

**STOPS ON THE 25TH OLD TIME RANCH TOUR  
SATURDAY, JULY 19, 1975**

1. Harrison Talbott Ranch  
Hosts: Mr. & Mrs. Harrison Talbott
2. The Elwood Hanson Ranch  
Hosts: Mr. & Mrs. Elwood Hanson  
Mr. & Mrs. Don Hanson  
Narrator: Mr. Howard Mortensen
3. Lake Hattie  
Narrator: Mr. Charles Salisbury
4. The Gilbert Engen Ranch  
Hosts: Mr. & Mrs. Gil Engen
5. The Ferguson Ranch  
Hosts: Mr. & Mrs. Garold Ferguson
6. Lunch at Woods Landing  
Courtesy: Mrs. Lestum
7. Cummins City Ghost Town  
Courtesy: Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Holland
8. Ring Mountain  
Narrator: Conrad Hanson
9. Jack Dinwiddie Ranch  
Hosts: Mr. & Mrs. Jack Dinwiddie
10. The Old Strom Ranch  
Narrator: Mr. Norman Strom  
Hosts: Adrian Roberts, Owner  
Mel Clark, Foreman

TWENTY-FIFTH ANNUAL TOUR

July 19, 1975

OLD TIME RANCH TOUR INCLUDING RANCHES AND POINTS OF INTEREST EAST  
OF SHEEP MOUNTAIN BETWEEN HIGHWAYS 130 AND 230

This tour is sponsored jointly by the Laramie Kiwanis Club, the Albany County Historical Society, the University of Wyoming Summer School and the Laramie Westerners. The owners of the ranches we are visiting have displayed true western hospitality and cooperation in inviting us to visit them. We are grateful to them. We are also indebted to some former ranch owners such as Mr. Norman Strom, Mrs. John (Bertha) Pearson, Mrs. Jack Hardigan and Mr. Conrad Hanson. Mr. Hanson also prepared the map of Cummins City.

The Kiwanis Club has furnished finances in addition to the services of many of its members who serve as guides and traffic controllers.

Dr. Robert Burns organized these tours a quarter of a century ago. We are grateful to him for this and also for much of the information on the early ranches contained in his book. Credit goes to Mrs. Robert (Agnes) Burns for the plans for the coronation of the Queen of the tour.

Credit goes to Dr. Norman Smith, Dean of the University of Wyoming Summer School and his most cooperative and helpful secretary, Mrs. Jeanne Unruh. We thank Mrs. Mayme Lestum for the use of the picnic grounds at Woods Landing. These are but a few of those who have been helpful. It would be difficult to list every one.

BRING YOUR CAR ALL GASED 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. SEE THE LAST PAGE FOR LOG OF TRIP.

WE HAVE ARRANGED WITH THE STATE HIGHWAY PATROL TO ESCORT US OUT OF TOWN AND ONTO HIGHWAY 230.

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 DIRT ROADS. DRIVE CAREFULLY. RESPECT THE OTHER FELLOW. ENJOY THE SCENERY AND HAVE A GOOD TRIP.

Sincerely,

THE COMMITTEE  
Agnes Burns  
Bill Riedl  
Robert Hymer  
Charles Salisbury  
Jack Corbett

Stop 1. The Harrison Talbott Ranch  
(Written by Mrs. J. H. (Leah) Talbott)

The Talbotts became Albany County residents on April 26, 1952, moving onto the Al Hunziker Ranch from Fort Collins, Colorado.

On September 6, 1955, we moved from the Sand Creek Ranch, as we called it, to this location with lease option to buy. The purchase was finalized on January 11, 1957. Thus we have lived here 20 years. In researching the abstract, I found that in the 20 years prior to our purchase of this ranch, it had been sold and resold 10 times. This in itself tells the story of unproductivity.

The first obstacle we had to overcome was the monicker of "foreigners." Land leveling, new irrigation methods, building improvements were frowned upon and were often discussed and criticized, but they were part of our basic plan so we continued with them. We had a Grade A Dairy for 7 years, which seemed a never ending job, but it did bring in the cash so necessary for survival.

As things began to fall into place, we were able to acquire more adjoining lands. To the original 100 acres, we have added 3 sections of land in the Big Hollow, and in June of 1967, we purchased the Pahlow Ranch, approximately 1,200 acres from Wm. Spiegelberg. Again through perserverence, conservation practices, land levelings and fertilization, we have turned mediocre lands into better producing grasslands and pastures, outstanding hay meadows and premium quality hay.

Our son, Jim; his wife, the former Janet Gietz; and their 5 children live on the Pahlow place, and have been a part of the operation, and its success, for 9 years.

Although we have accomplished much and see many improvements, ranching is a never ending profession and much remains to be done.

--JUST A BIT OF HISTORICAL DATA--

Although the Pahlow Ranch has only 3 transfer dates since the original homesteading in 1900, the abstracts for both ranches have a common element in that the first entrees on both are by an Act of Congress on July 1, 1862. This was the approval of lands to be available for the building of a railroad. Shares available were--1 million for \$10.00 a share at the interest rate of 7% with the cost not to exceed \$10,000.00 per mile. The names of Cyrus McCormick, John Duff, Fred and Oliver Ames appear many times prior to the 1900 and 1908 homestead dates on the abstracts of both ranches.

Stop 2. The Elwood Hanson Ranch

The Hanson Ranch was homesteaded in the 1890's by Frank and Johannah Parker each having 240 acres in their own individual names making the 480 acres in the main place. In 1892 they started to build an irrigation ditch

## Stop 2. The Elwood Hanson Ranch (continued)

from the Big Laramie River which was eight miles to the ranch. This was completed in 1895 and was called the Parker Ditch. It now carries water for three ranches in this valley.

The Parkers sold the ranch to David and Carrie McCulloch in 1901; some time later the McCulloch's sold to O. D. Berroth and O. E. Webb. Berroth and Webb sold to John and Lillian Loughrey and Theodore and Olive Dimon in January of 1912.

In 1920 Andrew and Hannah Hanson purchased the ranch as he had the land he had homesteaded just west of this place. They farmed and raised cattle here. The homestead is two and one-half miles west and they proved up on 160 acres in about 1910. Andrew and Hannah had four children, Elwood, the oldest, and three daughters, Irene, Werdna, and Betty. The homestead is now owned by Everett and Margaret Johnson.

In 1940 Elwood and Edna Hanson purchased the ranch. They milked cows, sold hay and had a few sheep to get started. Later on they bought a few cows and started in the cattle business in a small way. Elwood and Don baled hay for some years on a custom basis. Since buying the place Elwood has replaced or remodeled all the buildings. Where the original barn stood is now a new home that his son, Don, and family live in. Elwood and Don built this home in 1962 and Don has since added onto the south end of the original house. Elwood has just recently remodeled their home so it is quite different from the original house. Don is the oldest son of Elwood and Edna Hanson. Carol Atkinson, their daughter, lives at the Pitchfork Ranch south of Laramie. Duane, their youngest, lives in California. Don and his wife, June, have two children, Loree and Brett, who think the ranch is the only place in the world to live.

Between Elwood and Don they run about 150 head of Angus cattle and sell hay each year from about 2,000 acres, some of it being on the Little Laramie River.


## Stop 3. Lake Hattie

Before the days of early irrigation Lake Hattie was much smaller than it is now. It was named by an early survey group after Hattie Andrews, the daughter of Jude Andrews, a prominent early day resident of Laramie. In 1908 a group of men from Pennsylvania combined with a group from Albany County to construct an irrigation system which would enlarge the capacity of Lake Hattie by the construction of a dam and bring additional water from the Big Laramie River and also from the Little Laramie River via Porter Lake. Lake Hattie would be the storage reservoir for more than 68,000 acre feet of water which would be distributed over the Laramie Plains. The system worked well when there was sufficient water but in dry years many of the farmers and ranchers who depended on the system suffered severe losses. While it still serves the cause of irrigation, recreational activities, mainly fishing and boating, have given the lake a new meaning.

#### Stop 4. The Gilbert Engen Ranch

The land that became the Flying Heart Ranch was homesteaded in 1894 by Mr. and Mrs. Christian Gabrielson. They tried farming for a few years but the soil contained so much gravel that production dropped each year. They then started irrigation and raising native grasses which they cut for winter feed for their stock.

The Gabrielsons milked cows and sold butter in Laramie. During the next twenty years they acquired one and a half more sections of land. They built a home, two barns, sheds, shop and a bunkhouse all out of logs cut from the timber area above Woods Landing. They planted cottonwood and willows to alleviate the desolation of the prairie they had come to call home.

They raised a family here and in later years it was their eldest son, Axel, who became the owner. He in turn, added land to the ranch, most of which was well known for its quality. Axel married Edith Christensen and their family of two daughters, Donna and Ialene, grew up here on the ranch. The ranch was sold to Ialene and her husband, Gilbert Engen, in 1958 following the death of Axel. The brand  Flying Heart was acquired by Axel and was used on his cattle for many years and used for the ranch name.

Christian Gabrielson and Maria Salerstrom migrated from Norway and Sweden respectively, met and were married in Laramie, where they lived for several years while he fired on the Union Pacific railroad. The first few years of their life was sad, as the children died in infancy with the exception of the eldest. The object of homesteading was the hope for a healthier life for their subsequent children which proved to be true as all of those born on the ranch lived to adulthood.

From the farm life of their native countries, Christian and Maria learned to be ranchers in a climate completely different from what they had known. They taught love of America and love of this land to their children and with hard work made a good life for themselves.

#### Stop 5. The Ferguson Ranch

Mr. Ferguson has recently combined four of the early day ranches to develop one of the finest cattle ranches on the Laramie Plains. The home ranch is what was known as the Jonas Berglund Ranch, from about 1890 to 1942 when it was taken over by his daughter and son-in-law, Bertha and John Pearson. Jonas Berglund came to this country from Sweden and lived on the Sodergreen Ranch in 1889 where he was employed hauling logs and working in the timber. He first rented this property from Jacob Johnson and later purchased three quarters of a section from him. He later acquired much more land. While he was employed at the Sodergreen Ranch, he spent his spare time in constructing a log house, hewing, fitting and numbering the logs so it could be dismantled and moved to this location. The house is not recognized because it has been stuccoed and otherwise remodeled.

Stop 5. The Ferguson Ranch (continued)

Mr. Ferguson has made many improvements in the physical properties of the ranch as well as introducing many of the more modern and scientific approaches to the cattle business. In addition to the Berglund Ranch, he has added the Nate Johnson Ranch located about a mile to the north of us, the Ole Ericson Ranch located on Fox Creek a few miles north of Woods Landing and the McBroom Ranch.

Stop 6. Woods Landing LUNCH STOP

This location was named after Sam Woods who operated a timber business in the early days. He floated logs down the Laramie River, taking them out at about this spot where he had a large saw mill. At the present time the dining hall and the business here is operated by Mrs. Mayme Lestum, who with her late husband developed the business. Mrs. Lestum has kindly invited us to use this area for our picnic lunch. Good meals are served at the main dining hall and while it is always possible to secure a light lunch and refreshments on short notice, anyone interested in a full dinner could omit the trip to Cummins City and Ring Mountain and join the tour as it returns through Woods Landing at about 2:15 p.m. We are grateful to Mrs. Lestum for the use of this picnic area.

Stop 7. Cummins City

This settlement had its early beginning as a timber and tie camp and was known at that time as JELM. It was said to have been named after a timber worker by that name, who with his partner, a man named Smith, cut some of the first ties in that area and floated them down the river to Laramie City. After some prospectors found some small deposits of copper in the area, a man named John Cummins promoted the idea that there was gold in the hills and he and his wife, along with a close friend, Doc Thomas, reaped a harvest in selling mining claims and promoting other swindles. It was a "boom town" and its name was changed to Cummins City. Cummins lived in the forty room hotel which had been erected in the city until his creditors finally caught up with him. It is reported that he died in Denver before the date of his trial arrived.

There is evidence that the name of the post office remained as JELM and that after the collapse of Cummins City the post office was moved down stream to a location a few miles below Woods Landing. One enterprise which might have had legitimate motives was "The Inter-Ocean Water Power and Mining Company." It was incorporated with a capital stock of 300,000 shares at a par value of \$1.00 each. The president of the company was a Dr. C. C. Clark and the treasurer was Mr. Frank Smith who had been ranching just south of Cummins City on the place now owned by Mr. Ralph Holland. The settlement was said to have had a population of about 300 persons and the map in this pamphlet which was prepared by Mr. Conrad Hanson shows the location of some of the buildings.

## Stop 8. Ring Mountain

The presence of an almost perfect circle on the west side of Ring Mountain has given rise to much speculation regarding its origin. The width of the ring varies from 10 to 13 feet and the diameter of the circle varies from 281 to 294 feet, taken on four diameters measured at 45 degrees. Some theories hold that it was of Indian origin as it was felt that in many respects it resembled the Medicine Wheel in the Big Horn Mountains and it is believed that it was located close to one of the main routes used by the Indians on their summer hunting expeditions. The fact that it is located on the side of the mountain instead of on level ground and that there is not an abundance of artifacts in its immediate location fails to support this theory. There is an indication that the soil in the immediate location of the ring will not support the growth of bunch grass which is common to the area. This may have been caused by some geological development. Another theory and one which is supported by some agriculturists that it is the remanent of what is known as a "fairy ring". These fairy rings are quite common in this part of the country, sometimes occurring in town lawns. They are caused by a fungus starting at a central point and growing outward. It is believed that the fungus has the power of developing nitrogen which is beneficial to the growth of the grass but as they reach the outer limits of the circumference of the ring their power is depleted and the soil becomes detrimental to the natural growth of grass. As early as 1883, humorist Bill Nye, editor of the Laramie Boomerang, indicated that there may have been many theories. He said that perhaps there was a big circus and all of the great men in that locality a thousand years ago were inside the big tent looking at the animals, when all at once there was a big explosion and nothing was left except a paralyzed circus ring, two or three old jokes, and the unpaid bill for advertising.

There probably is more scientific information available but we were not able to secure it in time for this tour.

## Stop 9. The Jack Dinwiddie Ranch

While some may question that this beautiful home, located in such a beautiful setting is in reality a cattle ranch, it is the result of a thorough knowledge of the cattle ranching industry of the west combined with industry and hard labor. Before locating at this spot, Jack and Violet Dinwiddie operated a very fine ranch in the Centennial Valley. Some of the finest Hereford cattle in the country were produced on this ranch. The beginnings go back to the early 1880's when Mrs. Dinwiddie's grandfather came here from Iowa and settled on a ranch on Sand Creek. His name was Frank Mason and he had two sons, Oda and Osa. Oda continued his interest in ranching and acquired the old LeRoy and Caldwell ranches on the Big Laramie along with other property. Mr. Mason made definite contributions to the livestock industry in Wyoming, in addition to serving as a valuable citizen of Albany County. The combination of Dinwiddie and Mason was recognized for their industry and service to the community. While Mr. Dinwiddie is at least semi-retired at this time, a visit to his home will generally find him in his working clothes making improvements to his home and the community.

#### Stop 10. The Old Strom Ranch

This ranch was first settled by Jason Baily in 1879. Records indicate that the property was purchased by Bailey from a Mr. Caldwell. After Jason Bailey homesteaded and moved to the Centennial Valley, the ranch was purchased by John Strom, who also filed homestead rights on some adjacent land. In the early days John Strom raised cattle but in 1918 he changed over to sheep. His son, Norman, was associated with him in the sheep business and together they expanded the operation so that they had the largest sheep ranch in the county, either owning or controlling land from the foot of Sheep Mountain to the airport. After John Strom's death in 1942, Norman continued to operate the ranch until recently when it was sold to Mr. Julian Roberts, the present owner. As a condition of the sale, Mr. Strom has retained for the remainder of his life, a modest acreage on the northern part of the ranch. Here, he has built a lovely home where he and Mrs. Strom enjoy the comforts of modern living at a location where almost daily are seen small herds of deer and antelope and other wildlife is abundant.

#### Porter Lake and Jack's Place

Before the turn of the century the L. J. Porters lived about a mile above Woods Landing. They had two children, a son, Tom, and a daughter, Sylva, who was born there in 1891. In 1902 Porter bought the small ranch and the lake located just south of Highway 130 was named after him. About 1910 they acquired the homestead located at the foot of Sheep Mountain and, in addition to raising cattle and hay, they established a saw mill and sold lumber to the ranchers. By this time Sylva had married John J. (Jack) Hardigan and they along with Tom assisted in the operation. At times they milked up to 25 cows and sold milk and butter in Laramie. Mr. Porter died in 1924 and Mr. Hardigan died in 1974. The small store and service station is now operated by Jack Hardigan's son, Joe. Mrs. Sylva Hardigan, one of the truly old timers, at the sprightly age of 84 years, is still active and we hope that she will be with us on this tour.

This concludes the tour. We hope that you have enjoyed it. Please sign the register and if you have suggestions for a better tour next year we hope you will mention them.





PLACES, LOCATIONS AND STOPS	TIME	MILEAGES	
		LOCAL	TRIP
Leave Courthouse Square	8:00	0.0	0.0
Highway "Y" West Laramie	8:07	3.5	3.5
Seven Mile Lake	8:13	5.5	9.0
Nine Mile Lake	8:14	1.0	10.0
Turn right at Pahlow Lane	8:15	1.6	11.6
Old Pahlow Ranch on right	8:16	.5	12.1
Note land improvement			
STOP 1. Talbott's Ranch	8:21- 8:50	3.4	15.5
Note Pioneer Canal			
Gillat Lake on right (Public Fishing)			
Cattle Guard and Twin Buttes Turnoff	8:54	2.2	17.7
Turn right at Lake Hattie Road	8:56	1.4	19.1
STOP 2. Hanson's Ranch	8:58- 9:30	1.1	20.2
STOP 3. Lake Hattie	9:32-10:00	2.4	22.6
Turn right on Harmony Lane	10:05	3.5	26.1
Note Mortenson's Ranch on left			
Turn right at Trailer House (dirt road)	10:10	2.0	28.1
Cattle guard and ditch (Keep right)		1.2	29.3
Turn left		.5	29.8
Ditch		.4	30.2
STOP 4. Engen's Ranch	10:15-10:45	.8	31.0
Turn right at dirt lane		.4	31.4
STOP 5. Ferguson's Ranch	10:50-11:20	.4	31.8
Sodergreen Lake	11:30	2.9	34.7
Turn right on Highway 230	11:35	.1	34.8
Turn left at Highway 10	11:40	6.1	40.9
WOODS LANDING STOP FOR LUNCH (STOP 6)			
(Meals and refreshments available at Lodge. If members of the tour wish they may omit Cummins City and Ring Mountain and join the tour at the return at about 2:30.)			
Tour leaves PROMPTLY at 12:40	12:40		
STOP 7. Turn right to Cummins City	12:50- 1:20	2.1	53.0
Back to Highway 10	1:30	.5	53.5
Turn right to Ring Mountain	1:35	.5	54.0
Note mine shaft on left bank of road		.8	54.8
STOP 8. Ring Mountain Observation	1:40- 2:10	.8	55.6
Turn right at Highway 10	2:15	1.8	57.4
Return to Highway 230 at Woods Landing	2:20	1.8	59.2
Turn left at Dinwiddie Turn	2:25	4.5	63.7
Road rough but safe			
STOP 9. Stop at Dinwiddie Ranch	2:30- 3:00	3.9	67.6
Observe upper Lake Hattie			
STOP 10. Stop at old Strom Ranch	3:12- 3:40	4.2	71.8
Turn right on Highway 130	3:52	4.2	76.0
Pass Jack's Place	4:00		
Laramie	4:35	23.0	99.0