

# THE 37th OLD TIME RANCH TOUR

## Sponsors:

The Laramie Kiwanis Club

The Albany County  
Historical Society

The Albany County Historic  
Preservation Board

STOPS ON THE 37TH OLD TIME RANCH TOUR  
Saturday, July 23, 1988

1. Lewis Riverside Ranch  
Hosts: Marie and Rex Lewis  
Speaker: Ed Breault
2. McLaughlin Ranch  
Hosts: Judy and James McLaughlin  
Sandy and Les Shinkle  
Speaker: James McLaughlin
3. Everett Johnson Ranch  
Hosts: Margaret and Everett Johnson  
Speaker: Everett Johnson
4. Mountain Meadow Ranch  
Hosts: Ethelyn and Amos Bovee  
Speaker: Amos Bovee
5. Woods Landing  
Host: Lorraine Wicklund  
Speaker: Fred Dudley



THE THIRTY-SEVENTH OLD TIME RANCH TOUR  
Saturday, July 23, 1988

The series of Old Time Ranch Tours was conceived and promoted by Dr. Robert Burns. The first tour was held in 1951. The series has continued annually except for 1982. Portions of the historical accounts printed here are taken, often without explicit references, and updated from the writings and Wyoming Pioneer Ranches of Robert Burns, Andrew Gillespie, and Willing Richardson; the contributions of Ethelyn and Amos Bovee, Margaret Johnson, and Conrad Hansen; Ranch on the Laramie by Ted Olson; SunDAY Magazine; and anonymous authors of previous Old Time Ranch Tour booklets.

The 1988 Ranch Tour Co-chairmen: Maurice Wear and Henry Bauer

Committee Members: Gene Cadwell      Fred Dudley      Robert Kelly      Bill Riedl  
Murray Carroll      Ken Faulkner      Bob Nelson

Fred Dudley is the master of ceremonies.

The map of the tour is on the front cover of this booklet; the projected log of the tour is on the back cover.

Rest room facilities are available in basement of the Albany County Court-house prior to departure and at each stop at the trailer carrying the outhouses.

Safety is a primary concern. Local law officers, tour marshals and traffic controllers will coordinate the caravan. Be careful making left turns. 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 any of the sponsoring organizations accept any responsibility for accidents. A trailing car will inform the lead vehicle of any delays at railroad and highway crossings.

Your cooperation will also be appreciated at the parking sites. Parking will be 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 as we enter each site. This will be especially important at the lunch stop because we will park a short walk from the ranch house. Please allow the numbered cars to leave a site first so parkers and flaggers may direct traffic.)

Keep a safe distance between cars. Turn lights on while we are on the paved highways. We will travel at the speed limit on paved highways outside the city and at 15 to 35 miles per hour on dirt roads. Drive carefully. Respect the other fellow. Enjoy the scenery and have a good trip.

Many persons have helped organize and promote this year's tour. In particular, we thank the Coca-Cola and Pepsi Bottling Companies, and the Valley Gold Dairy for the refreshments at lunch. We greatly appreciate the publicity given to the tour by the Laramie Daily Boomerang, The Gem City News, the Laramie Community TV Co., and the Laramie radio stations KOWB, KOGY, KLDI, KRQU, and KUWR. We also thank the Wyoming Recreation Commission and Laramie Heating and Sheet Metal Works for lending the equipment for the rest room facilities. Finally, we thank the officers of the law who aided us along the route and the members of the Laramie Kiwanis Club who assisted.

\* The Old Time Ranch Tour is proud to honor Agnes Burns and Bill \*  
 \* Riedl. Agnes may be the only one among us to have participated \*  
 \* in all the Ranch Tours. Her husband, Professor Robert Burns, \*  
 \* initiated and led this series of tours until his accidental death \*  
 \* in 1973. Bill was a colleague of Dr. Burns at the University of \*  
 \* Wyoming College of Agriculture and has been a Ranch Tour organizer \*  
 \* since 1953. \*

#### Stop 1: Lewis Riverside Ranch (Lakeside Ranch, Tarkio Farms, Ray Lewis Ranch)

Boston, Massachusetts, was the source of many pioneers who came to the Laramie area. Two of the Bostonians who arrived in the 1870's were Henry Balch and Dan Bacon. Balch had developed bronchial trouble in 1876 and sought the dry climate. Bacon was a boyhood friend of Balch and followed Balch here a year later. After working on the Robert Homer Ranch (now the Flag Ranch) south of Laramie, the pair purchased land on the Big Laramie River from Tom Alsop to form the Riverside Ranch. Livestock, a block brand and dewlap mark were obtained from Charley Hutton and Metcalfe. The partnership developed into the Riverside Livestock Company in 1885, and the ranch was run by Dan Bacon. Balch's interests turned to banking in Laramie and Salt Lake City and to ranches in Montana. Several examples of the ranch's productivity are recorded. In 1885 they had 5093 head of wethers valued at \$3 a head. In 1889 they sold 60,000 pounds of wool in Boston for 12 cents a pound. Wool prices were low but were cut in half by the "Panic of 1893."

In the 1880's and 90's the Company brought high priced stallions to Wyoming. In 1888 one Cleveland Bay stallion was valued at \$2,000 at the same time that a draft horse was valued at \$1,000. At about the same time a thoroughbred stallion was valued at \$150, thoroughbred Durhams (Shorthorns) were listed at \$75, and an Angus bull was valued at \$500.

The Riverside Company bought out several small ranches along the Big Laramie River and near Rock Creek. These properties included the Charley Northrup place on Cooper Creek and the Caldwell and Gardinier place on the Big Laramie. Dan Bacon died young and the Riverside was sold to a developer who divided it up into 160 acre plots.

Later owners of the ranch included the Jeremiah Williams & Co., one of the old, Boston, wool firms; a Mr. Schmidt of Tarkio, Missouri who maintained Angus cattle; Frank Bosler, who restored the Riverside name; and Ray Lewis.

#### Passing City of Laramie Water Facilities

Our tour passes three important parts of Laramie's water supply. The Water Treatment Plant processes up to 6 million gallons of water per day. It stores some but sends most of the water, by gravity flow, to Laramie where it is pumped up into the storage tanks behind Wendy's. Sodergreen Lake, named for the Sodergreens discussed in the next section, stores some of the water. The lake is supplied by the Pioneer Canal which also carries water to ranches for irrigation. That irrigation system was one of the earliest in the Laramie

Plains. Organized in 1878, the first contract called for a ditch about twenty miles long, six feet wide at the top, four feet wide on the bottom and eighteen inches deep. In the mid 1880's the canal was enlarged to be 16 feet wide on the bottom and four feet deep from the river to Sodergreen Lake and to be about 35 miles in length. Later the canal system was enlarged to include Lake Hattie, north of here.

#### Passing the Oscar Sodergreen Ranch

Oscar and Charley Sodergreen came to the Laramie Plains in 1871 and built up a fine ranch on the Big Laramie River. Charley Sodergreen had a ranch just below Oscar's on the Big Laramie River. They were great sportsmen and in the pre-Henry Ford days used to outfit a wagon and take their friends over to the Platte River and elsewhere for fishing. In 1874, Oscar took some other friends on a wagon trip to North Park to hunt elk and their wagon was the first one in the park. Their later fishing trips were very successful and some real big ones were landed. Oscar remembered one weighing six pounds.

In later years this ranch became a part of the enlarged Riverside called the Tarkio Ranch. When the ranch was sold to Mr. Schmidt, the original Sodergreen name was restored.

Oscar Sodergreen was born in Pennsylvania in 1853. Oscar died here in 1947 at the age of 94 having lived in Wyoming for 76 years. He homesteaded the original ranch site in 1872 and gradually added to his holdings until he had more than 6,000 acres in 1936 when he sold the ranch. He and his wife were renowned as hosts and cooks.

The Sodergreen brand was a quarter circle over the figure 50. Oscar Sodergreen lived to see the Laramie Plains develop from the time when buffalo, elk and mountain sheep ranged the plains until the modern cattle—the sleek Herefords and Angus—grew fat on Wyoming grass.

#### Stop 2: McLaughlin Ranch (Hans Olson Ranch)

Hans and Bertha Olson settled on the Big Laramie River in 1890. Both were Norwegian born. Hans had been a sailor on a windjammer and an engineer for the Union Pacific Railroad. Bertha had come to the U. S. on an immigrant ship and had worked as a seamstress, maid, cook, and housekeeper. They had four children: Martha, Hattie, Oscar and Ted. Ted Olson was to become news editor and then editor of the Laramie Republican-Boomerang newspaper. It is from Ted's writings in his book Ranch on the Laramie that many of these details of the Olson Ranch are gleaned.

The ranch was 800 acres in area, and the Olsons had grazing rights in the Medicine Bow National Forest. The number of cattle varied between 100 and 150. They stacked 150 to 200 tons of hay per year. This is in contrast to the Riverside Ranch which ran 3,000 head of cattle and put up 3,500 tons of hay. The average of 1 ton of hay per head for the winter was small compared to the

two tons of hay required in North Park, Colorado. The ranch was perhaps the first on the Big Laramie to raise oat, wheat and barley grains as well as hay.

Ted Olson recalls, "We were farmers as well as ranchers. We grew much of our food, though of course we had to bring the staples from town—flour sugar, coffee, spices, canned goods to supplement the fruits and vegetables we put down for the winter. Milk, cream, butter and eggs we had in abundance, with a surplus for sale or barter. When we needed meat we butchered a steer.... We cured hams with juniper smoke. Our garden supplied lettuce, peas, beans, carrots, turnips, rutabagas, parsnips, radishes—anything that would mature at 7,500 feet. (Not, alas, tomatoes; they came out of cans.) Whatever could be preserved Mama put up in Mason jars. The root vegetables were stored in the root cellar, buried in sand; we kept a kerosene lamp burning there on cold nights. Gooseberries and currants from our hedge and the thickets along the creek and the river provided jams and jellies." (Ranch on the Laramie, p. 133)

The 800 acres were made up of an original 640 acres plus 160 acres added when Hans homesteaded a quarter section south of the Big Laramie. Ted Olson reports, "The Homestead Act requires that the claimant 'prove up' by building a house and living in it for a year. As the statute of limitations must have run out long ago, I can divulge now that Dad complied pro forma by moving the old bunkhouse across the river, log by numbered log, and spending one night in it. This was a practice widely followed and generally condoned in the Winning of the West." (Ranch on the Laramie, p. 131)

Hans died in 1912 and the ranch was sold by Bertha in 1917 to Charles Neal for twenty thousand dollars. The selling price included the machinery, some horses, harnesses, some cattle and the 1/3 brand.

### Stop 3: Everett Johnson Ranch (Jake Johnson Ranch)

Margaret Johnson wrote the following text for use in this booklet.

The first record indicating that Everett's great-uncle, Alexander "Alex" Johnson and his wife, Sophia, were living on this ranch was a mortgage dated January 20, 1881, in which he borrowed \$400 from a Martha Bramel. He secured the loan with all of section 31 plus improvements and livestock, indicating he had actually been living here for some time before that.

Alex and his wife had come from Sweden, arriving in the Laramie area on the Union Pacific railroad. What no one seemed to realize at the time was that Section 31 was the last railroad section out, lying due west of Tie Siding.

In 1884, Alex's brother, Everett's grandfather, Jacob Elge Johnson came to Laramie, having spent 3 years in Chicago after having left Sweden. In order to support his family in Laramie the first winter, Jacob dug graves. He then got a job as janitor at the old East Side School around which the Civic Center is now built. Nicknamed "Schoolhouse Johnson," he was remembered as a jolly man with a red beard who would "hold the "bell" for the late students so they wouldn't be counted tardy.

Alex died in 1888, and Jacob took over the ranch, working on it in the summertime and moving his family and milk cow to Laramie in the wintertime. People who had their cows in town had a barn and used the "common" pasture on the east edge of town. He lived in the schoolhouse until he built a home which still stands at 513 So. 10th Street in Laramie.

In 1890, the Union Pacific needed money and thus deeded lands to the Wyoming Central Land and Improvement Company. On November 7, 1894, the Wyoming Central Land and Improvement Company deeded to Jacob E. Johnson  $\frac{1}{4}$  section plus two lots of section 31 for a consideration of \$1,010.68.

This homesite is on that parcel. In 1908, Jacob acquired a 160 acre Homestead tract which bordered his land a few hundred feet north of his buildings. A two-room log cabin was built on this land to "prove up" and later was moved to the yard where it is now used for a garage and storage.

Jacob and Sophia had six children: Nate, Bada, Carl, Oscar, Eva and Wesley. Nate, Carl and Wesley all ranched in the Harmony area and helped build the little church which later was moved to West Laramie and is a part of Grace Chapel. Wesley purchased the ranch from his mother following his father's death in 1922. Oscar was a mail carrier in Laramie for many years. Nate and wife Anna had two daughters, Helen and Bertha. Bertha married Bill Harvey, and they live in Laramie.

Wes and Carl served in World War I. Soon after his discharge, Wes married Geil Bovee, whom he had met before going to the service when she boarded at his brother Nate's while teaching at Harmony School. They had two children, Everett and Carol. Carol married former Laramie resident, Ron Speight and now lives in Prescott, Arizona.

Everett served for 3 $\frac{1}{2}$  years in World War II, then returned to the University of Wyoming on the G. I. Bill. There he met Margaret Eaton from Veteran, and they were married in 1947. He graduated from the UW in 1948 and taught a post-war "on the ranch" training program for veterans for four years. In 1952, the family which now included Joyce and David, moved to the ranch where Everett became a partner with his father.

Wesley loved the ranch, and his wish to spend his life there was realized. In October, 1973, he died suddenly at home as he would have wished, at age 81. Geil lived at the ranch for a time, later moving to the Ivinson Home for Aged Ladies and later to Bethesda Care Center where she passed away in April, 1986, at age 91.

Everett and Margaret purchased the ranch from his mother and raised their children there. Their daughter, Joyce teaches second grade in Buffalo, WY. She is married to Bill Tyrrell and they have two children, Kenli Ann, 5 years. and mark, 3 yrs. Son, David lives in Franklin, MA and works in Boston as an agribusiness loan officer for John Hancock. He and his wife, Jo Lynne, have a 5 year old daughter, Amanda "Mandy."

Although they sold the cattle in 1973, Everett and Margaret still do all of

the ranch work including putting up the hay. A neighbor buys the hay and pasture.

They cherish the ranch, keeping it a special, welcoming place for all family and friends, and they hope that you enjoy your stop there, too.

#### Stop 4: Mountain Meadow Ranch (Jake Lund Ranch)

Amos and Ethelyn Bovee wrote the following text for this booklet.

Jacob "Jake" Lund, a Swedish immigrant, had sailed out of Hamburg for several years. In 1872, he came to Laramie and in 1880, he settled on a couple of sections. Early water rights, timber rights, and deeds were signed by Presidents McKinley, Harrison, Cleveland, and Taft. Wyoming did not become a state until 1890, and when Jake Lund filed, it was known as Wyoming Territory. During the first year Jake and Lenna Lund built a log house which is now the barn and still remains. One unusual contribution of the Lunds was the planting of apple trees—an orchard which still survives. In 1887, the Lunds hired the Rev. Danielson "who constructed religious services on Sunday and built good log houses during the rest of the week." to build the present ranch house. The Lunds planned to use it as a guest ranch. Originally, it had 14 rooms. A card from Mrs. Lund indicates that they had just had six guests from Fort Collins for two weeks. At this time, Mrs. Lund prepared Sunday dinners for guests from Laramie. Mr. Edward Ivinson, a Laramie banker, was a frequent Sunday-dinner guest.

In 1916, the Lunds sold the ranch to Joseph Woods. It was foreclosed by the bank in February, 1923. Apparently, the bank held it for several years and various ranch managers lived at the ranch.

Jack Montgomery, a Hollywood "cowboy" in early Westerns with Tom Mix, Hoot Gibson and others bought the ranch with a dream of making it the best guest ranch in the country. However, the stock market crash ended his dreams. The Montgomery family lived on the ranch from 1929 until it was foreclosed in 1931. The family included "Baby Peggy" Montgomery of Hollywood fame as a child star. She has written a book, Hollywood Posse, about her experiences as a star in silent pictures and has devoted a chapter of her book to her years at the ranch. The Montgomerys made some changes in the house, changing the original fourteen rooms to ten, removing the wallboard to expose the logs in the downstairs rooms, and changing the stairway and front entrance.

John W. Hay purchased the ranch at the foreclosure sale in 1931.

In 1935, William Dean Embree, an attorney from New York City, purchased the ranch for his family's summer home and vacation retreat. He was quite an historian and wrote notes about the changes he made in the ranch from time to time, including digging wells, building bridges, adding electricity, and running water and doing some remodeling. He gave the ranch its present name, Mountain Meadow Ranch.

When Mr. Embree died in 1967, he willed the ranch to his son who sold it to Todd Windsor of the McLaughlin Ranch. Although the Windsors never lived at the ranch, they used it as an extension of their other ranch until 1970 when they sold it to the present owners—Amos and Ethelyn Bovee.

Debbie and Bob Davis and their son Payton live at the ranch and manage the cattle operation. Saler cattle and a yearling operation are the main activities now. The Davises have been responsible for remodeling the kitchen, redecorating the living room and dining area and are in the process of converting two upstairs bedrooms to one master bedroom. They have added a large deck and a cement driveway.

The ranch and buildings have seemed to have been preserved through the years because each owner loved the ranch and the setting on the Big Laramie River, and each contributed something of himself to improve the ranch.

#### LUNCH

Frank Moore, Pastor of Grace Chapel of West Laramie, will lead the prayer before lunch.

We are delighted to have been invited to stop for lunch on the Mountain Meadow Ranch. A limited supply of soft drinks donated by the Coca-Cola and Pepsi bottlers and ice cream donated by the Valley Gold Dairy in Laramie will be available for your consumption. Please thank these businesses when you have the opportunity.

Jake Lund planted the first and possibly the only apple orchard in the Laramie valley. Even today, the apple orchard may be the only one in southern Albany county and likely the only one at this high elevation. It survives only because of the protection afforded by the many trees along the river. You can see the apple trees in the yard near the Bovee home where we will picnic.

Before you leave, please be sure to take your trash with you and to check for personal articles which you might have left behind.

#### Stop 5: Woods Landing

Woods Landing is named for Sam Wood. He had several sawmills and used to float logs down the Big Laramie river and take them out of the water near the present Woods Landing. His large sawmill was located near there. In Sam Wood's day, the Landing was called "Wood's Landing." Then many crews of men cut railroad ties above Wood's Landing and hauled them in there so they would be ready to shove into the river during the high water. The logs would float down the river to Laramie to the "tie boom," where they would be removed from the water.

Conrad (Connie) Hansen wrote the following account for this booklet about the early days of Wood's Landing (June, 1988).



Colonel Sam Wood left Atlantic, Iowa with his family in a wagon in 1882 bound for Wyoming. There were his wife Ellen L. and his two sons, Sheldon, age 10, and Ralph, age 6. In 1882 they arrived in Cummins City, now old Jelm. There he opened a saloon and served the community as constable. In 1884 Sam moved his family 4 miles down river to the present site of Wood's Landing where he homesteaded 160 acres and started a stopping place...a way station. He built a large barn that would accommodate 40 horses, along with hay storage and a sizable tap room.

The house was quite large...comprising 9 rooms and located where the present house stands. There was also an ice house to store ice cut from the river in winter time. The saloon was about 14 x 18 feet and stood where the gas pumps are; it was painted red. A Post Office was established, October 6, 1885, titled "Woods Landing," with Sam Wood, Postmaster. Sam Wood caused a road to be build up through Woods Creek canyon...rather...a crude trail to reach a small sawmill he operated on the forest.

That position he held until he retired and moved to Saratoga in the very early 1900's. Sam died suddenly in Saratoga...I have two dates, 1901 and 1903.

After the Woods vacated the place, other families rented and operated it...I know the Decks were here for a while; and vaguely, I want to name the Neils, but the Jim Pollock family moved off in 1909, then the place was vacant for several years.

Then in the late "teens" a Mr. Spallord bought the place and lived alone here for a while, but in tearing down the barn he picked up a spotted tick and died of the fever.

Next a group of men including Fritz Wattenberg bought the place for a hunting and fishing lodge, but that was short lived; Fritz bought out one and the other of the group until he owned it in about 1925.

Then Fritz sold to Clarence and Mayme Lewellen in 1926.

SunDAY Magazine (February 13, 1983, Cheyenne, p. 7) continued the story in an article by Kathryn Gress from which the following is created.

The Gress article says 1920 was the year that Mayme Lewellen and her husband arrived in Jelm from Indiana. A week after the couple had been married, they had learned that he had tuberculosis and suffered from consumption. His doctor urged him to move to the West. Mayme had been a music teacher in Indiana which she had to give up. On a return visit to Indiana she trained to be a beautician. She earned money as a beauty operator in Laramie to purchase the old inn, dance hall, and surrounding land. The buildings have been torn down.

The town of Wood's Landing began while Mayme's first husband was still alive. But the buildings which now stand were constructed after she married Hokon Lestum. Lestum was a Norwegian timber worker, who harvested the trees and handhewed the logs for the now standing bar, cafe and dance hall. The buildings were constructed without nails. Booths inside the cafe were made of the same handhewn timber. The dance hall was built on 24 railroad boxcar springs.

The 37th Old Time Ranch Tour

Saturday, July 23, 1988

<u>PLACES, LOCATIONS AND STOPS</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>MILEAGES</u>	
		<u>LOCAL</u>	<u>TRIP</u>
Leave Albany County Courthouse Square	8:00	0.0	0.0
Bear left on Wyoming 230 at "Y" in West Laramie	8:09	2.4	2.4
Turn left onto Lewis Road	8:30	16.4	18.8
Cross Big Laramie River	8:37	2.3	21.1
Stop 1. Lewis Riverside Ranch	8:40-9:30	0.2	21.3
Return to Wyoming 230 and turn left	9:40	2.5	23.8
City of Laramie Water Treatment Plant on left	9:41	0.8	24.6
Sodergreen Lake, City of Laramie water storage on, right	9:43	1.6	26.2
Pioneer Canal on right	9:44	0.8	27.0
Turn left onto Sodergreen Road	9:45	0.3	27.3
Pass Oscar Sodergreen Ranch buildings	9:48	0.5	27.8
Pass Orton Ranch sign, left after cattle guard	9:50	0.6	28.4
Pass McLaughlin Ranch sign	9:52	0.6	29.0
Stop 2. McLaughlin Ranch	9:55-10:55	0.9	29.9
Pass Oscar Sodergreen Ranch buildings again	11:00	2.2	32.1
Turn left to Johnson Ranch	11:01	0.4	32.5
Stop 3. Everett Johnson Ranch	11:05-11:55	0.8	33.3
Return to Wyoming 230 and turn left	12:00	0.8	34.1
Turn left into Mountain Meadow Ranch	12:05	2.9	37.0
Stop 4. Mountain Meadow Ranch	12:10-1:30	0.3	37.3
Return to Wyoming 230 and turn left	1:35	0.2	37.5
Turn left onto Wyoming 10	1:40	1.8	39.3
Stop 5. Woods Landing	1:45-2:35	0.2	39.5
<p>The caravan will disband. Return to Laramie by returning to Wyoming 230 which passes in front of the Woods Landing Cafe. Turn right onto Wyoming 230 and follow 230 into Laramie. If you are interested in additional sightseeing, you may continue along Wyoming 10 which eventually enters Colorado or you may return to Wyoming 230 and turn left to go to Fox Park and then into Colorado.</p>			
Return to Wyoming 230 and turn left	2:38	0.2	39.7
Return to Laramie	3:15	29.3	69.0