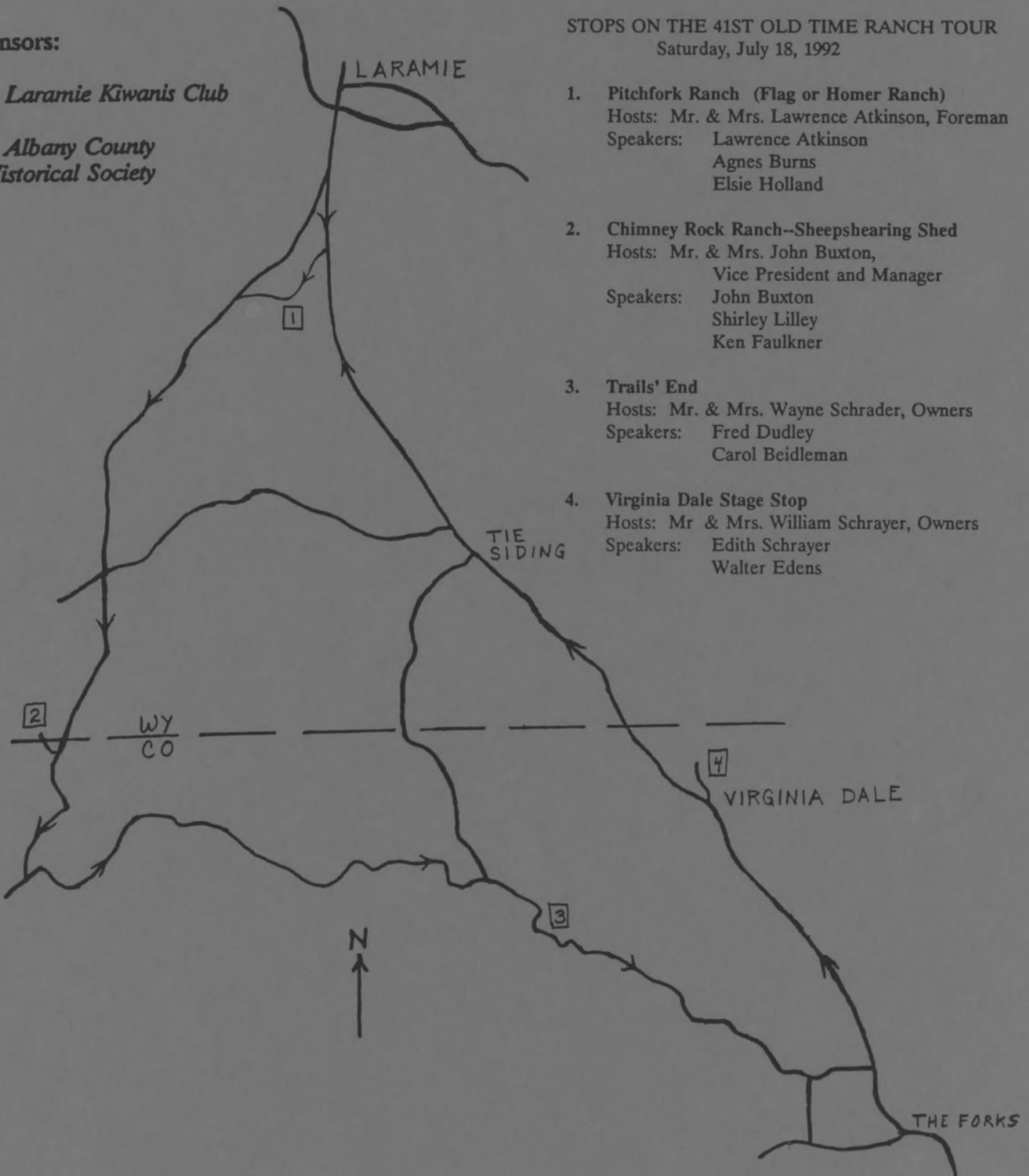


THE 41st OLD TIME RANCH TOUR

Sponsors:

The Laramie Kiwanis Club

*The Albany County
Historical Society*



STOPS ON THE 41ST OLD TIME RANCH TOUR Saturday, July 18, 1992

1. Pitchfork Ranch (Flag or Homer Ranch)
Hosts: Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence Atkinson, Foreman
Speakers: Lawrence Atkinson
Agnes Burns
Elsie Holland
2. Chimney Rock Ranch--Sheepshearing Shed
Hosts: Mr. & Mrs. John Buxton,
Vice President and Manager
Speakers: John Buxton
Shirley Lilley
Ken Faulkner
3. Trails' End
Hosts: Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Schrader, Owners
Speakers: Fred Dudley
Carol Beidleman
4. Virginia Dale Stage Stop
Hosts: Mr & Mrs. William Schrayner, Owners
Speakers: Edith Schrayner
Walter Edens

THE FORTY-FIRST OLD TIME RANCH TOUR

Saturday, July 18, 1992

The Old Time Ranch Tours were conceived and promoted by Dr. Robert Burns. The series has continued annually since 1951 except for 1982. Portions of the historical accounts printed here are taken and updated from the writings and Wyoming Pioneer Ranches by Robert Burns, Andrew Gillespie, and Willing Richardson; and from previous Old Time Ranch Tour booklets. The Fort Collins Public Library has information about the Larimer County sites. Sources are cited when known.

The 1990 Ranch Tour Co-chairmen: Maurice Wear and Henry Bauer

Committee Members: Bob Bacon Norm Brown Gene Cadwell Fred Dudley
 Walter Edens Ken Faulkner Bob Nelson John Rowland

Fred Dudley is the master of ceremonies.

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

Rest rooms are available in the Albany County Fairgrounds building, at the rest stop after Stop 4, and for 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 and crossing railroad tracks. 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 the sponsoring organizations accept any responsibility for accidents. A trailing car will inform the lead vehicle of any delays at highway or railroad crossings.

Your cooperation will 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 at entry to each site so a close-in parking place may be found. Please allow the numbered cars to leave a site first so tour personnel 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.

WE ARE GUESTS OF THE RANCHES. PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE ANY ITEMS, INCLUDING ARTIFACTS FOUND ON THE GROUND.

Many persons have helped organize and promote this year's tour. In particular, we thank the Coca-Cola and Pepsi Bottling companies for the refreshments at lunch. We greatly appreciate the publicity given to the tour by the Laramie Daily Boomerang, TCI Cablevision of Wyoming, and the Laramie radio stations KOWB, KCGY, KLDI, KRQU, KIMX and KUWR. We also thank the Wyoming Recreation Commission and Dick Strom's Rambouillet 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 Tour is grateful for the support of the financial institutions in Laramie. Their advertisements helped defray the costs. Please thank the fine people at these Laramie businesses next time you visit.

*American National Bank
Bank of Laramie
First Interstate Bank
Key Bank of Wyoming*

*Security First Savings and Loan
UNIWYO Employees Federal Credit Union
Wallick and Volk Mortgage Bankers
Albany County Public Employees Federal Credit Union*

We are concerned about the number of cars on this particular tour. Your cooperation in sharing your vehicle with others will be appreciated and assist us in parking. We plan to travel on highways at the speed limit so that the caravan will not become a traffic hazard. Please keep a reasonable distance between cars, but do not let the caravan get strung out for miles. In spite of the dust, please also keep the caravan together so that no one takes a wrong turn.

Stop 1. Pitchfork Ranch (also known as the Flag Ranch or Homer Ranch)

The Flag Ranch was established by Robert Homer and Frank Sargent in 1872. Later Sargent returned to his former home in Boston. Homer added to his holdings and owned the ranch until his death in 1927.

Wyoming's Pioneer Ranches is a rich source of material concerning the early history of the Flag Ranch since a good portion of that book was written by Robert Homer Burns. The book describes Bob Homer as a man born in Boston in 1849 and a member of one of the oldest families in that area. Captain John Homer had a prosperous shipping business to India and the Far East in the late 1600's.

In 1871 Bob Homer was travelling to California. In Omaha he took the advice of a friend to visit Laramie. After stepping from the train and looking around Laramie, he liked it. Although he continued his trip to California, he did not take up residence there. Instead, he returned to Laramie. Homer then returned to Boston and convinced his friend Frank Sargent to come back to Wyoming with him. They arrived in August, 1871, and began to make plans to start a ranching business. In that year, Homer leased the Lake Ranch (an old stage station) at the tip of Boulder Ridge.

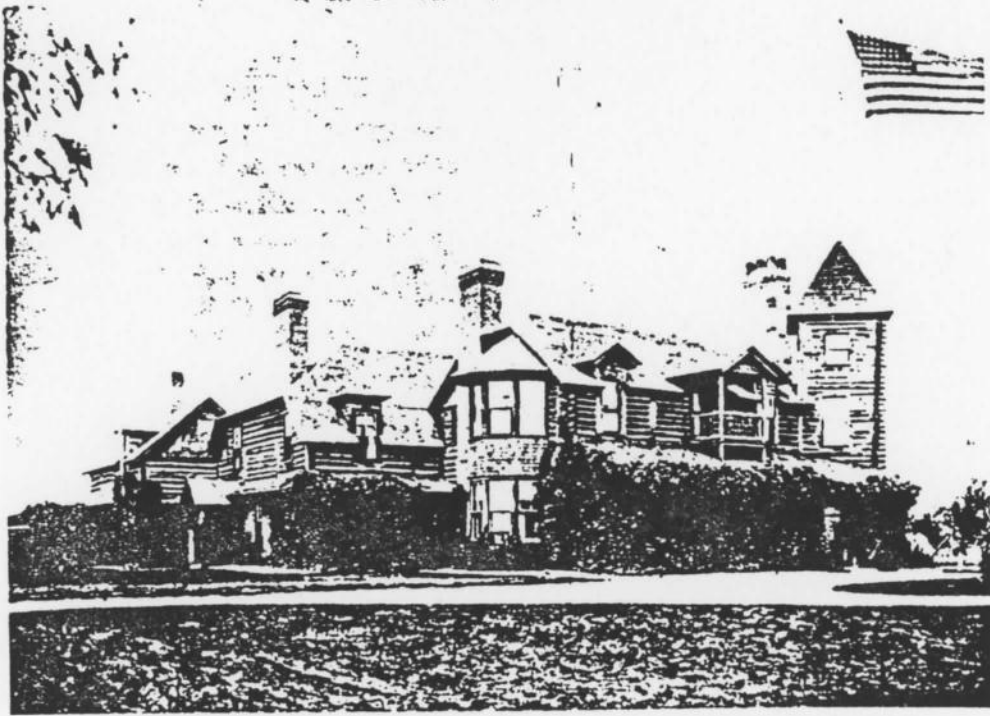
Burns quotes from a letter written by Frank Sargent telling of the first year.

"I was informed by residents of the place and parties interested in livestock that no sheds or hay were needed; notwithstanding their advice I purchased 50 tons of hay located about ten miles from my ranch. My sheep, about 2,000 in number, were to arrive by cars the 1st of September. I erected a comfortable log house for myself and men, a stable for horses and a corral 240 feet square. My sheep arrived in good shape from Iowa with a loss of only 10-10.5 percent. About October 13 snow commenced to fall, and the storm raged unabated for four days without intermission, and a high wind drifted the snow. Other storms followed and it was impossible to take care of the sheep or get feed to them. The storms continued until the middle of April and the sheep perished from starvation. I was thoroughly disgusted with the business and the country, but finally made up my mind to try again."

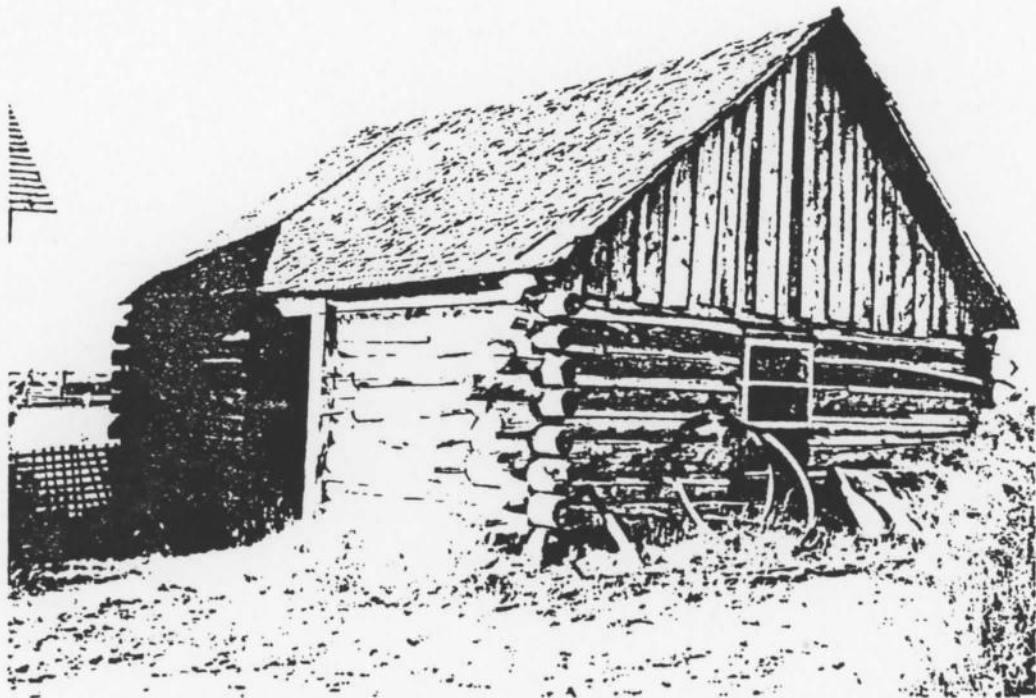
The second attempt was successful. Burns concludes from accounts by Homer and Sargent that they purchased the George and Charles Brown ranch in June, 1872, at the site of the present buildings. Sargent and financial records reviewed by Burns say that the ranch produced 200 tons of hay for 1,000 ewes and some Cotswold rams Sargent purchased. The sheep increased by 60% the first year and produced 4 1/2 pounds of wool per animal. In monetary terms, he invested \$6,000 in animals and \$3,300 in improvements in the form of corrals and sheds. Running expenses for a year totaled \$1,930. The wool brought \$2,700 and the lambs brought \$1,200. After expenses a \$1,412 profit resulted in the first year with no payment on principal.

Bob Homer held squatter's rights on a place on Sand Creek in the 1870's and later moved his log house down to the present ranch where it served for many years as the blacksmith shop. The cabin is shown in a picture on the following page from Wyoming Pioneer Ranches, page 166.

Through the years Bob Homer bought several smaller ranches: the Rice and Lindsey places on Lone Tree Creek at the foot of Boulder Ridge; the W. A. Simpson ranch on Sportsmen's Lake, presumably the old Boswell and Dana property, added in 1902; the Konold place founded in 1889 by Al Konold and added to the



The Homer Castle at Flag Ranch 1907. Homer and Burns Collection.



Blacksmith Shop at Flag Ranch. Mr. Homer's original homestead cabin.

Flag Ranch in 1894 at Konold Spring about a mile southeast of Hutton Lake; the Poole property which was the Big Pasture which Anna Poole had filed on under the Carey Act and built ditches for irrigation; Dan Livingston, Sr.'s ranch at Tie Siding and Dan Livingston, Jr.'s ranch about a mile southwest of Red Buttes; the Gilmore and Soule Ranch (James Gilmore and J. F. Soule), added around 1900, about two miles southwest of Red Buttes; the (James) McGibbon Ranch, headquartered about three miles south of Red Buttes on Willow Creek and known as the Willow Creek Ranch; and the J. W. Collins' Five Mile or Lone Tree Creek Ranch, patented in 1889, on the west side of Boulder Ridge, and which was purchased by James McGibbon in 1902 and then by Fred Klink. The Poole house was moved to the home ranch and was used for many years as a bunk house and later as the foreman's residence. J. F. Soule became a member of the first faculty at the University of Wyoming, acting as a Professor of Greek and Latin and as football coach. The Gilmore home was moved to the headquarters of the Flag Ranch after its purchase. Otto Burns, manager of the ranch from 1892 until Bob Homer's death in 1927 and father of Robert Homer Burns, lived in the Gilmore house until the ranch was sold in 1932 to Ralph Klink. In 1934 the Gilmore house was remodeled by Klink.

Hartman K. Evans joined Homer and Sargent in 1882. In 1888 the partnership was dissolved and the Red Buttes Land and Livestock Company was incorporated. Sargent and Evans returned to the east. Homer ran the ranch, also known as the Flag Ranch from the brand used for livestock.

After Homer's death, his heirs split the ranch and sold the upper part, about 10,000 acres, to John Goetz. The lower part of the ranch, including the headquarters, was sold twice and eventually passed to the Klinks--Fred, Sr., Fred, Jr., and later Ralph--who sold it to the Pitchfork Ranch Company in the early 1950's.

The Big House of the Homers, the so called Homer Castle, built in 1892 by Buckskin John Moyer, was a 21 room, log home. It included servants' quarters, large dining room, living room, billiard room, master bedroom and guest rooms. Many guests from Europe and the Eastern United States were entertained here at parties and hunting trips. The Homer Castle was a gracious and pleasant social center in the Laramie community. The Castle was outfitted with furnishings from Europe, New York, and Boston. The Castle was destroyed by fire in November, 1933. A picture of the Castle from Wyoming's Pioneer Ranches, page 161, is shown on the previous page. The large barns still standing were built with the same skillful log work about the same time as the Big House.

The Flag Ranch is now owned by the Pitchfork Land and Cattle Company. Lawrence Atkinson is the ranch manager.

As we travel along....

We pass several points of historical and geological history today. Our trip log points out the **John Goetz Ranch** on Sand Creek. John Goetz, Sr. was born in 1850 and came to Wyoming in 1876. He was a baker by trade and followed that trade for five years in Laramie City. When he started ranching, he chose the pretzel as his brand because he had made many of the twisted bakery products. His first ranching venture was a sheep business in partnership with John A. Fischer and John Prahl of Laramie City. He later started his own ranch on Shell Creek, called the Bull Mountain Ranch. In 1892 he sold this ranch and moved to Sand Creek, buying out the homesteads of W. W. Doyle and William Konold. The elder John Goetz died in 1924 and his son John, Jr. carried on the business until his own death in 1945. When the Homer estate was settled around 1927, John, Jr. bought the upper or southern part of the Homer Ranch, giving 200 yearling steers as down payment. This land included the Lindsey and Rice places and the adjacent Boulder Ridge Red Rocks. Margaret Mansfield Goetz, John, Jr.'s wife, carried on the ranch until her death in the early 1970's. Then the ranch was sold to people from Loveland and incorporated under the name Eagle Rock Ranch Company.

Our trip log also points out the **Wooden Shoe Ranch**. It too was named for its brand, a wooden shoe. It was settled by Nick Lundquist, who came to the United States from Sweden, where he was born in 1839. He

was a carpenter by trade and helped to rebuild Chicago after the great fire of 1871. In 1881 he came to Laramie City from Waukegan, Illinois, with August Trabing, pioneer Laramie merchant. That same year he made a homestead filing on Sand Creek. His skill at carpentry was used in making houses, barns, and skillfully notched bucks for fences. In 1882 he returned to Illinois to marry. The couple returned to the ranch.

About 1890 Nick Lundquist built a house, but the school district needed it and bought it. He started his own home in 1892.

Edith L. Wurl, a daughter, told of the ranch hosting some 70 to 80 horses for an overnight stay for freighters travelling from Tie Siding to the upper Big Laramie River area, a distance of about sixteen miles. The ranch was about midway in the trip.

Nick Lundquist ran few cattle. For the most part his skill as a carpenter kept him busy in house and barn building. He helped build the large barns at the Flag Ranch of Bob Homer.

The fantastic shapes of the rocks draw our attention as we near the Colorado-Wyoming border. The shapes are the result of wind and water erosion.

We also pass **Chimney Rock**, part of the Chimney Rock Ranch. It is reported that Will Wurl, son of August Wurl, as a boy was one of the first to climb this almost perpendicular rock using iron pins in the process. From the north, this rock looks like a chimney, hence its name. From the west or east, it looks remarkably like a camel, hence its other name, **Camel Rock**. The Rock is located in Colorado, yards from the Wyoming line.

Just west and a little south of Chimney Rock is the famous animal trap or buffalo jump which from early days has been a noted place. Bob Burns cited the October 31, 1870, The Laramie Daily Sentinel report that one of Thomas Alsop's herders found a mountain lion which could not get out due to the steep walls of rock. Since those days the drifting sands have filled the animal trap.

Robert J. Swan wrote about the Chimney Rock area for a Red Feathers Historical Society tour on August 10, 1989. Then Gary Lemert owned the Colorado land which includes Chimney Rock and the trap. Swan also described the animal trap as a basin thirty feet in diameter over which a small cliff extends. The Native Americans would drive the buffalo toward the basin and then kill them while trapped. Archaeologists believe many tribes used the jump at various times.

Near the trap is an inscription of a Greek lyric by Sappho. The stanza of the lyric as translated says, "Therein cold water babbles through apple branches, and the whole place is shadowed by roses, and from the shimmering leaves the sleep of enchantment comes down." The origin of the inscription is unknown.

Stop 2. Chimney Rock Ranch.

Our stop is at the sheepshearing shed on the Chimney Rock Ranch. We past the headquarters of the ranch on the main road just before we crossed the state line into Colorado. The shed is in Wyoming. The yellow post that we passed as we entered the area marks the state line.

The shed was built on the Swastika or Windhurst Ranch. Alex Johnson of the University of Wyoming Wool Department in 1935 listed this shed as one of only 20 Australian type sheds built in Wyoming and Northern Colorado between 1916 and 1920. It had 10 "drops" or shearing stations and cost \$2,800 to build. (Judith Hancock Sandoval's Historic Ranches of Wyoming has two pictures and descriptions of this sheepshearing barn. One shows the outside of the barn, and the other shows the sheep chutes inside.)

The Swastika Ranch was built by George Hutton. The Paynes came up from Texas with horses and cattle. Don Payne, Sr. and later his son were on the ranch. They named the ranch the Windhurst Ranch. After Payne left, Bill and Harry Tatham owned the ranch, and then Otto Gramm and Neal Roach. Fred Klink bought the ranch to add to the McGibbon and Flag Ranches. Eventually, it passed to the owners of the Chimney Rock Grazing Association.

The Swastika brand was abandoned and not used during World War II for obvious reasons. Harold Clay, manager of the Pitchfork Ranch for several years in the 1950's, bought the brand from the Klinks. Perry and Gloria Clay, ranchers on the Little Laramie, now own the brand.

Gramm and Roach built the large, sheepshearing shed we are visiting and a series of small lambing sheds. Its architecture is that of an Australian style sheep barn. In these barns, the shearing stations were on the second level unlike other barns in which the shearing level was only a few feet higher than the level of the pens. Here the entire ground floor was used as a sweat shed. The sheep were kept on the lower level overnight to get warm, which makes the fleece come off better. Then they were driven out and up a ramp on the west side to the shearing level. After the shearing, the sheep were pushed down the slides to the pen on the lower level.

Bob Burns carried on a sheep coat experiment on the ranch during the time it was owned by Ralph Klink. Burns reports putting cotton coats on sheep to protect them and their fleeces! It worked well to keep the fleeces clean of red dust and prevent loss of life of some older sheep. Wool buyers would not believe the "coated" fleeces came from this area because they looked like imported Australian wool. However, the coats would not stay on and were torn off on snags and fences.

As we travel along....

We pass through some very scenic land. Take your time and enjoy the views. The tour log notes the **Sheep Creek Ranch**, formerly the Van Wanning Ranch, according to Robert J. Swan. Lyle Van Wanning was a master log builder. The log buildings we see were built in the 1920's and after. In the same area we see the **Sheep Creek Restoration Area**. The Forest Service had an experimental program to revegetate sage brush flats with good high elevation grasses. Initially, a D 7 CAT plowed about 300 acres and then the area was seeded. Later, the tour log points out the Eaton Reservoir built in 1902 by Bruce Eaton, son of Governor Ben Eaton.

Stop 3. Trails' End

Our lunch stop today is at Trails' End. First, walk along the river and enjoy a lunch in a clearing adjacent to the river and the old bear cages. Then our speakers will talk of Trails' End and Phantom Canyon.

Trails' End is on the North Fork of the Cache la Poudre River, which runs down through Laporte and Fort Collins to the Platte River. The Cache la Poudre received its name in 1836 when a Frenchman named Virees Robidoux camped by this stream with a small group of men. They were attacked by a band of Indians and the first words uttered by Robidoux were "Cache la poudre," which means "Hide the powder." From that time the stream has been known by that name.

For many years Frank C. Miller, Jr. travelled with the Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show throughout the United States and Europe. He was born, reared, and died in Fort Collins, Colorado. He purchased the Trails' End Ranch on January 10, 1920. It grew from 640 acres to 1000 acres with land added in 1925 and 1927. The original ranch by one account in the Fort Collins Courier (February 6, 1920) said the ranch was called the Somner Ranch and another account said it was purchased from Alford Cornelison.

Miller's Trails' End was the show place of the area for nearly 20 years. He spent some \$100,000.00 developing the place. Local residents remembered seeing his marvelous skills in sharpshooting, knife throwing, and trick roping. His expert shooting was a feature at many fairs and rodeos, and he gained national and international fame through 50 years of performances. He was listed in the May 13, 1939, issue of "Ripley's Believe It or Not" for his being able to toss a can into the air and shoot it up to 12 times before it hit the ground, according to Arlene Ahlbrandt writing her recollections for Fort Collins Senior Voice in February, 1991.

Here at Trails' End he built what was probably the largest private zoo in the west, containing 1,400 wild animals and birds. The travel brochure says,

"There are all kinds of wild animals and birds, and almost all of them can be handled: eagles, owls, hawks, raccoons, bobcats, Lynx cats, mink porcupines, prairie dogs, skunks, badgers, silver fox, swift fox, brown and black bears, coyotes, Siberian deer, native deer, elk, buffalo, squirrels, woodchucks, and wild ducks and geese of many varieties, as well as numerous other birds and animals. In the spring and early summer when the baby animals come along, the children experience a lifetime thrill in playing with the baby fawn, bus, and raccoons, to say nothing of the little ducklings and other feathered hatchlings.

"Here you will see bear and deer eating sugar from the hand of a friendly human; elk, buffalo and deer coming on the run from a quarter of a mile away, at the call of their names; eagles screaming a welcome and owls that hoot their answer when you speak; coyotes as gentle as dogs that will howl in concert for your amusement. Fancy, if you can, a battle between the gamey trout and the snow geese in the stream. Watch the animals do their tricks for the sugar they all crave. See the natural beaver dams and learn, among many other interesting facts of wood lore, the way trees are treated to keep the beavers from cutting them down."

Indeed, one woman told the writer that from her experiences at Trails' End when she was a girl she believed all the trout had names and would come when called!

An account in the Fort Collins Library says that in October, 1921, there were 33 kinds of wild animals, and there were Sunday attendance figures of 500, 600, and 350 with dinner served to 321 persons. About 1923, 6,000 visited Trails' End during the summer from 39 states and 5 foreign countries. It was noted that 175 varieties of flowers covered the 2 acre valley. In 1925, 10,000 guests registered including those from 25 foreign countries.

In 1928: Employee Jack Baers was discharged after firing at Miller. Guests included Will Rogers. Forty-two Sioux from Pine Ridge, SD, camped in tepees. On one Sunday, 1000 visitors were served a "sumptuous luncheon." Bill Clay of Laramie had a finger bitten off by a bear. Animals included albino opossum and albino deer. There were two acres of potatoes.

On November 30, 1934, Miller sent a buffalo calf to Denver as the mascot for Colorado University in its Turkey Day Classic game against Denver University.

On February 4, 1936, Miller's huge buffalo bull died. Miller hauled the body to the "Aggies" college in Fort Collins where an autopsy revealed that the animal had died from a porcupine quill! An account by Robert Easterday, said that the quill had penetrated its nose and worked its way up into the brain where it finally killed the buffalo.

In the 1930's Miller bought a mining claim and borrowed to keep it going. The first Home Loan was in 1933 for \$6,368.72. Then on June 24, 1939, Frank became a victim of the Great Depression. The Home Owners Loan Corporation foreclosed when it accused Trails' End of being used as a private club. The animals were either sold or turned loose, and the family left the property. Frank and his wife Peggy divorced, and later

his only son Teddy who was adopted died in an Army garage fire in Berlin, Germany, in 1946. Throughout his life Frank painted, primarily local landscapes and regional history, and these paintings exist. Some are in the Fort Collins Museum. Miller died November 21, 1953, after living his last years at the Linden Hotel.

Today our speakers are Fred Dudley, who worked at Miller's Trails' End, and Carol Beidleman, who will talk about Phantom Canyon. We will go around Phantom Canyon as we continue to Virginia Dale.

As we travel along....

We go around **Phantom Canyon** on this portion of the trip. There are the Phantom Canyon Ranches and the Phantom Canyon Preserve. The Phantom Canyon Preserve is owned and operated by The Nature Conservancy, an international, non-profit, conservation organization. The mission of the Conservancy is to preserve plants, animals, and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth. Preserve Manager Carol Beidleman provided the following information.

"Phantom Canyon Preserve was purchased in 1987 and opened to the public in 1989. The preserve is located 30 miles northwest of Fort Collins along Highway 287 north of Livermore. It protects 1600 acres of rugged granite canyon country along the North Fork of the Cache la Poudre River and represents one of the last remaining roadless canyons along the Front Range of Colorado. Black bear, mountain lion, bighorn sheep, and golden eagles make their home in the canyon. The preserve also protects an extremely rare member of the parsley family and harbors an excellent trout fishery. Visiting the preserve is by reservation only, on guided field trips or through the public fishing program. The preserve also has an extensive volunteer program.

"The Livermore area has been a major cattle ranching area for the last 100+ years. The lands surrounding Phantom Canyon during this period have served largely as summer pasture for cattle operations. Jimmy Andrews ran cattle over the Phantom Canyon Ranches area from the turn of the century through the late 1930's, when it was lost in foreclosure. The ranch was broken into several ranches with various owners including Pat Ferree and Clarence Koch. In 1981, Carl and Jeanne Judson acquired the contiguous properties which became Phantom Canyon Ranch Co. and ran a large cattle operation. In 1985, the Colorado Department of Parks and Recreation considered, unsuccessfully, the acquisition of a portion of the ranch as a State Park. During 1986 the Judsons entered into negotiations with The Nature Conservancy to acquire the ecologically sensitive portion of the canyon. The effort was successful, and the acquisition was completed on December 31, 1987. The Nature Conservancy's Phantom Canyon Preserve is surrounded by and accessed through the private Phantom Canyon Ranch Co. property."

Travel Advisory

We must enter US highway 287 with a left turn. We have arranged with the Larimer County Sheriff's Office to have a deputy assist us in entering the highway. We will begin to enter the highway after all cars are lined up at the intersection. Please keep to the right so that traffic not in the tour may pass and traffic coming the other way may get by. Please observe the commands of the deputy sheriff.

When we arrive at Virginia Dale, we will place a person with a sign at the top of the hill. Our turnoff is to the right about a quarter mile from the sign. Please slow down.

Stop 4. Virginia Dale Stage Station

Harold Marion Dunning describes the Virginia Dale Stage Station in The Overland Trail North. This account draws heavily from Dunning's writings and from other material in the Fort Collins Library.

The Station was established in June, 1862, and operated until 1867. It was located on the Cherokee Trail of 1849. The site was named for Joseph Alfred Slade's wife, Maria Virginia. Ben Holladay had first appointed Slade division superintendent with headquarters at Fort Laramie and then at Virginia Dale when the headquarters was moved. It was Slade who made the station famous across the country.

Joseph (Jack) Slade was born in Carlisle, Illinois, and at the age of thirteen displayed a terrible temper and killed a man by striking him with a stone. Slade's father sent him to Texas where he grew up and married Virginia Dale. Virginia always had him under control even when drunk. However, soon after arriving in Wyoming he killed Andrew Farrar while they were drinking at a site east of Green River. Farrar had dared Slade to shoot him, and Slade did. Immediately, Slade tried to save Farrar, but failed.

Slade had trouble with many people. Perhaps it was his reputation which caused the Overland Company to hire him. He provided a bit of protection. However, his conduct and the reputation of the stage station as a hangout for the "wild bunch" led to his dismissal after one year.

One incident involved Jules Reni, a French Canadian, who had a ranch on the South Platte, near present day Julesburg. Slade had replaced Reni as station agent in Julesburg earlier. As the story goes, Slade had added insult to injury by moving in on Reni's girlfriend, Rose. Reni and Slade quarrelled, and Reni fired thirteen buckshot into Slade. Reni left him for dead. About this time the Overland Stage arrived. On board was the line's Superintendent, who ordered the arrest of Reni. Those who took Reni into custody proceeded to hang him. After he was black in the face, he was cut down and let go on his promise to leave the country. Slade survived and swore he would kill Reni. After a while Slade sent word to Reni that he was determined to kill him. Reni in turn told several people that he was going to kill Slade. Hearing of the threat, Slade started off toward Julesburg. Having ordered Reni captured at a station called Chansau's, Slade arrived and found Reni bound in a corral. Slade shot him twice in the head. Then Slade gave himself up to the officers, but nothing was ever done about the killing.

One account tells that Slade traveled frequently to Laporte on business. There he caused lots of trouble. One occasion he entered the G. W. Sanderson's store, smashed the mirrors, opened up the faucets of the vinegar and molasses to see what sort of mixture they would make when flour and sugar were added. When Slade sobered up, he came around and settled the \$800 damages.

On another occasion Slade shot up the Sutler's store at Fort Halleck. After this episode, the commander had Slade arrested and refused to release him unless the stage company would dismiss him.

After his dismissal as station agent, Slade moved to Virginia City, Idaho Territory (now Montana), and started a ranch and made money at freighting. After he had killed several persons in his wild outbursts, vigilantes hanged him in 1864.

Slade was succeeded by Robert Spotswood. Later, William S. Taylor and his wife operated the Virginia Dale stage stop until 1886 when they moved to the Laporte Station. Mr. & Mrs. S. C. Leach ran the station until it closed with the completion of the Union Pacific Railroad in 1867. Between 1864 and 1866, Virginia Dale was a popular stop for emigrant trains. It was not unusual to find 50 to 100 wagons parked here. Leach purchased the station and lived there, operating the Post Office, until 1885, when he moved to Wyoming. His wife is buried in the Virginia Dale cemetery.

Libby James relates several tales concerning the 500 foot cliff southeast of the old station house. One says that a Cheyenne Indian was refused permission to marry the Ute girl he loved because they were from different tribes. He took the young girl in his arms and both jumped to their deaths on the rocks below.

Another story says that an immigrant whose mistress abandoned him to marry someone else jumped to his death in full view of the woman he loved.

Northeast of the station Table Mountain, also known as Robber's Roost, is a mountain where bandits hid their loot. It is rumored that Slade was a member of this group and would inform them when valuable shipments were due to arrive.

To the west of the station is a well dug 65 feet deep in solid granite in 1864.

About three miles from Virginia Dale is the Butte Royal tunnel which was constructed in 1910-11 by the Denver, Laramie, and Northwestern Railway in an attempt to reach the coal fields near Elk Mountain. The tunnel is 350 feet long and 19 feet high. It is located along Fish Creek. Evidence of the railroad grade can be seen from US 287 near the turnoff we took.

Many well known people passed through the Virginia Dale Station. The plaque located on US 287 says, "Vice President Colfax and party were detained here by Indian raids in 1866." Also Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain) recalled his meeting Slade in Roughing It.

"In due time we rattled up to a stage station, and sat down to breakfast with a half-savage, half-civilized company of armed and bearded mountaineers, ranchmen, and station employees. The most gentlemanly appearing, quiet and affable officer we had yet found along the road in the Overland company's service was the person who sat at the head of the table, at my elbow. Never youth stared and shivered as I did when I heard them call him *Slade!*

"Here was romance, and I sitting face to face with it!--looking upon it, touching it, hobnobbing with it, as it were! Here, right by my side was the actual ogre who, in fights and brawls and various ways, had taken the lives of twenty-six human beings, or all men lied about him! I suppose I was the proudest stripling that ever traveled to see strange lands and wonderful people.

"He was so friendly and so gentle-spoken that I warmed to him in spite of his awful history....

"The coffee ran out; at least it was reduced to one tin cupful, and Slade was about to take it, when he saw that my cup was empty. He politely offered to fill it, but, although I wanted it, I politely declined. I was afraid he had not killed anybody that morning and might be needing diversion. But still with firm politeness he insisted on filling my cup, and said I had traveled all night and better deserved it than he; and while he talked he placidly poured the fluid, to the last drop. I thanked him and drank it, but it gave me no comfort, for I could not feel sure that he would not be sorry, presently, that he had given it away, and proceed to kill me to distract his thoughts from the loss. But nothing of the kind occurred. We left him with only twenty-six dead people to account for, and I felt a tranquil satisfaction in the thought that, in so judiciously taking care of No. 1 at that breakfast table, I had pleasantly escaped being No. 27...."

The return to Laramie

The caravan will disband. To return to Laramie retrace our path to US 287 and turn right onto the highway. Please use care in entering the highway since cars and trucks are travelling fast down the hill.

The 41st Old Time Ranch Tour

Saturday, July 18, 1992

<u>LOCATIONS AND STOPS</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>MILEAGES</u>	
		<u>TRIP</u>	<u>LOCAL</u>
Leave Albany County Fairgrounds	8:00 AM	0.0	0.0
Turn from US 287 into Pitchfork	8:05 AM	4.6	4.6
STOP 1: Pitchfork Ranch	8:20 - 9:20 AM	9.4	9.4
Leave Pitchfork Ranch going by log house	9:20 AM	9.4	0.0
Bear left	9:21 AM	9.5	0.1
To gate at Cement Road	9:29 AM	10.9	1.5
Bear left at fork	9:30 AM	11.4	2.0
Cattleguard opposite Lake Hutton	9:34 AM	13.1	3.7
Bear left at fork	9:42 AM	17.2	7.8
Opposite Goetz (Booth) Ranch	9:48 AM	20.4	11.0
Cattleguard at Wooden Shoe Ranch	9:50 AM	21.3	11.9
Wooden Shoe Ranch	9:50 AM	21.4	12.0
Bear left at fork	9:51 AM	21.8	12.4
Chimney Rock Ranch entrance	9:54 AM	23.4	14.0
State line, onto Larimer County 89	10:02 AM	27.4	18.0
Turn right toward sheepshearing shed	10:04 AM	28.1	18.7
Bear right at fork	10:06 AM	29.0	19.6
Fence line	10:07 AM	29.2	19.8
STOP 2: Sheepshearing Shed	10:10 - 11:15 AM	30.1	20.7
Fence line	11:18 AM	31.0	0.9
Return to fork	11:19 AM	31.2	1.1
Turn right onto Sand Creek Road	11:23 AM	32.1	2.0
Return to Sand Creek Road	11:23 AM	32.1	2.0
Turn left onto County 80C toward Fort Collins	11:35 AM	37.2	7.1
Bear left at fork	11:44 AM	41.2	11.1
Sheep Creek Ranch	11:52 AM	44.5	14.4
Eaton Reservoir is in the distance to the right	12:13 PM	53.3	23.2
Junction County Roads 59 and 80C, bear right	12:21 PM	56.4	26.3
STOP 3: Turn left into Trails' End Ranch	12:30 - 2:00 PM	59.2	29.1
Leave Trails' End, turn left onto County 80C	2:00 PM	59.2	0.0
Cherokee Park access	2:20 PM	69.2	10.0
Intersection with Larimer Co. 37	2:26 PM	72.3	13.1
Reach US 287	2:31 PM	74.7	15.5
Turning left onto US 287	2:46 PM	74.7	15.5
Virginia Dale Post Office	2:59 PM	85.4	26.2
Turn right at Virginia Dale Station turnoff	3:00 PM	85.7	26.5
Bear left at Y	3:01 PM	86.1	26.9
STOP 4: Overland Trail Stage Station	3:05 - 3:55 PM	87.2	28.0
Turn right onto US 287	3:59 PM	88.5	1.3
Rest Area on left	4:02 PM	91.2	4.0
Colorado - Wyoming Border	4:04 PM	92.8	5.6
Albany County Fairgrounds	4:30 PM	116.2	29.0

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