the pending lawsuit. In 1880 the Union Pacific directors were on a cross-country trip when the train stopped at Sherman, then a thriving town. It was such a spectacular sight they decided that this was the point on which to build the monument. The architect was Henry Hobson Richardson; he provided his design to Norcross Brothers of Worcester, Massachusetts. Captain A. L. Sutherland was the builder. The monument was completed in October, 1882, three years after it was started, at a cost of \$64,773. The medallions of the brothers are the work of artist, Augustus Saint-Gaudens. The Monument is 65 feet high and 60 feet square at the base. All the stone was from the rocks a half mile away.

W. R. Williams and his freight teams helped haul the stone from the original rocks to the monument. Mr. Williams had two old oxen he was taking to the XX Ranch to fatten for beef. Mr. Sutherland offered to buy the oxen, which he did, and they were used for 3 years to haul the stone. The faithful oxen were named Sam and Buddy.

Resources:

Lincoln's Other Dream, American History Illustrated, Reader's Digest, June 1971. Wyoming's Monument to the Great Political Scandal of '73, Zeke Scher, Sunday Empire, the Magazine of the Denver Post, September 30, 1973.

Stop 6. -- Lunch and rest.

Quoting from the Laramie Boomerang dated May 31, 1974:
(in 50 years ago column)

"Perhaps the largest automobile caravan that has ever been organized at Cheyenne will journey on June 1st to a natural amphitheater in the Sherman Range, 30 miles west of Cheyenne and 19 miles east of Laramie, where the annual student play of the University of Wyoming will be staged with a cast of 300. Several thousand Cheyennites, led by Governor W. B. Ross and Mayor Archie Allison, are expected to make the trip. The region is in the Fort D. A. Russell maneuver reserve. Should the reserve ever be abandoned it is regarded as certain that the portion of it in which Veedauwo is to be presented will be made either a national, state or city park."

The name "Veedauwo" is of Arapahoe Indian origin, meaning "earth born"; it was the name of the principal character in the pageant which was presented on the rocks and in the canyons of the area. The location became known as Veedauwo Glenn and later simply as Veedauwo. In 1925 the military reservation was transferred to the Medicine Bow National Forest by an executive order.

Stop 7. Richard Williams Ranch.

(written by Dixie Williams Mathisen)

The AX Ranch was homesteaded in 1909 by Arthur H. Williams and his wife Minnie Collins Williams. Art Williams was the son of W. R. Williams of the XX Ranch, which will be visited later on today's tour. All the buildings were built by Art Williams, Blackie Cota, and Charlie Clark. All the lumber was cut and milled on the ranch. The ranch house was added onto by moving a building from the vacant Impson homestead buildings. The original house is occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Richard Williams.

Art and Minnie Williams started out by milking cows. They milked 30 or 40 cows. They sold the milk and cream. It was taken to Sherman and shipped by train from there. Eventually they got some Hereford cows and these were crossbred with the dairy stock. They added to their land by buying the Holiday place from Hans Nielson, and the Fred Impson land. Hans Nielson filed water rights in 1875. Art Williams built a nice log cabin on the Holiday place. Fred Impson once held an Albany County office.

Art Williams was a county assessor during the assessment periods for several years in the 1920's; first under W. A. Comly and then Earl A. McKay. In 1931 he was commissioned as deputy sheriff and stock inspector at Tie Siding by Sheriff Eugene P. Smith. Later he was transferred from Tie Siding to Sherman to be nearer home. He held this office at the time of his death in 1935.

In 1946 Richard and Gussie Williams purchased the ranch from his mother Minnie Williams. Richard Williams was the oldest son of Art and Minnie Williams. Since that time the John and George Lindstrom place and the Ollie Sandean place have been purchased.

AX Ranch, cont'd.

In order to get a start Richard and Gussie Williams also milked cows for several years. Eventually the crossbred cattle were converted to an entire herd of Black Angue cattle. Only in the last few years have they once again used cross breeding.

Much land development has been done to produce more hay land. Many water conservation projects have been completed.

Today the ranch is operated by Richard and Gussie Williams. Their sons-in-law, Ted Warfield and Gary Mathisen are also involved in the operation. A fourth generation of Williams enjoy the ranch.

Resources for this were:

Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Richard Williams.

Stop 8. The F. S Blunk Ranch.

(written by Dixie Williams Mathisen)

The XX Ranch was one of the first ranches homesteaded in this area. W. R. Williams came to Colorado in the 1850's; at that time he was given the opportunity to buy all the land Denver is located on, for 25¢ an acre. After considering the opportunity, he felt that land would not grow enough grass for cattle. He then returned to his homeland of Nova Scotia. He returned to Wyoming in 1867. He engaged in a lumbering operation for five years. In 1872 he returned to Nova Scotia and married Margaret Keys and they returned to Wyoming and homesteaded the XX Ranch. A lumber mill had been in the same area. They raised four sons and three daughters, all born and reared on the XX Ranch. They also owned and operated a farm at Fort Collins, Colorado.

Mr. Williams had an oxen freight business and built it up to be one of the biggest in the area. In 1879 he owned 400 head of oxen. In 1875 he freighted from Cheyenne to Deadwood, South Dakota. In 1878 and 1879 he freighted between Fort Fetterman, Fort McKinney and Fort Custer in Montana. Mr. Williams was freighting in the Meeker, Colorado area when the Meeker Massacre took place. He lost most of his oxen and all the outfits were burned. He then had to buy more oxen and replace the wagons. He hauled lumber and ties from the Sand Creek Pass Country and Boulder Ridge to Red Buttes for the construction of the Union Pacific Railroad. He sold his freight teams and went into full-time ranching at the XX Ranch.

After his death in 1906 the ranch and the farm were operated by his widow and his sons and daughters. The sons and daughters that married at one time or another, all lived on the ranch with their mates. Minnie Williams and Stella Williams did a lot of riding for strays and it was their job to get the horses in the corrals. Many times they rode as far as Red Buttes and the Twin

Mountains to find the horses. Chet Williams bought Angus bulls in Casper. He rode horseback to get them and bring them home. After leaving the XX Ranch there was not another fence until he got to Casper.

In the 1930's Mr. and Mrs. Chet Williams purchased the ranch. They retired in 1967. At the time of his death, December 1972, Chet Williams was the oldest Black Angus breeder in the State of Wyoming. In 1959 Mr. and Mrs. Forest Blunk purchased the ranch. Mrs. Blunk (Edith Margaret Williams) was the only daughter of the Chet Williamses. In July 1970 Mrs. Blunk passed away. In 1971 Mr. Blunk married Mary Alice Williams, a first cousin of Edith Margaret. So, the ranch is still operated by the Williams heritage. The XX Ranch is the oldest ranch in Wyoming that has remained in the same family. A fourth generation, Scot and Sally Jo Blunk spend as much time as possible on the ranch.

Resources for this were:

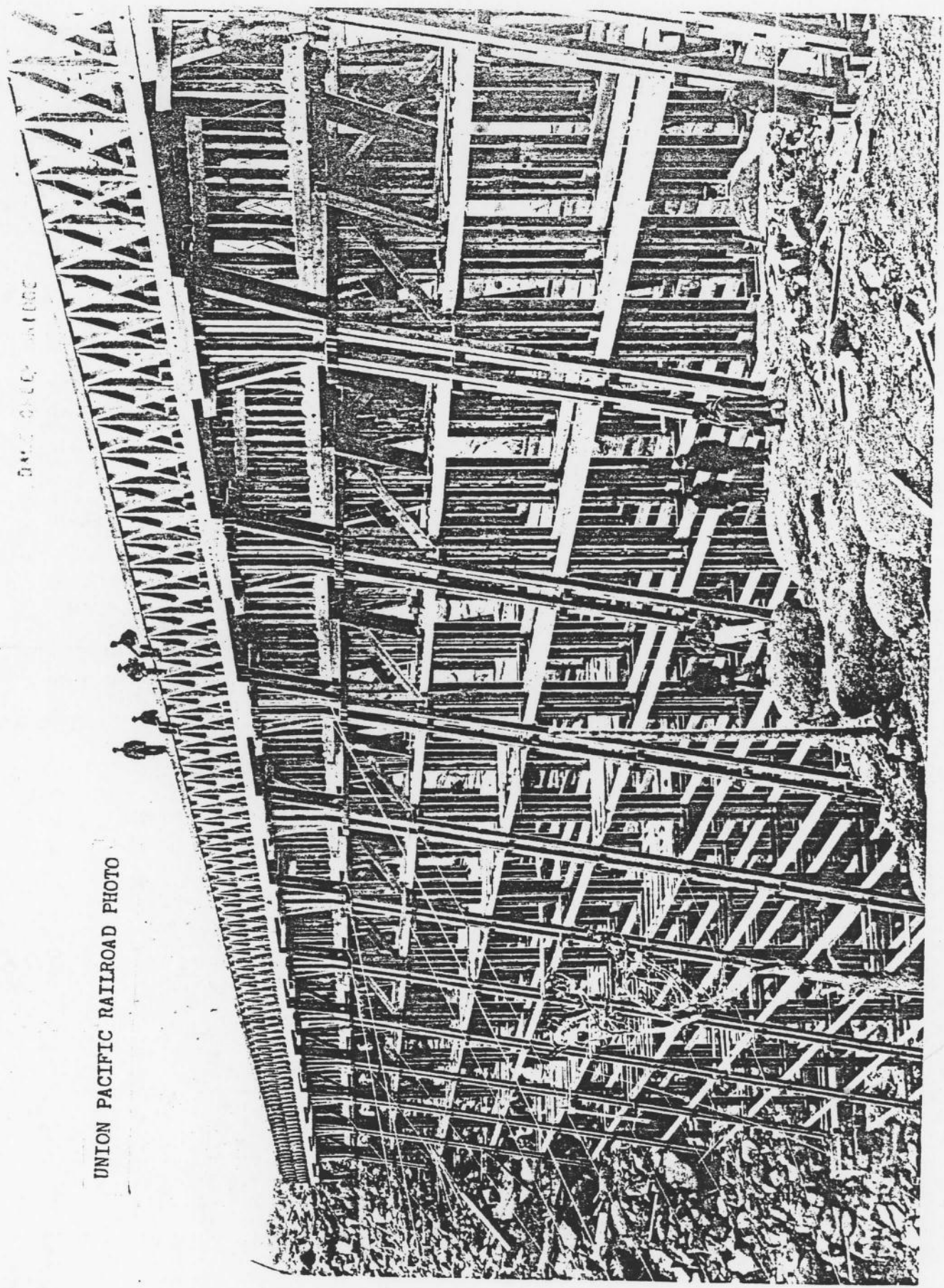
The Col. and Mrs. Briggs history of W. R. Williams, material collected by Edith Margaret Blunk, recollections from Forest Blunk and Richard Williams.

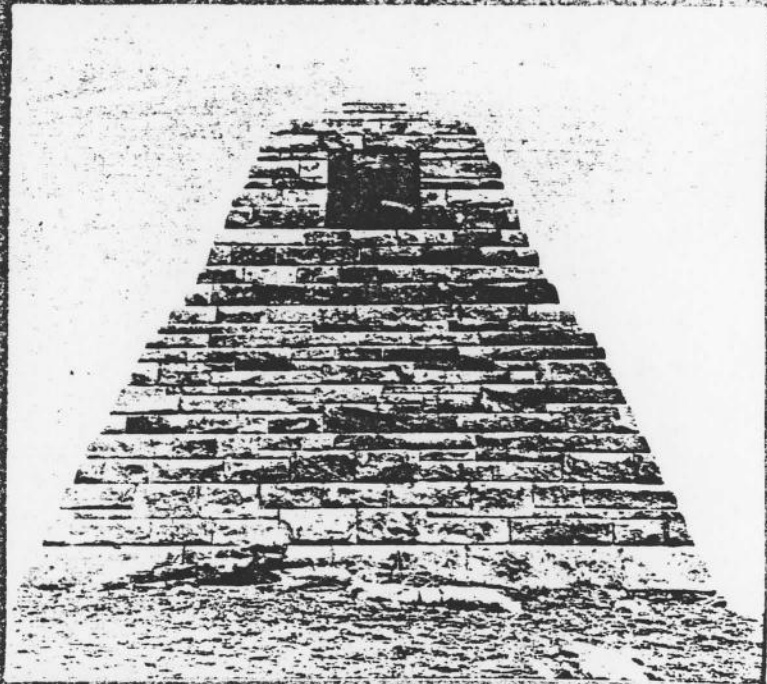
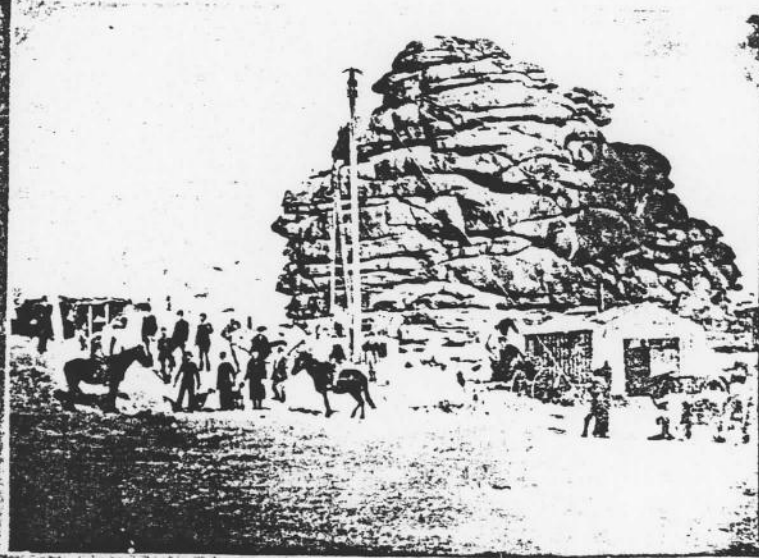
Stop 9. The Otto Lembcke Ranch.

This ranch was first settled by Peter Johnson sometime prior to 1873. He sold it to Whitehouse and Stokes in the late 1880's. Both these gentlemen were Englishmen who appreciated good horses and hunting parties and the entertainment of their friends, many of whom came from England. The ranch was called the Oxford Horse Ranch and included a half mile race track located near the site of the present Fair Grounds. There was a pack of fifty-four hounds and 3,000 thoroughbred horses. Coyotes, wolves and antelope were the quarry for the many hunting parties using the hounds. Axel Palmer, a colorful early day rancher was first an employee of the ranch and later became a partner when Mr. Stokes sold his interest. Whitehouse and Palmer sold the ranch to Talmadge and Buntin and it passed through several owners before being acquired by its present owner, Mr. Otto Lembcke.

DAVIS BRIDGE

UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD PHOTO





UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD PHOTO

Upper
Quarrying rock for the Ames Monument.

Lower
Ames Monument. Constructed in 1880-1882 in honor of Oakes Ames and Oliver Ames at a cost of \$100,000 west of Sherman, Wyoming.

PLACES, LOCATIONS AND STOPS	TIME	MILEAGE	
		Local	Trip
Leave Court House Square	8:00	0.0	0.0
Old Flag Ranch at right	8:11	7.3	7.3
Red Buttes	8:13	2.4	9.7
Gravel Pit turnoff (left)	8:19	4.2	13.9
Fork in road (keep right)	8:20	0.4	14.3
Weaver Ranch (Old Stevenson Ranch)	8:28-8:48	2.8	17.1
Cross Railroad track	8:50	0.3	17.4
Harnden Ranch turnoff	8:50	0.1	17.5
Harnden Ranch	8:52-9:20	0.4	17.9
Fork in road (keep right)	9:26	2.1	20.0
Old Tie Siding	9:28-10:00	0.6	20.6
Cross Dale Creek	10:12	5.1	25.7
Leave County Road	10:14	1.0	26.7
Dale Creek Bridge Stop	10:25-11:00	2.6	29.3
Back to County road	11:21	2.5	31.8
Sherman Cemetery	11:26	1.4	33.2
Ames Monument	11:27-11:47	0.4	33.6
Veedaawoo (Lunch and rest)	12:00- 1:30	4.0	37.6
Assemble $\frac{1}{4}$ mile west of Veedaawoo for departure	1:30	---	----
Pass Ames Monument	1:35	4.0	41.6
Railroad Crossing (straight ahead)	1:45	4.2	45.8
Richard Williams Ranch	1:52-2:30	2.2	48.0
Fork in road (keep right)	2:35	2.5	50.5
Railroad underpass	2:40	2.5	53.0
Old Cabins on left	2:43	0.3	53.3
Turn left	2:44	0.1	53.4
Blunk Ranch (XX)	2:45-3:15	0.9	54.3
Return to County Road	3:17	0.6	54.9
Junction with U. S. 287	3:32	6.5	61.4
Tie Siding Post Office	3:36	2.4	63.8
Lembcke Ranch	3:46-4:15	9.0	72.4
Laramie	4:25	8.0	80.4