

**STOPS ON THE 26TH OLD TIME RANCH TOUR
SATURDAY, JULY 24, 1976**

1. Old Stone Ranch
Host: Al Sherwood, Owner
2. Joe Miller and Wm. Lawrence Ranches
Narrators: Mr. Kit Westbrook, foreman for Joe Miller and Mrs. Rena Lawrence, owner of the Lawrence Ranch
3. The Mike McGill Ranch
Host: Mike McGill
Narrator: Mrs. John McGill
4. The Vee Barr Ranch
Hosts: Mr. and Mrs. George Crouse
5. Centennial. Two-hour Lunch Stop
See brochure
6. The Medicine Creek Ranch
Host: Mr. Barry Smith
7. The Campbell Ranch
Hosts: Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Campbell
8. The Sundby-Wilson Ranch
Hosts: Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Wilson

TWENTY-SIXTH ANNUAL TOUR

July 24, 1976

OLD TIME RANCH TOUR INCLUDING RANCHES AND POINTS OF INTEREST IN
THE CENTENNIAL AND LITTLE LARAMIE VALLEYS

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 and managers of the ranches we are visiting have displayed true western hospitality and cooperation in inviting us to visit them. We are grateful to them.

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

Dr. Robert Burns organized these tours over a quarter of a century ago. We are grateful to him for this and also for so much of the information on the early ranches contained in his book.

Credit goes to Dr. Norman Smith, Dean of the University of Wyoming Summer School and to his most cooperative and helpful secretary, Mrs. Jeanne Unruh for the preparation of this pamphlet. Many others have been helpful in many ways. It would be difficult to list every one.

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. SEE THE LAST PAGE FOR A LOG OF THE TRIP.

WE HAVE ARRANGED WITH THE STATE HIGHWAY PATROL TO ESCORT US OUT OF TOWN AND ONTO HIGHWAY 130.

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.

Stop 1. The "Stone" Ranch, Al Sherwood, Owner.

Henry Bath was born in Germany and arrived by ox team in Laramie in 1868 about the same time that the railroad reached here. He first built a hotel in Laramie and catered to the immigrants passing through the territory. He soon realized that the horses and cattle that they had were quite exhausted by the time they reached Laramie and he saw the possibilities of establishing a business in trading fresh stock for their worn out stock and making a profit. This led to the establishment of a homestead at this location. He first built a log corral, a log barn and a small log house, with a dirt floor, in 1869. He had a few milk cows and had purchased 300 head of cattle which were trailed here from Texas. These cattle were not in good shape and were not familiar to this country. The first bad blizzard took most of them and some drifted with the storm as far as Sidney, Nebraska.

There was also trouble with the Indians so when Mr. Bath built this stone house he made the walls nearly two feet thick and at convenient intervals there were port holes where rifles could be fired at the attackers. The words "H. Bath - 1875" are inscribed near the top on the east side of the building.

Ranching on the Laramie Plains in those days was a discouraging business. Irrigation dams and ditches had to be built from scratch. Fences were built from poles brought in from the mountains about twenty miles away. There were few comforts and many hardships. At one time the Indians stole 96 head of horses from the Bath Ranch. They were located on the Red Cloud Indian Agency but they could not be recovered. Twenty years later the government did settle by paying \$3,000. for the 96 head which were worth \$100. apiece.

This ranch was the center of many activities from barn dances to religious services to amateur rodeos. It was operated by Fred Bath who was the son of Henry Bath. About 1943 Mr. Al Sherwood bought the ranch from the heirs of Fred Bath. He continued to operate it as a cattle ranch in the traditional manner. At the present time no one lives on the old Stone Ranch and the place is rapidly deteriorating. It would be difficult to restore the old buildings to modern dwellings. Mr. Sherwood has introduced a modern development in the cattle industry in his experiment with Beefalo, a cross between Buffalo and either Herefords or Angus cattle. At this time of the year these animals are out on the summer range so we cannot see them here at the ranch.

Stop 2. The Joe Miller Ranch and the Wm. Lawrence Ranch.

These two ranches are being considered at one stop because they are so close together and because they both had a common origin. According to the records, Phil Mandel was the first person to settle on the Laramie Plains. Records indicate that he settled on part of this land in 1859 and that he made one of the first homestead entries for the

Dakota Territory in 1864. The Overland Trail crossed the Little Laramie River less than a quarter of a mile southeast of the buildings on the Lawrence Ranch and the big stone house located on the Joe Miller Ranch housed many a weary traveler in the early days of the Overland Trail.

Phil Mandel was the manager of the stage station at the river crossing. In addition he developed a lucrative business in trading fresh stock to the travelers for their worn out stock which after some rest and good feed was in good shape again and ready to be traded to the next immigrant. He also cut hay and sold it to the government at Ft. Saunders. His brother, George Mandel, became associated with him and located on the place just south of the station. Between them they owned much of the land in this immediate area.

The Wm. Lawrence Ranch was sold to Abrams by Mandel and then to Folsters and then to Vallie Bath who sold it to Wm. Lawrence. Mr. Lawrence sold all of the ranch except the buildings to Whitneys. Today, Mrs. William Lawrence (Rena) lives alone on the ranch. She has so many friends that it is not a lonely life.

While the Lawrence Ranch has become smaller, as suited to the owners needs and desires, the Miller Ranch has expanded to the extent that it is one of the largest in the country. Part of the home ranch was transferred from Mandel to Rathje who sold to John Ernest who sold it to Lawrence and Brifogle. They in turn transferred it to Swift and Co., who had acquired other ranches in the area. Swift sold all of their holdings to the Miller Brothers and the ranch later became known as the Joe Miller Ranch. Some of the earlier ranches which are now incorporated in the ranch are: (1) The Sprague Ranch which had been owned by Whitehouse, Ross, Chappel Bros., Swift and Co., (2) The Basin Ranch, which had been owned by Eyken, Carbon Timber Co., Quealey Land and Livestock Co., (3) The Stillson Ranch, owned by Woolfe, and Swift and Co., (4) The Cavender Ranch, which was sold directly to Miller, and (5) The Northrup Ranch which included the Judson and Sutphin Sheep Camp and was sold directly to Miller.

From its beginning this has been a most interesting location and we are privileged to be here.

Stop 3. The Mike McGill Ranch.

The McGill Ranch was first settled by John McCreary who was employed by his brother-in-law, Ed Creighton who was constructing the overland telegraph line in the late 1860's and early 70's. McCreary owned a farm in Iowa and saw the possibilities of raising cattle in Wyoming and fattening them on his farm in Iowa. He bought the adjoining ranches belonging to Maxwell, Clugston and McDonald so that he had a rather large operation. In 1889 he employed Mike Coughlin as foreman and in 1896 Coughlin bought him out. He in turn sold the ranch to William Rathje. In 1924, the ranch was sold to the estate of John McGill Sr., who owned the Kite Ranch

on the Laramie River, not far from the Wheatland Reservoir. John McGill bought out his sister, Francis, and he and his wife, Thelma operated the ranch for many years. Many improvements were made in the operation of the ranch as well as the quality of the livestock. The McGills have two children, Mike, who now owns and operates the ranch and Jean (Mrs. Warren Benson, who lives in Laramie). John McGill died in 1975 and his wife, Thelma now lives in Laramie. Much of the success and the progress of this ranch must be attributed to the hard work and cooperation of each member of this closely knit family who were together through the depression of the 30's and other hard times.

Stop 4. The Vee Bar Ranch.

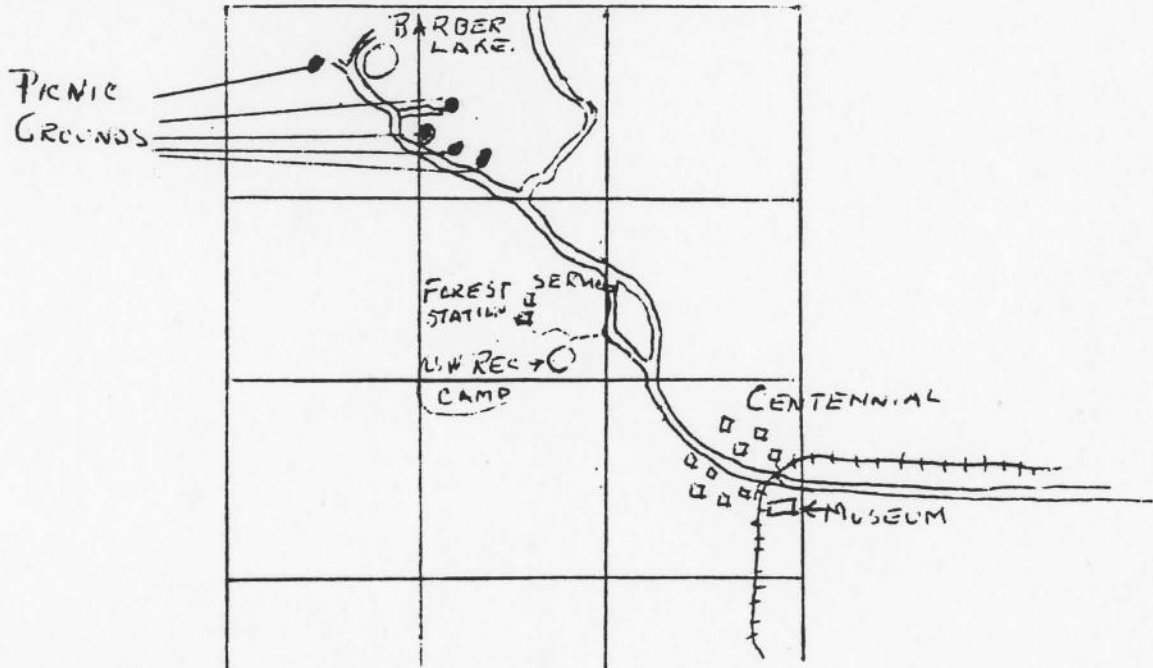
The Vee Bar Ranch lies 22 miles west of Laramie on Highway 130. It has been operated as a cattle-guest ranch for many years. The names of various owners have attached themselves to this ranch so it may, even now, occasionally be referred to as the Fillmore, The Wright, The Hein or the Schindler Ranch. Since George and Roberta Crouse purchased the ranch in 1965, they have called it by its original name, The Vee Bar. Dr. John Evers and wife, Ann, leased the ranch in 1975 from the Crouses and their name, Aspenwood, hangs at present on the entrance gate.

Early land entries on the Vee Bar date back to 1886, when Theodore Bruback erected the first cabin and barn and filed on water rights. He was unable to keep the ranch and, in 1890, a Lionel C. G. Sartoris purchased the Vee Bar. He is remembered primarily because he built the lower floor of the Fillmore Stage Stop, or Lodge. This building, having been completely remodeled in 1975, is presently occupied by guests of the Evers' Horsemanship School for Girls, as well as other guests. Sartoris also erected the large barn that is in use at this time. The fantastic corporation of Douglas-Willan-Sartoris went broke in 1892 and the ranch soon passed into the ownership of Luther and Susan Fillmore. The Fillmores left their name on the following: Fillmore Ranch; Fillmore Stage Stop (or Lodge); Fillmore Post Office and Fillmore Ditch.

The next enduring owner was the Gordon Wright family. Mr. Wright ran a stagecoach and passenger line to the Holmes Mine and also hauled heavy freight to the Holmes, Keystone and Rambler Mines. Mrs. Wright ran the Fillmore Post Office for 25 years, in addition to operating a guest lodge in the Sartoris building. The Wrights owned the ranch for 27 years and reared four daughters on the Vee Bar. They sold the ranch to a Mr. Trumbull in 1934, who sold to Leonard and Lillian Hein in 1938. They continued with the guest business (in addition to cattle) and owned the ranch for 19 years, at which time they sold it to Charles and Ina Schindler. The guest business was continued, plus a cattle and sheep operation.

In 1965, the Schindlers sold the ranch to the George Crouses, who are the present owners. Crouse operated the ranch as a bison cattle ranch for eight years, liquidating the bison herd in 1973 and the cattle in 1975.

Stop 5. Centennial. (Two hour lunch break).



In 1875 when our nation was preparing to celebrate its first one hundredth birthday, gold was discovered in the area of what is now known as Centennial Ridge, just west and south of the town of Centennial. Several mining companies were formed and a great deal of prospecting was carried on. Considerable gold was mined and one company is reported to have made a profit of about \$80,000. in a period of two years. The town was named Centennial in recognition of the activities being held in 1876. It prospered and grew for a period of about two years when it was discovered that the vein of gold-bearing ore faulted and future prospecting has not been able to find it again. Since that time there have been other mining activities but none of a lasting nature.

The town now serves local ranching interests as well as timbering and recreational activities. The Tour will spend two hours here for lunch. Meals may be purchased at THE OLD CORRAL and THE WAGON WHEEL. There are several Forest Service Camp Grounds within three miles of Centennial complete with tables and rest rooms which provide ideal spots for a picnic lunch. These are shown on the above map.

The people of Centennial are proud of the efforts they have made to gain early recognition as a Bi-Centennial community. We urge you to visit the museum they are developing.

The Tour will assemble and depart from Centennial promptly at 1:30 p.m. on the south side of the highway just east of the museum. We hope that you will continue with us as we have some very interesting ranches to visit.

Stop 6. The Medicine Creek Ranch.

The first recorded entry for this ranch was made in 1878 by Mads Wolbol who came to America from Denmark in 1871. He was an industrious man and by using good judgement acquired additional land in various parts of the valley and was considered one of the larger ranchers in the area. After his death the ranch was divided among their three daughters. One daughter married Nels Engen and they operated the ranch just south of the town of Centennial. Another married Mr. Davidson and they had the ranch in the southern end of the valley. The third daughter married Mr. Rhinesmith and they lived on this ranch. It was considered to be one of the better ranches in the valley, having good water rights and the ability to produce good hay crops year after year. Mr. Rhinesmith was considered to be a good man to work for and had no trouble in keeping good workers. They continued to operate the ranch until 1925 when it was sold to A. J. Hull and the mining interests who planned to use most of the land as part of the development planned as a result of the discovery of platinum. The mining development was not a success and the ranch was sold to Oda Mason and his son-in-law, Jack Dinwiddie, who were operating a fine ranch on the Big Laramie River. This proved to be a good combination and Dinwiddie and Mason were noted for the high quality of their Hereford cattle.

About ten years ago the Mason-Dinwiddie ranches were sold to Mr. Guy Smith, who has recently transferred ownership to his two sons, Barry Smith who lives on this ranch and Laddie Smith who lives on the old Mason Ranch. These two men operate the two ranches as a unit, raising cattle and registered quarter horses.

Stop 7. The Campbell Ranch.

In 1918, Horace and May Campbell traded their farm near Ft. Collins, Co. for the ranch in the Centennial Valley. On June 20, they arrived with 5 year old Ronald, 2 year old Shirley, a couple of milk cows and 5 or 6 horses. They purchased a few cattle but for several years they baled hay and shipped it out on the Hahns Peak Railroad as well as milked cows and sold cream for a living. Later on they bought steers in the fall and fed them for a year before selling them, but the Depression hit and Horace and May went broke like many other ranchers. Rather than take over the ranch, the Federal Land Bank loaned the money for a new start, and 125 head of Hereford cattle were purchased in 1932 for \$14. a head. This bunch of cattle was the start of the herd that supported the ranch through the years.

Ronald remained on the ranch, and in 1938 married a school teacher, Christena McMillen. They built their own house on the ranch and raised two daughters. Horace Campbell died in 1947 at the age of 77, and May died in 1969 at the age of 94. In 1964 Ronald and Cristena became the owners of the ranch keeping the Lazy Y J Brand } that had been used through the years.

Methods changed through the years, but the cow/calf operation remained and all the hay put up on the ranch was fed during the winter. For several years a carload of yearlings was shipped to the Denver Western Stock Show. Because of the difficulties of getting good help, and health reasons, a change was made this year. The cow herd was sold and this summer the entire ranch is pastured with yearlings.

Stop 8. The Wilson Ranch.

In January 1927 when Emma Olson Anderson and Gudmund Sundby were married they came to live on a ranch located near Hecht Creek, also near Sheep Mountain in Centennial Valley. It was leased from Mr. and Mrs. Henry Hecht.

Part of the ranch where the buildings are was homesteaded by Mr. and Mrs. William Hecht in 1906, who had purchased a large meadow from Mr. Hecht's father, Ryenold Hecht, who came with his family from Ohio and acquired a few sections of meadow land in 1887. The William Hechts had a nice two story log house built by Swedish Logs Men and many fine barns and other necessary ranch buildings, nestled along the creek and surrounded by large Wyoming native Cottonwood trees and willows. With the addition of the Henry Hecht's original ranch made up of a large meadow purchased from the Dole Brothers, a homestead proved-up on by Henry Hecht and a homestead purchased from Mrs. Snapp, Mrs. Henry Hecht's mother, it made a sizable ranch of good meadows, good water from a river and several creeks. A few years later the Sundbys purchased this ranch and added to it a homestead Mrs. Sundby proved-up on in the 1920's besides a half section of land south of the town of Centennial they purchased from the Laramie Hans Peak and Pacific Railroad originally owned by the McCune family before the turn of the century.

The ranch was greatly improved by Gudmund Sundby who was a firm believer in conservation so many practices were put into use. He had several reservoirs built and made great improvements by clearing sagebrush and planting crested wheat grass in the pastures. The meadows produce very good quality hay because of the network of irrigation ditches. This ranch is known for its fine quality Hereford cattle and calf buyers have come back for many years to buy the calves for their feed lots in Iowa and around Ft. Collins, Colorado.

After Gudmund Sundby's fatal automobile accident on June 2nd, 1952 Emma Sundby continued to live on the ranch and managed it and the cattle until 1961 when she married Lloyd Wilson, who owned and operated a farm near Worland, Wyoming. His son now operates the farm, and Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Wilson live on the Sundby-Wilson Ranch.

When the Union Pacific Railroad found there was no need of a depot in Centennial they generously gave the depot to the town of Centennial with the stipulation that it was to be removed from the present location. As there was no land available Mrs. Emma Sundby Wilson gave an acre of land

to the Centennial Historical Association a short distance to the east, and the depot has now been moved and looks very nice in its new location where it will become a museum for the town of Centennial and all of Centennial Valley and the surrounding mountainous areas.

The ranch home is partly surrounded by trees and willows except to the south where a meadow is visible. The Hecht Creek flows through this yard. A great addition to the ranch is the good, pure drinking water which is piped three fourths of a mile from a spring near the foot of Sheep Mountain in a large amount, so the yard can be sprinkled whenever necessary. Two walls of the original William Hecht homestead cabin are still the background of a large flower bed.

Mrs. Wilson's son Ernest Anderson and his wife live on their ranch near Albany. Her granddaughters, Roxanne and Susanne Squires, are teachers and spend most of the summers at the Sundby-Wilson Ranch. There are four grandchildren and 8 great grandchildren in Mrs. Wilson's family. Mrs. Wilson's parents were the late Mr. and Mrs. John Olson and her brother was the late Harry Olson. They owned and operated the present T-K Ranch now the home of Mrs. Harry Olson and members of her family.

PLACES, LOCATIONS AND STOPS.	TIME	MILEAGES	
		LOCAL	TRIP
Leave Courthouse square	8:00	0.0	0.0
Pass Airport	8:14	6.8	6.8
Turn right at Herrick Lane	8:16	2.2	9.0
Pass Radio Beacon	8:17	.9	9.9
Pass Alsop Lake on left	8:22	5.4	15.3
STOP 1. Stone Ranch	8:24-8:50	2.3	17.6
Pass Harry Bath Ranch on left	8:54	1.7	19.3
Pass old Herrick Ranch on right	8:55	1.5	20.8
Turn left on Mandel Lane	8:58	1.4	22.2
Turn right on Joe Miller Ranch (thru gate)	8:59	.1	22.3
STOP 2. Overlook at Joe Miller Ranch	9:01-9:32	.7	23.0
Back thru gate, turn right on Mandel Lane	9:35	.7	23.7
Note old Mandel Homestead on right	9:37	1.0	24.7
Turn right on County Road 510	9:38	.9	25.6
Pass Dallas Ranch on right	9:42	1.8	27.4
Turn left on County Road 519	9:43	.3	27.7
Note Forbes Ranch on left	9:45	.8	28.5
Turn right on County Road 513	9:47	1.2	29.7
STOP 3. McGill Ranch House	9:50-10:15	.7	30.4
Turn right on County Road 525	10:20	1.7	32.1
Note remains of old Milbrook Ranch on left	10:22	.5	32.6
Cross railroad tracks	10:23	.5	33.1
Turn right on Highway 130	10:30	4.4	37.5
STOP 4. Turn right to V-Ranch (Aspenwood)	10:33-11:10	1.4	38.9
Leave V-Ranch and turn right on Highway 130	11:12	.5	39.4
Pass Museum and Centennial	11:22	7.2	46.6
STOP 5. TWO HOUR LUNCH STOP (see text)			
Assemble in line on right of Highway 130	1:15	6.0	52.6
Leave museum	1:30		
Turn right on County Road 416	1:36	1.2	53.8
Turn left at cross road	1:37	.5	54.3
Turn right at Smith Ranch Sign	1:40	1.1	55.4
STOP 6. Medicine Creek Ranch	1:47-2:07	1.4	56.8
Turn right on County Road 416	2:20	1.3	58.3
Cross Hall's Bridge and pass Centennial Ranch	2:24	1.5	59.8
Turn right on County Road 11	2:26	.4	60.2
Turn right at Campbell's mailbox	2:32	3.9	64.1
STOP 7. Campbell's Ranch House	2:39-3:02	1.7	65.8
Turn left on County Road 11	3:09	1.7	67.5
Turn right at Sundby Ranch sign	3:13	1.0	68.5
STOP 8. Sundby-Wilson Ranch	3:16-3:46	.9	69.4
Turn right on County Road 11	3:49	.9	70.3
Turn right on Highway 130	3:56	6.5	76.8
Arrive in Laramie	4:24	24.1	100.9