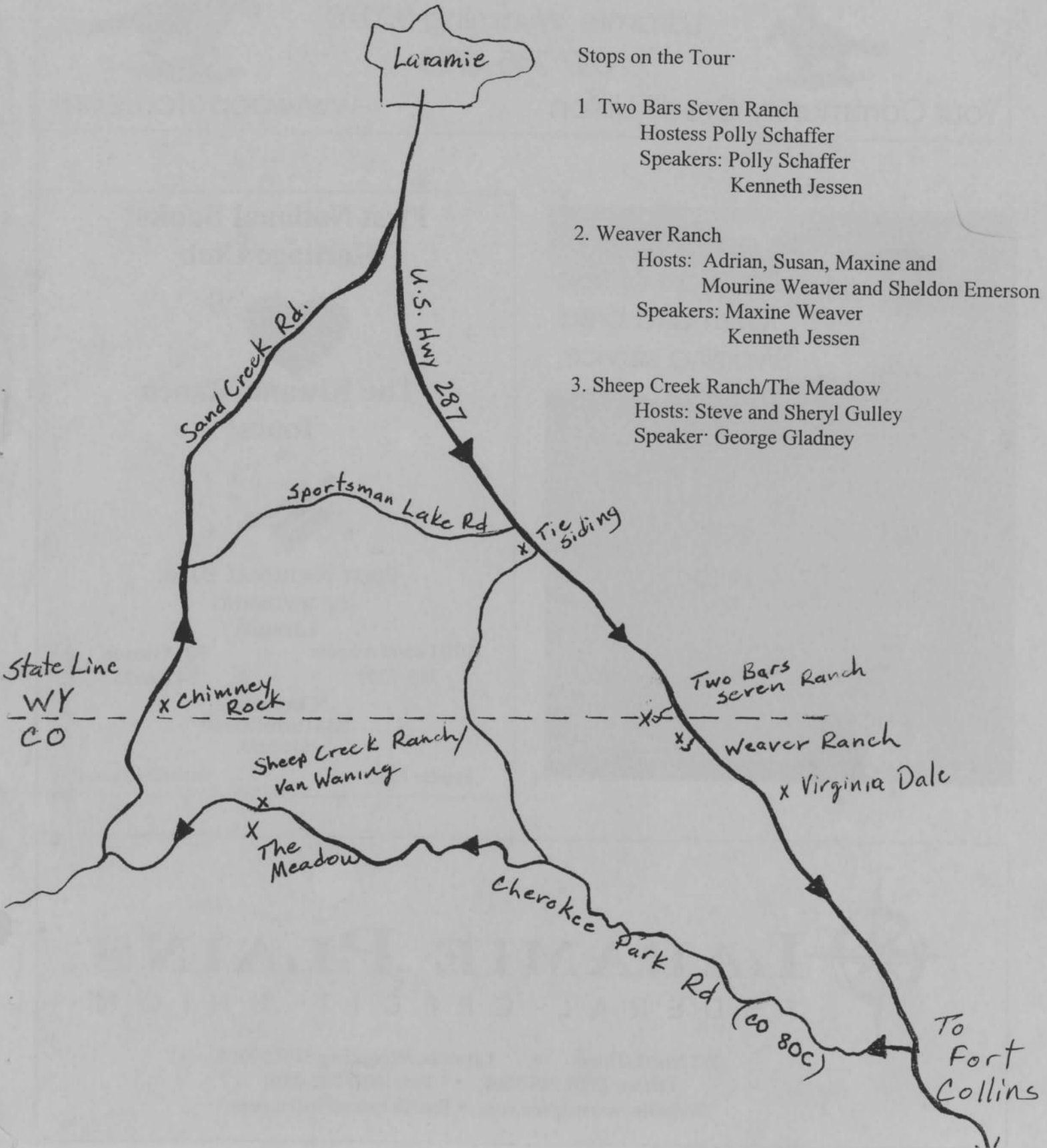


2010
The 60th Old Time Ranch Tour

Sponsored by the Laramie Kiwanis Club



Stops on the Tour

1. Two Bars Seven Ranch
Hostess Polly Schaffer
Speakers: Polly Schaffer
Kenneth Jessen
2. Weaver Ranch
Hosts: Adrian, Susan, Maxine and
Mourine Weaver and Sheldon Emerson
Speakers: Maxine Weaver
Kenneth Jessen
3. Sheep Creek Ranch/The Meadow
Hosts: Steve and Sheryl Gulley
Speaker: George Gladney

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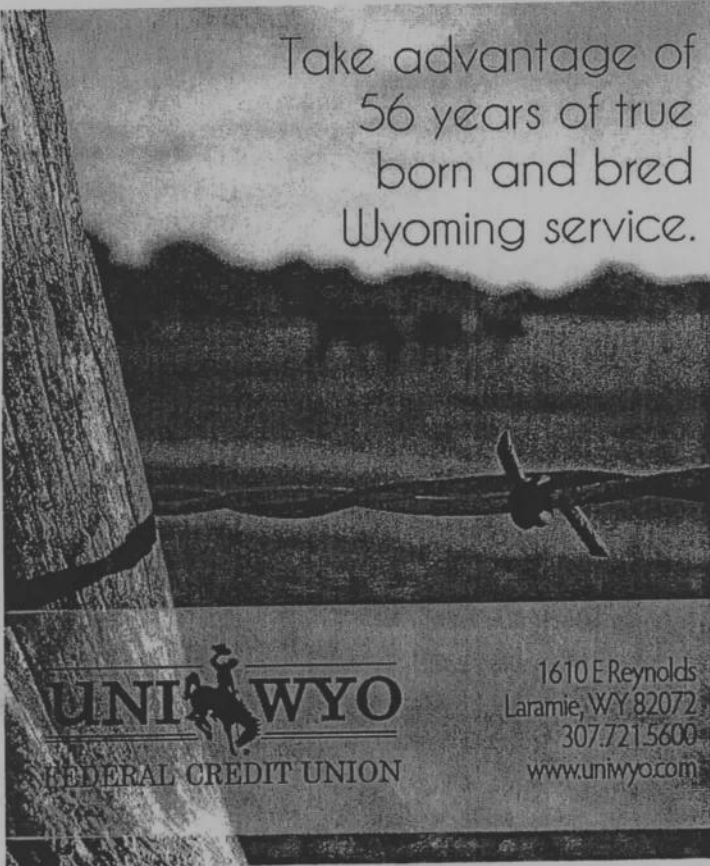
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Two Bars Seven Ranch

Located on both sides of the Colorado-Wyoming border, it is a little more than 2 hours drive north of the Denver airport, but worlds away from the pressures of modern life. Polly and her staff work to ensure that guests at the Two Bars Seven Ranch take a step back in time, discovering all the adventure that this scenic 3,000-acre working cattle ranch and adjacent National Forest land have to offer.



The ranch was established during the days of the territorial government before Wyoming was a state. It has been in the family for four generations and a dude ranch for three. Pictured on the left are the 2nd and 3rd generations, Teddy, Ted, Peggy, and Polly, circa 1950. Our horses and cattle carry the lines of our ancestral breeding programs. Some of our guests are also three generations of vacationers. The ranch is still its original size.

From the 1930s through the 1960s, the ranch hosted regular rodeos at a remote arena built into a natural valley, affording grandstand-like seating for spectators on the hillsides flanking the arena, which used natural trees as posts for the arena enclosure. Competitors and spectators alike traveled from far away to take part in the rodeos.

Today, the Two Bars Seven offers horseback rides through the surrounding canyons, fishing in the pond near the ranch headquarters, a rustic dance hall above the barn (be sure to go visit while you are here) and overnight guest accommodations for groups up to fifteen people, including bed and breakfast packages. Guests have access to many square miles of granite rock formations, valleys teeming with wildlife and (right now anyway) all the wild raspberries, chokecherries and gooseberries a guest can stand to eat.



If you are interested in visiting the Two Bars Seven as a guest, please visit their website at: <http://www.twobarsevenranch.com>



Virginia Dale's railroad tunnel never saw a train

By Kenneth Jessen
Correspondent

It's a fact; there is a railroad tunnel about a mile and a half from Virginia Dale. However, Virginia Dale has never had rail service.

This unusual piece of Colorado history began in November 1907 when a group of prospective investors from Kansas were entertained in Fort Collins with a banquet in the Northern Hotel. A new railroad, the Denver, Laramie & Northwestern, hosted the investors to interest them in its many properties including town sites, farms and coal mines. Never had there been such an entertaining railroad in Colorado!

This obscure railroad was launched by four Laramie businessmen in conjunction with several wealthy eastern capitalists. The Denver, Laramie & Northwestern's ambitious plans were to connect Denver to Seattle with a route running through Fort Collins, Laramie and Yellowstone National Park.

Construction began in May 1909 just west of the "mouse-trap" where Interstates 70 and 25 now

join. Turning the first spade full of earth was proceeded by a grand parade from the Brown Palace Hotel in downtown Denver. The railroad spared no cost to publicize the event.

After a year of laying track over relatively flat terrain, the DL&NW reached a place called Hillsboro a few miles east of Johnstown. Hillsboro was the location of a beet dump serviced by the Great Western Railway. Ignoring the existing community, the DL&NW laid out its own town naming it Milliken for one of the railroad's founders, Judge John D. Milliken. Grading crews worked only long enough to plow some furrows in the prairie to mark the streets before continuing their work toward Fort Collins.

In its push westward, the railroad ran out of money and its leaders began a publicity campaign designed to excite the residents of Fort Collins. Over two dozen articles appeared in the Fort Collins Courier during 1907 and 1908 about this new transcontinental railroad.

The next move was to solicit \$200,000 from the city of Fort

Collins itself in exchange for shares of its stock. The payment was to be made in stages dependent on the railroad reaching Fort Collins and continuing construction to Laramie. The town council wisely rejected the proposal on its first reading.

Stuck in its new town of Milliken, the DL&NW approached Greeley with a similar proposal, which also met defeat. A terminal company, however, was organized by some Greeley businessmen to purchase the necessary land and right of way and to construct a depot for the DL&NW.

Grading crews immediately stopped work on the Fort Collins line, leaving behind a partially completed trestle over the Big Thompson River. Now they began grading toward Greeley, not on the original route. Eventually, the 54 miles of track from Denver to Greeley were completed and train service began.

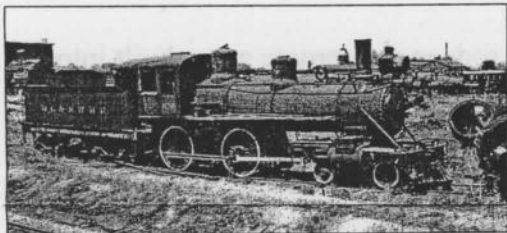
Due to financial limitations and competition from the Union Pacific, the DL&NW never extended its rails beyond Greeley. It did, however, complete all of the necessary grading to Severance. The entire town of Severance was purchased for the highest amount ever paid per acre for land in northern Colorado as of that date.

In anticipation of continuing its march towards Laramie, the DL&NW laid out the town of Scott, 16 miles due north of Fort Collins. A plat of Scott remains on file in the Larimer County Courthouse. Scott was to have been a division point complete with shops and a roundhouse. Extra locomotives would have been required for the long climb up Park



The light at the end. Shown is the Butte Royal tunnel in 1914, shortly after completion. It measured 18 feet in height and 350 feet in length.

Photo from Richard Baker collection



Days of glory past. Years after the Denver, Laramie & Northwestern was abandoned, this locomotive was discovered sitting in a Denver scrapyard by railroad photographer Dick Kindig.

Creek to Virginia Dale and on to Wyoming. Since the railroad never reached Scott, the town failed to develop and was withdrawn in 1941. It remains one of the few Colorado towns founded, never built, and then withdrawn all in the same century.

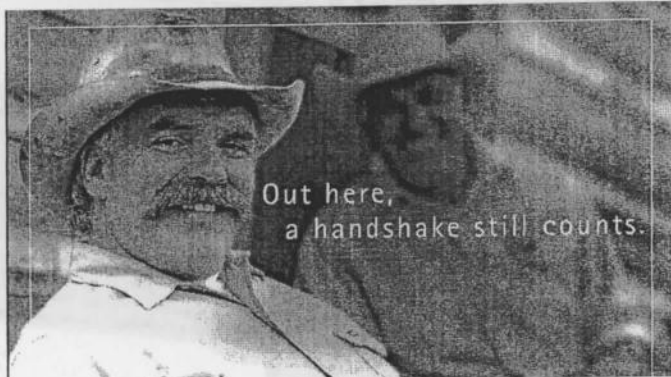
The DL&NW wished to establish a firm foothold on its most valuable asset, an easy passage up Fish Creek Canyon near Virginia Dale. For this reason, it began grading in the Virginia Dale area in 1910. So important was the Fish Creek route that the Union Pacific seriously contemplated joining forces in the construction of this section for joint use by both lines.

Judging from what work was done, the DL&NW wanted to get the worst grading over with first. Part of the old grade can be seen north of U.S. 287 near the turnout to the Flying "S" Ranch just beyond the now abandoned Virginia Dale filling station. A large fill followed by a cut was constructed in this area ending abruptly in the Dale Creek Canyon. Spanning this canyon would have required a spectacular trestle, maybe 150 feet high and some 400 feet long.

A second piece of grade, a little over 2 miles long, can be found on private property in Fish Creek Canyon. A rugged rock ridge forced the railroad to bore a 350-foot tunnel. They called it the Butte Royal Tunnel. The portals are hidden behind a dense cover of brush and trees. The wooden collars have collapsed, and there has been a cave-in in the center of the tunnel making it unsafe to walk through. This unique monument is the only Colorado railroad tunnel never used for its intended purpose.

The DL&NW eventually went bankrupt costing investors their every dime. It hung on until 1917, trying to compete with the Union Pacific for Denver to Greeley traffic using motor cars for its passengers and worn out freight locomotives to pull what few revenue cars it could get.

The entire line was sold to a Denver junk dealer. The Great Western Railway purchased 29 miles of track to expand its sugar beet operations along the South Platte River. Today, almost all visible signs of the old D.L. & NW. are gone, putting to rest forever a dream of a direct rail connection between Denver and Seattle.



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The Kiwanis Club of Laramie would like to express our thanks to the North Forty News and author Kenneth Jessen for their kind permission to reprint this wonderfully informative article.

WEAVER RANCH

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4

Established 1886

Hosts: Adrian, Susan, Maxine and Mourine Weaver and Sheldon Emerson

Weaver Ranch was established in 1886 when Noah and Adeline Weaver purchased property at Tie Siding, Wyoming and Virginia Dale, Colorado. They also had the general store at the town site of old Tie Siding, Wyoming, and they, along with their in-laws the Woodards, established the livery stable and small hotel at Tie Siding. Later, the Weaver's established a general store in Laramie. Their son, Adrian, Sr. was born in Laramie in 1889, a year before Wyoming became a state. Following service in World War I, Adrian Sr., and his wife Eva homesteaded near the family ranch at Virginia Dale on Fish Creek, which we are touring today

After graduating as a veterinarian from Colorado A & M in 1952, Adrian practiced in Lusk, Wyoming before purchasing a veterinary practice in Laramie. In 1958 Adrian purchased the Stevenson Ranch at Tie Siding that joined the other Weaver property. He purchased his first registered Angus cattle in 1960 and he moved his family to the ranch in 1962. When he moved to the ranch, Adrian dropped the small animal practice in Laramie, but he maintained his large animal practice in Albany county as he continued to build the ranch operation. In 1969, the current headquarters at Owl Canyon was purchased to provide necessary expansion of the ranch and a more suitable winter climate for the cattle. The 2000 feet lower in elevation is milder on the livestock in the winter, requiring less hay while still allowing the cattle to winter in pasture conditions. An additional expansion of the Weaver Ranch came in 1989 when the Cottonwood Ranch was purchased in Sedgwick County in northeastern Colorado.

Currently, the main cow herd is managed in Sedgwick. The yearling bulls and heifers are managed at the Owl Canyon headquarters and are summered at Tie Siding or Virginia Dale at an elevation of 7500 feet.

Weaver Ranch is a seed stock supplier, meaning the main "crop" of Weaver Ranch is 2-year old registered Angus bulls, with an emphasis on balanced traits, calving ease, good handling disposition and adaptability to high altitude. The Weavers market primarily to Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico and Texas. Heifers that are not kept as herd replacements are sold at the annual sale as bred commercial heifers.



Recently, the Weavers have incorporated goats into their ranch operation. The goats are used for natural weed control and the kids that are not kept as herd replacements are sold as meat goats to Texas and New Jersey

The Weaver management team consists of Adrian, his three daughters, Susan, Maxine and Mourine and his grandson, Sheldon. All have college degrees from Colorado A & M/ Colorado State University. While at Tie Siding, Adrian became the first president of the Albany County Stock Growers Association and was a booster of the Laramie Jubilee Days. Susan, an animal science major, is responsible for the bookkeeping necessary to maintain the registered operation. She serves on the board and is past President of the Larimer County Farm Bureau. Maxine and Mourine are both ex-vocational agriculture teachers. Mourine is responsible for the "herdsperson" position and handles the computer work and electronic communications. She currently serves as secretary of the Colorado Angus Association. Maxine received her Juris Doctorate from the University of Wyoming and is a staff attorney with the Wyoming Legislative Service Office. She provides the legal expertise for the ranch and produces the annual production sale catalog. Mourine's son, Sheldon, has just completed his masters program in integrated resource management and helps with the livestock and crop management. Mourine's daughter, Darby, is attending college in Houghton, New York. Both Sheldon and Darby have shown their angus cattle at the Larimer County Fair and at Colorado Angus Association activities. They have used the proceeds from their Angus herds to help finance their college educations. All members of the family can be found doing any and all activities necessary to running a registered livestock operation.

The Weaver Ranch and family were honored in 1995 as one of Colorado's Centennial Farms for operating the ranch at Virginia Dale continuously for more than 100 years. In 1998, Weaver Ranch was honored as the "Colorado Seed Stock Producer of the Year". In 1999 Adrian was honored as the Colorado Angus Association Pioneer Breeder and in 2009 Adrian was selected as the U. S. Livestock Industry Leader of the Year by the Record Stockman. This award recognizes Adrian's years of building the Seed Stock program that is foundation of Weaver Ranch today.

Due to time constraints, only a portion of the Weaver Ranch will be seen on the 2010 Ranch tour. The main house at Virginia Dale consists of the original portions of the house, as well as a portion added on in the 1950s. It has a quartz rock fireplace in the living room. The main barn is the original livery stable from Old Tie Siding that was dismantled and moved twice in its history, piece by piece and log by log.

Part of the ranch, which has since been sold, included the Butte-Royal Tunnel (Tunnel) through the native granite stone that was to have been used by the Denver-Laramie and Northwestern (DL&NW) Railroad. The DL&NW Railroad had prepared roadbeds for the tracks as well as digging the Tunnel before they were stopped from laying tracks on the Weavers' meadows. The Tunnel was built in 1910 and 1911 and is 19 feet tall and 350 feet in length. The tracks were never laid through the Weavers' meadows nor the neighbors' meadows, because of litigation by Adeline Weaver and because the railroad ran out of financing. The Tunnel is located downstream and across the road from the meadow where we will have lunch, but because it is on property no longer owned by the Weavers, the Tour will not be able to walk to the Tunnel. Currently it is unsafe to walk through the Tunnel because the timbers supporting the Tunnel are no longer stable. While the tunnel mouth was once in plain site from the road, it is now overgrown by trees and shrubs, and thus no longer visible.

Visitors are always welcome at our ranch and we would be happy to answer any questions about the ranch or our operation.

Sheep Creek Ranch/The Meadow

This ranch is the oddball on the tour, because it has not remained in one family through many generations, and the ranching operation itself, no doubt of vital economic importance to each family that has resided here, is not the important story

Here, the setting is the story. Located high in the mountains, you will immediately note that this meadow lacks the lushness of the two lower mountain meadows we visited this morning. Water is less abundant here, and so is summer's heat. Crops will not grow so lush, and domestic animals will struggle to survive through the winters. In the early days, before electricity and propane heat and well-maintained roads, humans struggled to survive the winters too.

Historically, this land is most well known as the Van Waning Place, where Lyle Van Waning and his family eked out a living, some of the first humans willing to brave the harsh winter conditions to occupy this landscape year-round. It is the sort of landscape that tends to leave its mark on its people, rather than people leaving their mark on the landscape.

For those who are interested in an account of the several families who lived here in the early days, you should read *The Meadow*, by author James Galvin. The book follows the lives of numerous residents of this high mountain meadow, the slow but steady settlement of the surrounding area, and their struggles to survive in this harsh land.

Many of the older buildings you see at the Sheep Creek Ranch were built by Lyle Van Waning when he lived here. The Appleton "App" Wurster place was on the half-section of land above the Van Waning place, near Eaton Reservoir. There is a little-known cemetery to the north of our route, where App Wurster's first wife and child are buried. Another local resident, Oliver Brown, who lived on Trail Creek, buried a child here. A Mexican family who worked at a nearby sawmill buried two children here, victims of Scarlet Fever. A short distance from the cemetery is the Lone Tree Lookout Point, from which one can see the entire expanse of the Laramie Plains. This was a well-known lookout point in this high and timbered country.

The Eaton Reservoir is the result of the energy and vision of Mr. Benjamin H. Eaton, a Colorado resident, who saw the possibility of obtaining more water for the Cache la Poudre/ South Platte River watershed by diverting water from the headwaters of Sand Creek, out of the Laramie/North Platte River watershed. He organized the Eaton Ditch Company to finance the project, and the litigation that naturally ensued. Eventually, the company was allowed the right to divert water into Eaton Reservoir, where it was conveyed down Sheep Creek to the many farms and ranches of the Poudre Valley that use the water to this day.

Our Colorado and Wyoming tour participants will naturally part way after this stop. Participants can return to Fort Collins by back-tracking down Cherokee Park Road. An alternative would be to follow Cherokee Park Road West to Four Corners (where you will pass the large buffalo feedyard) and then turn south, toward Chambers Lake, and return to Fort Collins via Highway 14 (the Poudre Canyon.)

Those returning to Laramie will follow the Sand Creek Drainage on our route to Laramie. Near the state line, you will note the magnificent sandstone spire known most widely as "Chimney Rock." As we pull along side its base, you can look up at the rock and understand the reason it is sometimes called "Camel Rock."

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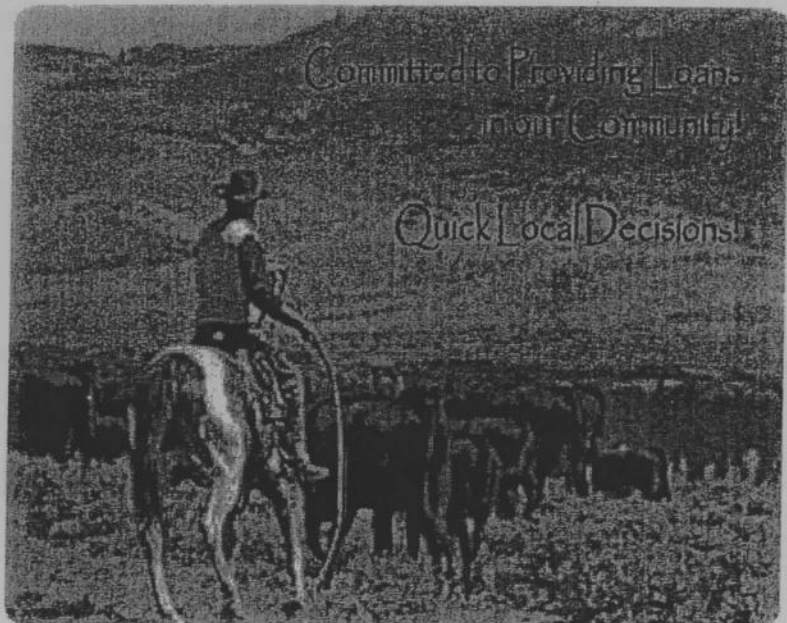
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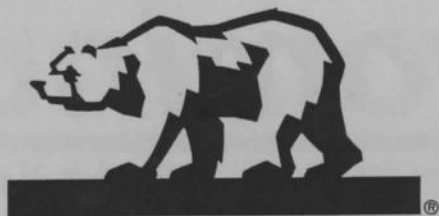


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