

# The 61<sup>st</sup> Old Time Ranch Tour

Stops on the 61<sup>st</sup> Old Time Ranch Tour  
Saturday July 23, 2011

1. **Old Tie Siding and the Weaver Ranch**

Hosts: Weaver Ranch, Inc.  
Glo Serrano  
Steve and Kristin Kramschuster  
Speaker: Maxine Weaver

2. **Dale Creek Railroad Trestle Site**

Host: Peter A. Hansen  
Speaker: Larry Ostresh

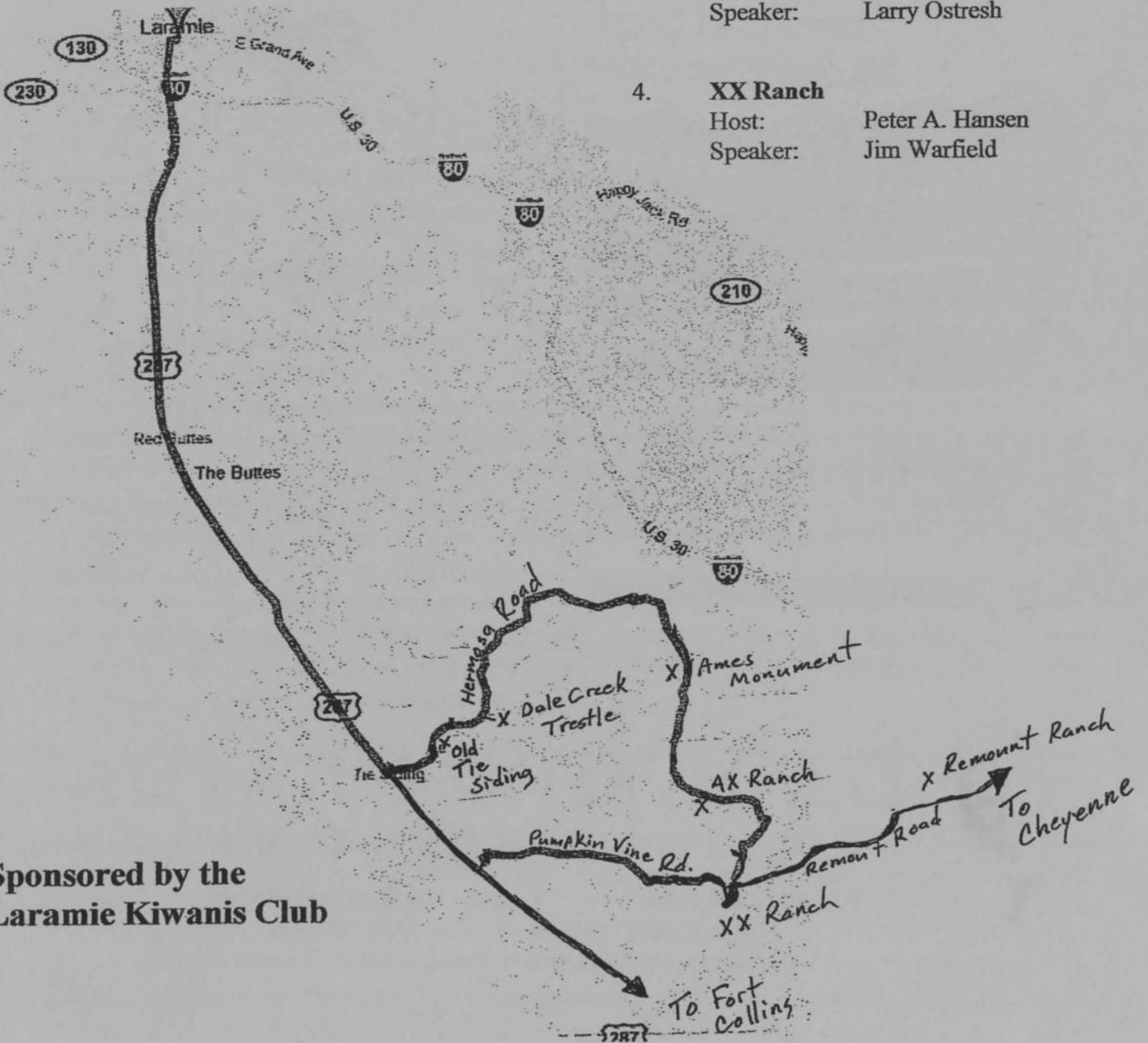
(Lunch Stop)

3. **Ames Monument and Old Sherman**

Host: State of Wyoming  
Recreation Commission  
Speaker: Larry Ostresh

4. **XX Ranch**

Host: Peter A. Hansen  
Speaker: Jim Warfield



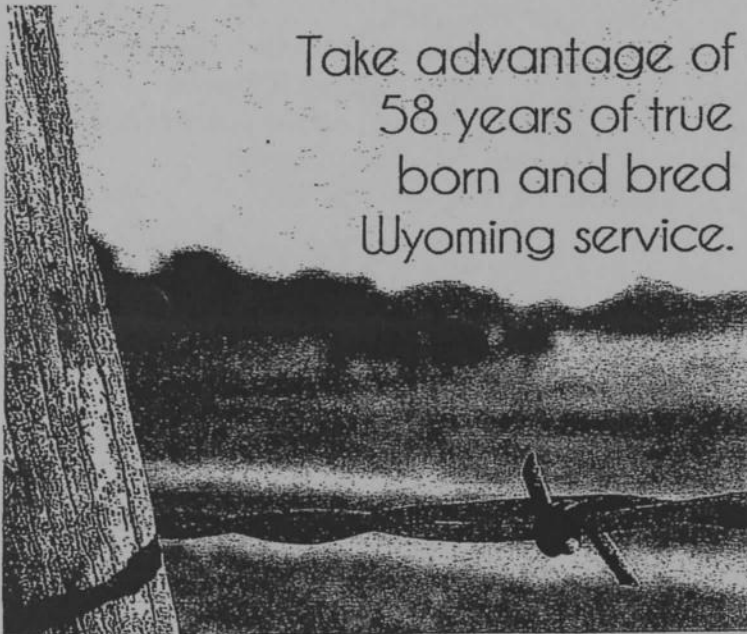
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**Sixty-first Old Time Ranch Tour**  
**Saturday, July 23, 2011**

The Old Time Ranch tours began in 1951 under the guidance and vision of Dr Robert Burns and have continued every year except 1982. Portions of the historical accounts in this program were taken from the writings of Dr Burns, Dixie Williams Mathisen, Mary Alice Williams Blunk, Penelope Bauer, Mary V. Ostlund, Steve Bangert, and previous tour booklets. Historic photos were obtained from the Union Pacific Railroad;

The 2011 Old Time Ranch Tour

Chairperson: Ted Preston

Committee Members: Grant Showacre, John Rowland, Bob Nelson, Marjorie Daley, Larry Streumpf

Master of Ceremonies: George Gladney

**RULES**

- 1) We bring our own Port-a-Potties. Please use these. Hint: There always seems to be a line at the porta potties when we first arrive at a stop, and before we depart for the next stop. You might consider finding your way to the porta-pottie during the middle of a ranch visit, in order to avoid the lines!
- 2) Driving
  - a. Stay to the right on hill crests
  - b. The UP tracks are heavily used. Please use caution while crossing tracks. You will not be left behind as there are Kiwanis members scattered throughout the tour who will stay in cell phone contact with the leaders.
  - c. Keep a safe distance between cars. We will travel at 25 to 35 miles per hour on gravel roads.
- 3) There will be parking coordinators at each site. Please follow their directions. If you have difficulty walking, please inform the first traffic director at each site so that an appropriate parking place may be found.
- 4) Please keep children and pets with you at all time. Pets **MUST** remain on a leash, as we will be in close proximity to livestock owned by our hosts. There are uncovered wells at Old Tie Siding and Dale Creek canyon is very deep and steep.
- 5) We are the guests of the ranches and historical sites. Please **DO NOT** remove any items including artifacts found on the ground. Please do not climb on Ames Monument or the trestle foundations. You might put an eye out!
- 6) Please be aware of the risk of fire in our arid climate, and **DO NOT SMOKE** outside your vehicle, and please do not throw cigarette butts out your windows.

Neither the committee, individually or collectively, nor the sponsoring organizations accept any responsibility for accidents.

Thank you to our sponsors and a special thanks to A-One Septic Systems for their generous loan of the porta-potty.

## STOP ONE: TIE SIDING

Tie Siding was founded in 1868 and by the 1870s, the fifty citizens of the town had built two stores, a saloon, a school house, a livery stable, a hospital, a town hall, and three hotels: the Keys Hotels, the J.W. Price Hotel and the Shaw House. The railroad added a depot and telegraph and station house.

The town was established to provide railroad ties and cordwood for steam engines of the Union Pacific Railroad. In 1874, 250 men employed by J.S. McCool produced 100,000 ties from timber in the Tie Siding region. Tie hacks received 35-65 cents per tie, and Union Pacific paid the tie companies \$1.00 to \$1.30 for each tie. Timber was also used for lumber and fence posts. The tie contractors soon stripped the land for miles north of Sherman Station (Ames Monument) and Tie Siding.

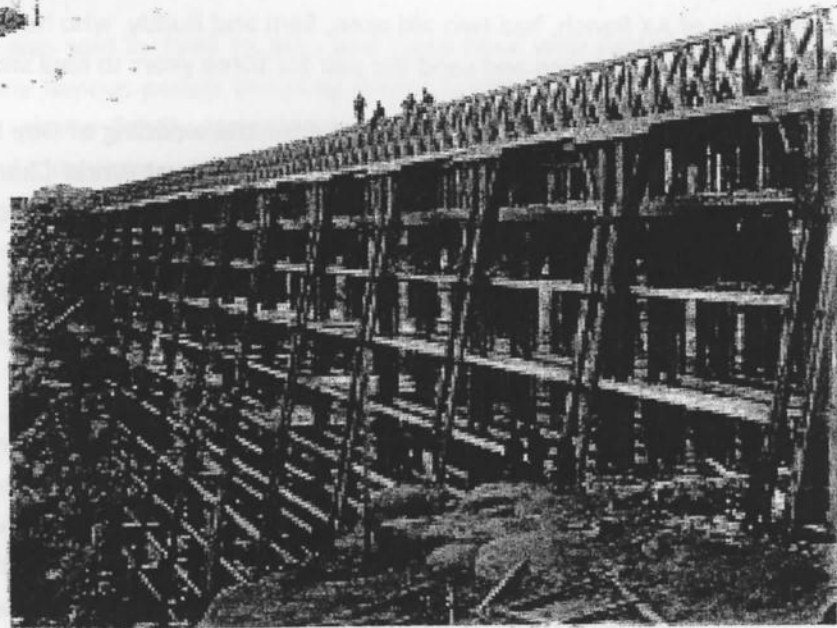
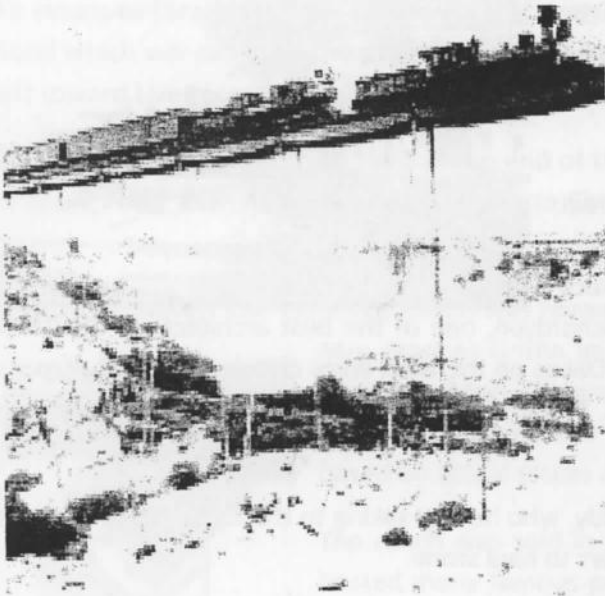
Before the creosote plant was built in Laramie in 1902, ties were treated at Tie Siding. Ties were loaded onto a train of small cars which were then turned into cylinders 6 feet high and 117 feet long. The ties were steamed, and then zinc chloride was pressure applied. About 1,000 ties were treated each day. In its day, Tie Siding was a boom town and a lively place to visit. A copper mine established in 1900 failed to be economically profitable. As the demand for timber declined, most Tie Siding residents moved on and in 1931, the post office was moved to its present location on U.S. 287. All that remains of the original town site are a few ruins and a cemetery. Most of the buildings were removed when the townsite was abandoned. Those who joined our tour in 2010 may recall the large barn at the Weaver Ranch, where we had lunch. That barn, which was moved to its current location, was the original livery stable here at Tie Siding, visible in the upper right of the second photograph below.



## STOP 2: DALE CREEK AND RAILROAD TRESTLE

The original bridge crossing this canyon was completed by the Union Pacific Railroad in April 1868. According to the Union Pacific Railroad, it was completed in 30 working days. The Dale Creek Bridge was 126 feet high and 720 feet long, one of the highest railroad bridges in its day. It was constructed entirely of wood, probably Michigan white or Norway pine, and almost all of the timber was transported from Chicago.

As railroad equipment became larger and heavier, the wood frame was replaced by steel construction in 1876. This lightweight steel bridge was known as the "Spider Web" bridge was 707 feet long and 127 feet high and cost \$39,450. Fire destroyed the wood part of the bridge in 1884 when embers from an engine ignited the fire that was spread by a brisk wind. Minnie Williams, who founded the Williams Ranch, always claimed that the bridge was burned by Indians. In 1885, it was replaced by heavier steel construction with iron girders and spans. A small community named Dale City was founded at the base of the canyon in 1868. It was abandoned when the tracks were moved, and the bridge was torn down in either 1901 or 1902. Minnie Williams recollected that an old cowboy living in the area would get drunk and ride his horse over the bridge. Minnie said that she would not ride her horse over it, but she had walked across it several times. The bridge swayed and was scary.



### STOP 3: AMES MONUMENT AND THE OLD TOWN OF SHERMAN

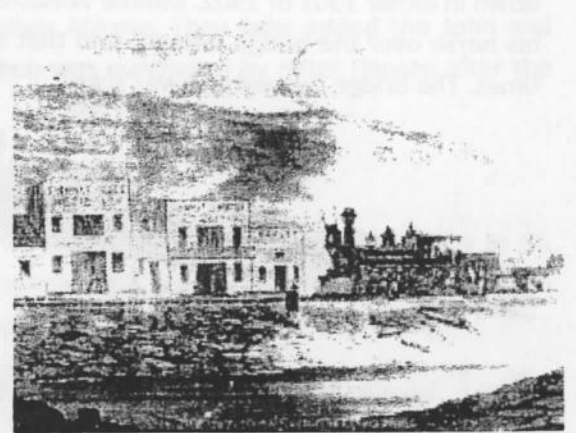


Ames Monument was built by the Union Pacific Railroad in 1881 and 1882 in tribute to Oakes and Oliver Ames, who were instrumental in the construction of the railroad across Wyoming. Brothers Oliver and Oakes were successful businessmen from Boston; Oliver was president of the UP and Congressman Oakes was instrumental in passage of a bill permitting the railroad to issue its own bonds equal in the amount to the total sum lent by the government to construct the railroad, about \$60 million. After construction began, it became apparent the available funds were insufficient to finish and the Ames brothers were

instrumental in getting the funding to complete Abraham Lincoln's dream of a transcontinental railroad.

The site for the monument was chosen in 1880 when Union Pacific directors on a cross country trip stopped at Sherman, then a thriving town. It was such a spectacular sight that they decided to build the monument there. The town of Sherman had sprung up around the Sherman station, the highest point on the railroad (8,242 feet) where trains were stopped and checked before descending the steep grades on either side.

The monument is a pyramid, 60 feet square at the base and 65 feet high. It stands 600 feet from the old railroad track. The gray granite came from an outcropping one half mile west known as Reed's Rock (named for the first Wyoming Surveyor-General). Henry Hobson Richardson, one of the best architects of the 1800s, designed the monument. The medallions of Oliver on the east and Oakes on the west were chiseled by artist Augustus Saint-Gaudens from Quincy granite in Massachusetts. Captain A.L. Sutherland was the builder. The monument was completed in October, 1882 at a cost of \$64,773.50.



W.R. Williams, founder of AX Ranch, had two old oxen, Sam and Buddy, who he was taking to the XX Ranch to fatten for beef. Mr. Sutherland bought the oxen and used the pair for three years to haul stone.



The monument was the background for the wedding of Guy Holt and Annie Gearhart on December 30, 1903. Guy was a famous bronc rider, named World Champion Saddle Bronc Rider at the 1903 Cheyenne Frontier Days Rodeo. The couple wanted a quiet wedding where they could get away from friends, so they chose this site. Annie was born in Tie Siding and later moved to Laramie. Guy was born at Hecla, Wyoming and lived in Granite Canyon at the time. Guy Holt's name may be unfamiliar, but his image is well-known to all Wyomingites: he is the rider on the bucking horse, Steamboat, on our license plates.

Laramie justice of the peace William Murphy learned that the monument had been located by mistake on government land instead of U.P. land. He filed a homestead claim for the site and then demanded that the U.P. either remove the "pile of stone" or repurchase his claim. After railroad attorneys pointed out the scandal that would result if citizens learned Murphy was involved in a conspiracy to take advantage of his neighbor, he traded the claim for several city lots in Laramie. Some say that this 1885 incident gave rise to "Murphy's Law" – "Whatever can go wrong, will go wrong." In 1916, the railroad authorized \$16,000 to move the monument closer to the site of the present tracks, but it was never moved.

## Along the way: THE AX RANCH

We will not stop, but our route takes us through the headquarters of the AX Ranch which was homesteaded in 1909 by Arthur H. Williams and his wife Minnie Collins Williams. Art Williams was the son of W.R. Williams of the XX Ranch, the final stop on the tour. All the buildings were built by Art Williams, Blackie Cota, and Charlie Clark from lumber cut and milled on the ranch.

Art and Minnie Williams began by milking 30 – 40 cows and selling the milk and cream. These products were taken to Sherman and shipped by train. Eventually, the Williams bought some Hereford bulls, and these were crossbred with the dairy stock. They later bought the Holliday place from Hans Nielson and the Impson land. Hans Neilson filed water rights in 1875. Art Williams was a county assessor for several years in the 1920s, first under W.A. Comly and then Earl A McKay. In 1931, he was commissioned as deputy sheriff and stock inspector at Tie Siding by Sheriff Eugene Smith. Later, he transferred from tie Siding to Sherman to be nearer home. He held this office until his death in 1935.

In 1946, Richard and Gussie Williams purchased the ranch from his mother Minnie. They later added the John and George Linstrom place and the Ole Sanden place to their holding. The ranch was purchased by Peter Hansen after the Richard's death.

## STOP 4: THE XX RANCH

William Richard Williams was 26 years old in the spring of 1867 when he traveled by train from Nova Scotia to St. Joseph, Missouri and then worked as a bullwhacker en route to Denver. He made his way to southeastern Wyoming in search of silver at the Silver City Mine near Happy Jack but found greater opportunity in freighting and ranching.

Dick teamed with W.H. Holliday in 1867 to provide lumber for construction of the transcontinental railroad. It was a profitable relationship. W.R. Williams supervised hauling wood to and from Holliday's three sawmills. One of the sawmills was located where the large horse barn at the XX now stands.

The ranch was homesteaded in 1868. However, it was 1882 before Williams received his citizenship papers and homestead patent. By 1872, Williams returned to Nova Scotia to marry Maggie Keyes at Gays River. Williams returned to Laramie with his 17 year old bride, a brother and two sisters. In time, eight of Williams' brothers and sisters and six members of Maggie's family, including her father, moved to Wyoming, most settling permanently in the state.



By 1879, Williams owned 400 head of oxen and operated one of the largest freighting companies in the area. In 1875, he freighted from Cheyenne to Deadwood, South Dakota. In 1878 -79, he hauled wood and supplies between Forts Fetterman, McKinney and Custer. Williams' freighting outfit was commandeered to go to Meeker, Colorado when the Meeker Massacre took place. The men were snowed in and most of the oxen died. He replaced his herd and wagon to

haul lumber and ties from Sand Creek Pass and Boulder Ridge to Red Buttes for construction of the UP. After the horrible winter of 1886 and 1887, he sold his freighting equipment and went into ranching full time.

After Williams' death in 1906, the XX Ranch was operated by his widow, four sons and three daughters. The children married and stayed on the ranch. Minnie and Stella Williams' job was to bring horses into the corrals. Many times, they rode as far as Red Buttes and Twin Mountains to find horses. Chet Williams bought Angus bulls in Casper, riding horseback to get and bring them home. After leaving the XX ranch, there was not another fence until he got to Casper. During the 1930s, 40s and early 50s, Chet and Edith Williams and his daughter, Edith M and husband Stew Blunk purchased the ranch from the other heirs. A fourth generation, Scott Blunk and Sally Jo Clark, were active in the operation of the ranch for several years before its sale.

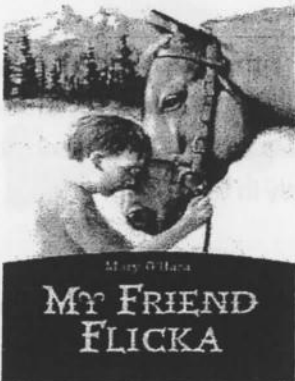
When the XX Ranch was sold in 1992, it was the oldest ranch in Wyoming still in the same family and one of the oldest Angus ranches in the state. The current owner is Peter Hansen, son of former Governor and Senator, Clifford Hansen.

**Our tour disbands at this point.** Thank you for attending and drive safely! We hope to see you on the 62nd Old Time Ranch Tour in 2012!

**To return to Laramie or Fort Collins via Highway 287:** Turn left at the end of XX Ranch driveway, and use Pumpkin Vine Road which will exit onto the pavement at Highway 287. When you reach the pavement, turn right toward Laramie, or left toward Livermore and Fort Collins.

**To return to Cheyenne:** Turn right at the end of the XX Ranch driveway and stay right at the three-way junction, using remount road, then Interstate 80 to return to Cheyenne. You will drive past the historic Remount Ranch. (information below)

**REMOUNT RANCH** The Remount Ranch was homesteaded in 1886 by Thomas Gunston. In 1923, the ranch was sold to Mrs. Frances Griffin and then purchased by in 1930 by Helge and Mary Sture-Vasa. Better known as Mary O'Hara, Mary Sture-Vasa wrote *My Friend Flicka*, *Thunderhead*, *the Green Grass of Wyoming* and *Wyoming Summer*. Many of the places and events in the books were based on actual places and occurrences.



The ranch was sold in 1946 to John and Carol Knox who turned it into a guest ranch and hosted many famous people including Arthur Godfrey, the McGuire Sisters, and Pat Boone. There was also a fondly remembered restaurant that hosted many special dinners for Laramie and Cheyenne residents. The ranch was later purchased by John and Mary Ostlund in 1962 who used it as a weekend and summer retreat. In 1995, the Ostlunds sold the ranch to present owners Steve and Bonnie Bangert. It is now a working ranch with approximately 200

registered Texas Longhorn cattle on the 3,800 acre ranch. The Remount Ranch is listed the National Register of Historic Places.



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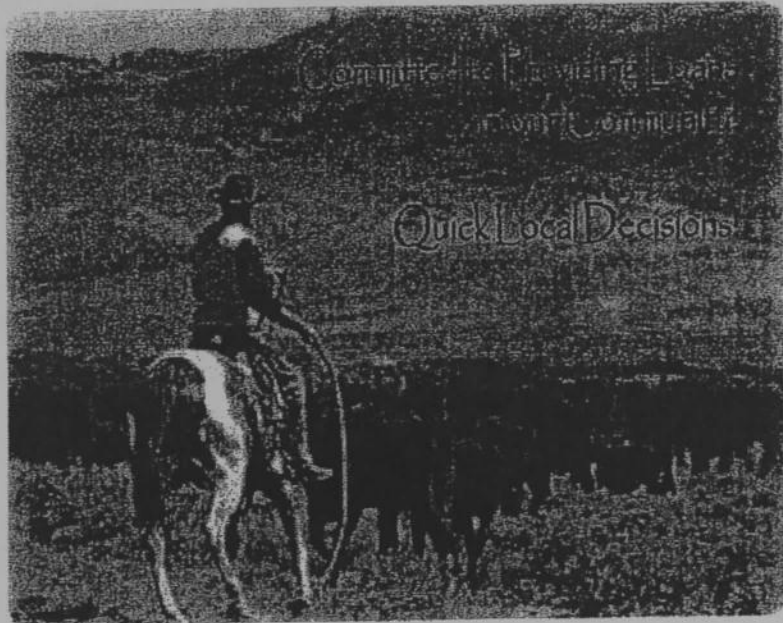
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