The Sherwins of Northfork

Memoirs of Ted B. Sherwin

Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1993

A short history of the Sherwin family from the time they moved from Crooked Creek in the Bighorn Canyon in 1921 to Wapiti, Wyoming, and the two decades following.

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Preface

This book is not really a history. It is, rather, an account of things remembered by the author, or related to him by other family members. In general, it is a story of our family, [headed by Wylie Grant Sherwin] moving from Crooked Creek, on the Bighorn river, to the Northfork of the Shoshone river, and the two following decades. Some of the dates may be off a little, but not on important items. The anecdotes were selected to provide a little flavor of our life and times, and there are many other stories that could have been told by others in the family.

The Sherwins owned and operated the Trail Shop for forty years, from 1922 to 1962. The stories and events related in this book are from the first twenty years, or what seemed to us to be the "pioneer" period.

The Cody road to Yellowstone was originally called "The Yellowstone Trail," hence the name, Trail Shop. A shop it was, but much, much more: a restaurant, post office, filling station, motel, information center, rest stop and land mark, "At the Forest Boundary, between the twin peaks."

Yellowstone Park was opened to motor vehicle traffic in 1917. The Cody road to Yellowstone was little more than a wagon trail. But Wylie Sherwin recognized a great opportunity— to open a tourist camp to serve the motoring public. In the best tradition of the American entrepreneur, he saw a need and filled it. With no business experience, and less than an eighth grade education, he made a success of The Trail Shop by being sensitive to the needs of people.

Dad's business credo was: "You never lose by treating people fairly." It was his version of the Golden Rule, and it worked.

This volume is dedicated to the memory of Wylie Sherwin, who was to all of us a loving father and husband, a role model and teacher, a truly "self-made man," who demonstrated what hard work, determination, and inspiration can accomplish.

T. B. S.

Chapter I—Crooked Creek Revisited

A Sentimental Journey

On a hot summer day in 1985 I made a sentimental journey back to Crooked Creek on the Bighorn river, to visit the place where I was born, and where our branch of the Sherwin family tree began to grow.

Nothing looked at all familiar to me as we came around a bend in the bumpy dirt road and glimpsed the remains of the old log farm house in the distance. But that was not surprising, as it had been 50 years or more since I last saw it, and that was only a brief visit with Dad, when I was still in grade school.

Others in the party that day, in addition to Helen and me, were Nina, Betty and Harold, Dad's elderly cousin, Gertrude Barnett, and Frances Burrell, a prominent local historian, along with her brother-in-law and his wife. Frances had responded to an ad I placed in the Lovell Chronicle a few months previously, asking if anyone had any old maps of the Crooked Creek area. When she found out why I wanted them, she became very interested in helping with the research. She also wanted to read Dad's memoirs, which I was glad to arrange. Gertrude also read the book and suggested that a copy be made available to the Lovell Public Library, for their Pioneers collection. I had enough extra copies to do that and to send a copy to the University of Wyoming community college library at Powell.

Another resident, who lives at the end of the road up Crooked Creek, Marian Tillett, had written in response to the ad and had sent several copies of a map of the recreation area surrounding Yellowtail Dam and reservoir. The map showed all the landmarks and terrain features of Crooked Creek and the Pryor Mountains, and gave family names for ranches on the creek. She also mentioned in her letter that her family now owns the Sherwin and Huntington ranches.

> *Note: Copies of the map were sent to those who received bound copies of Dad's memoirs. Those who have the map, and who are not familiar with the geography of the area, will find it useful to look at it when reading this introduction.*

We parked our cars on the north side of the irrigated field between the low sandhills and the old Sherwin place, and walked a few hundred yards to the remaining buildings. The old log barn and other small sheds were standing, and we peered into the remains of the old root cellar, close to the house. The walls and roof of the house were still in pretty fair condition, but the windows were gone and it was obvious that cows would soon be using the house for shelter. All the furnishings, and even the

partitions, were gone, and there was little to show that this had once been the home of a family of six.

I tried to imagine where the kitchen cabinet had stood, where I climbed the drawers at the age of two and overturned a crock of buttermilk on my head, almost drowning myself and shattering a valuable crock when we both hit the floor! My memories of those days were based, of course, on stories Dad told us, like the account of my bout with the washing machine powered by a gasoline engine. I looked in vain for the flagstone-paved porch where the washing machine had stood. Dad said that when I was about a year and a half old I was crawling around on the floor where the washing machine was running, and I reached under the machine and stuck the fingers of my left hand into the rotating gears. The machine jammed and my screams brought my mother on the run, but she was unable to extricate my hand, and had to run out to the field to get Dad. He was able to turn the flywheel of the engine by hand, reversing the gears of the washer and freeing my crushed hand. They took me into Lovell as fast as possible, and the doctor who treated me (Dr. Olson, of course) said that the knitted red mitten I was wearing was all that saved my hand. He had a job picking the red wool out of the ground up flesh, but when he got the little fingers sorted out, they were only slightly damaged, and in time the hand healed completely, although the scar remained for the rest of my life.

Betty and I exchanged recollections of other things we had been told about, and then we left the old house and went to see if we could find any trace of the little 16 x 20 ft. log cabin Dad built in 1917, a mile or so from the main house. Dad had written: "Down on the lower end of the ranch there was a small grove of trees. During summer the ditch ran close by and there was a red bluff on the north which gave good protection from the wind." He described how he and his dad built the house that summer, furnishing it sparsely with a few things from the main house, where his parents then lived.

Dad wrote that the three of them (Virginia was the only "little one" then) moved into the cabin in September, and none too soon, because I was apparently just waiting for a place to land.

"On the night of October 1," Dad wrote, "we had to have my dad go into Lovell to get Dr. Olson. It was midnight before the doctor arrived and our first boy was born about 4:30 in the morning of October 2." He added that he remembered walking out to the car with the doctor. "It was beautiful. Frost sparkled everywhere and the sun was just tipping the Big Horn Mountains to the east. All was well and peace surrounded us. I was a happy man."

On our nostalgic journey that day, I stood quietly where Dad must have stood, and looked at the blue sky, the red bluff and the hazy mountains in the distance, and felt that I had "found my roots." I was reluctant to leave the spot, although there was no longer any trace of the log cabin, but our trip was not ended.

Dad's final notes about their first home of their own said that he was offered a chance to rent another place two miles up the Creek (the Raymond place) and he decided to take the offer, on a crop-share basis. So the family moved away from the one-room cabin in March of 1918 and apparently it was never occupied again. After a year on the Raymond place, Dad's folks decided to move into Lovell, and Dad moved the family back to the main ranch in March of 1919. That was just in time for Clifford to be born, March 21. Dad closed that book with the note: "Dr. Olson again was the doctor, and about all I can remember about that day was that the frost was going out and the mud was so bad in the yard that Dr. Olson's car got stuck and we had to get the team to pull him out."

Just 13 months after Clifford was born, Betty made her appearance, delivered by Dr. Olson at the Lovell hospital on April 10, 1920. It was a "full house" indeed, for the little family on Crooked Creek, but people didn't seem to require so much space in those days .

After leaving the old Sherwin ranch, we drove up to the Tillett's on Crooked Creek, but did not find her home. Coming back down the creek we stopped at several abandoned places that Dad had referred to in his memoirs, and it helped put the whole picture in focus. After a brief stop at the overlook near where Crooked Creek runs into the Bighorn river, we drove back to Lovell and bid our tour guides and Gertrude farewell. It had been a long day, and an emotional experience, but most useful and satisfying.

Crooked Creek Anecdotes

Hauling Water

Water from Crooked Creek was very alkaline, and no doubt tasted awful. Dad used to haul water for drinking, cooking, clothes-washing, etc., from pools of rain water in the sandstone cliffs a quarter of a mile from our house. The team of horses pulled a wooden sled, about four feet square, built to collect rocks from the irrigated fields. It was easier to haul the wooden water barrel that way than to use the spring wagon. Dad would dip water from the rain water pools with a bucket, and when the barrel was full he would tie a cover over it to keep the water from slopping out on the trip home.

Virginia and I were old enough to ride along, but we had to walk back, because of the heavy load. One day, as we were walking home, I sat down to tie my shoe, and let out a howl of pain as I realized I was sitting in a bed of cactus. I couldn't even put my hand down to get up, but Virginia pulled me to my feet, and led me home, as Dad had gone on ahead of us. Mama heard the story from her, as I quickly helped her remove my pants to survey the damage. Mama put me across her lap and gently removed the

cactus stickers and dried my tears. I think I probably ate dinner standing up that day, but there was no real damage, and wounds heal quickly when you are three .

Clifford Takes a Tumble

Farm machinery was scarce, and lots of things were done by hand, including spring planting. When Clifford was three, he was riding in the spring wagon seat with Mama, who was driving the team while Dad broadcast grain on the plowed ground, standing in the back of the wagon. Mama had to stop the wagon, and as she did, Clifford toppled forward to the ground. She saw him fall and yanked on the reins, but too late. The front wheel had already rolled over him, and as she hauled on the reins the wagon rolled back, running over Clifford again!

By that time Dad was on the ground and pulled Clifford out and dusted him off. He had the wind knocked out of him, but was soon breathing well enough to ask his mother why she did that to him. They put the team up and drove into Lovell to let the doctor have a look at him, but there was no damage except some black and blue marks on his legs. The plowed ground and light wagon, along with his still-flexible bones, saved him.

Virginia Has Company

One afternoon when Mama went to get Virginia up from her nap, having heard her crying in her crib, she came running back into the kitchen, yelling at Dad to come quick. Dad hurried to the bedroom with her and saw a rattlesnake curled up in the crib, near Virginia's feet. The snake was rattling ominously as the baby cried and kicked.

Dad ran outside and picked up a stick, and poked it at the snake, telling Mama to grab the baby when the snake struck at the stick. Dad flipped the snake out of the crib and stepped on its head before it could strike again. It was late in the fall, and the snake had apparently crawled in through a crack and was looking for a nice warm place to spend the winter.

It was not Dad's first encounter with a rattler. He used to tell us about collecting rattles to trade to the Indians in Oklahoma, before the family moved to Wyoming. He was after a very large rattler one day when it started down a gopher hole. Dad had a hunting knife in his hand and he reached down and cut off the snake's rattles. Just as he did so, the snake doubled back in the hole and came at Dad with mouth open wide. Fortunately Dad's reflexes were quick, too, and he did not get bitten .

Chapter II—On the New Frontier

Moving To The Northfork

Dad's memoirs ended with his recollection of moving our little family back to the "home place" on Crooked Creek. taking over the farm when his folks decided to move into Lovell. Clifford was born there that year. on March 21, 1919. Little sister Betty arrived on the scene a year later. April 10, 1920. She was the only one of the four of us to be born in a hospital in Lovell.

The Legg family, our neighbors on Crooked Creek, had moved to a place west of Cody on the Northfork of the Shoshone River. After visiting their place and talking to a neighbor of Leggs who had some land to sell, Dad bought 10 acres adjacent to the Shoshone National Forest boundary in 1922. The man he bought it from was Elsworth Jenkins. who lived on Canyon Creek, above our place, with his three boys and his fat sister, Nellie, who ran the household.

I don't recall ever hearing Dad say what he had to pay for the land. or how he got the money. but I imagine his folks loaned him the money. Being an entrepreneur at heart, Dad had figured out that there was a need for a roadside tourist camp between Cody and the east entrance to Yellowstone Park, a distance of 53 miles. The spot he chose, at the forest boundary, was half way between Cody and the Park. The only tourist camp at the time was Pahaska Tepee, Buffalo Bill's old hunting lodge, a couple of miles outside the Park. Forest Service regulations prohibited the construction of additional buildings within sight of the road, so he felt that competition up the river would be minimal.

The land negotiations took place in 1921. but it was the spring of 1922 before arrangements could be made to move the family from Crooked Creek to the Northfork. We made the trip in a horse drawn wagon. pulled by our team, Barney and Chub. We had a milk cow tied alongside. Milk was very important because Betty was only two, Clifford was three, I was four and Virginia was five.

We spent the first night with the Cles family at their farm west of Powell, where the Sherwins had homesteaded when they moved from Oklahoma. Dad's sister, Lissie, and her husband, Jim, had four children, about our ages. The next day we set out for Cody, some 20 miles away. We kids recall stopping at a farm where the road crossed the river, about half way to Cody. The big red house on the river bank was there for many years, and we always called it "the milk and honey house," because the kind people who lived there fixed a lunch for us that day.

The Original Trail Shop

We spent that night in Cody and the next day we headed west, through the Shoshone Canyon and on up the Northfork. I believe we spent a few days with the Legg family, a mile east of our place, while Jim Legg helped Dad put up a tent house for us to live in during construction of our house.

With help from Jim Legg, Dad cut the logs for the cabin, from a stand of lodgepole pine about eight miles up the river, and hauled them down with our team and wagon. By the end of the summer the cabin was pretty well finished, but with very little furniture. Dad arranged with his folks for us to spend the winter in Lovell. Virginia was six by then, and ready to start school. We all enjoyed the creature comforts of civilization, especially the indoor plumbing, after living on the farm and then camping out at our new homesite.

Dad worked on the cabin and furnishings as much as possible during the winter, and as soon as school was out in the spring of 1923 we moved into our two-room cabin. Dad hand-lettered a sign that read:

THE TRAIL SHOP
Cold Drinks
Candy & Souvenirs
Camping 25¢

We had gasoline, too, in barrels with spigots, and bulk oil which was pumped by hand from a big square tank on the front porch of the cabin. The campground was across the road from the Trail Shop, and really not on our land, but it was level, and we cleared it of sagebrush and rocks and built some firepits for campfires. We supplied the wood, also. We usually had several cars spending the night. Most people carried their camping gear on the running boards or fenders of their cars. Setting up camp was quite a project, involving many ropes, poles, stakes and heavy tents. As soon as the campers had left each morning, Clifford and I would rush over to see what treasures we could find. It was amazing what people left behind, either discarded or forgotten. By summer's end we had a large collection of knives, hatchets, tent ropes and stakes, and even a few cooking utensils. I recall that milk was sold to travelers in cone-shaped paper containers treated with wax, with a dollar-size paper cap which snapped into the top. Clif and I found many uses for the containers, after washing out the last of the milk.

When September came we returned to Lovell, spending the winter in a small rented house near our grandparents' home. I went to school for the first time. Virginia was in the second grade, and we walked to school together each day. I still remember my first-grade teacher, Miss Redman. She was a rather portly woman, kind and patient, and I was very fond of her. It was an important milestone in my life, to be going to school.

Mama's brother, Ted Huntington, for whom I was named, and a friend of his, Charlie McEachron, stayed at our cabin that winter, trapping on the Northfork and its tributaries. They did quite well, trapping coyotes, fox, lynx, marten, ermine and beaver. They covered their trap lines on snowshoes or skis and there was no shortage of camp meat, as deer and elk were within sight of the cabin almost every day.

The New Trail Shop

That winter Dad learned that a new survey showed that the Trail Shop had been built just inside the forest boundary, and that we would have to move 100 yards east. That was quite a blow, but by that time it was apparent that the tourist business should improve steadily, so a larger place would be needed. Accordingly, in the spring of 1924, Dad began cutting and hauling logs once more, and started construction of the new lodge.

Dad needed help with the new building so he hired some neighbors who knew something about working with logs. Burt Allen, Burt Sullivan and Brooks Borron were his helpers. The new site was on higher ground, sloping to the west, so a stone foundation had to be constructed before the log walls could be put up and the floor laid. The building was set back off the road, in anticipation of the new highway that was to be built in the near future. The lodge was on a big, sweeping turn, easily visible from the west, but not too visible from the east. Dad figured that most of the business would he coming from the west, but in hindsight, I think he wished he had built a little further east.

The new building, which Dad designed himself, had a large front room with a fireplace in one end, which would be the store and lunchroom, and behind that a large kitchen and family dining area. In back of the kitchen were three rooms which included a living room and two bedrooms. Underneath the end bedroom on the west was a cellar, used for storing food and supplies. There was a fairly large enclosed porch next to the kitchen, serving as a utility room, laundry and space for a large icebox.

Dominating the kitchen was the huge wood-burning range, with four removable lids and a hinged firebox door to facilitate adding wood. The entire right side of the top was a griddle, where many things like hotcakes, eggs, bacon and steaks were cooked in direct contact with the griddle. There was a large reservoir for heating water, and a big double warming oven up above. On the back of the cook top there was another large container of water, and frequently a kettle of soup or a big coffee pot. There was a large wood box next to the stove, and Clifford and I were responsible for keeping it full. We had a little wagon, on which we hauled the wood to the back door, and then carried it into the kitchen by the armload. In the living room behind the kitchen there was a wood-burning heater, but it was not used in the summer, as the range heated the rooms quite well. Dad made a large pedestal table for the dining area of the kitchen and it would seat eight people comfortably, two on a side. The work surface of the kitchen cabinets was

covered with zinc, coved up under the windows that ran along the east side of the room. A crank-type wall telephone was mounted on the wall next to the swinging door to the main lodge and store, and the phone was well used by many neighbors who did not have a phone. We were on a party line, and the Trail Shop "ring" was five "shorts."

The new Trail Shop was completed and ready for business by the spring of 1925, along with three double cabins which had been built during the winter, with some hired help. Dad hand-lettered another sign which said CABINS and underneath that WAFFLES & HONEY. The word CABINS was in capital letters, and Dad inadvertently reversed the diagonal bar on the letter N. He always chuckled about how many cars would stop, back up and drive in to inquire about the cabins, and then when they were registering they would say: "By the way, did you know that the letter N is reversed on your sign?" And Dad would say: "Is that so? Do you know that that sign has been up for a month, and you are the first person that ever noticed that?"

The waffles and honey sign drew many hungry travelers, and that specialty became known far and wide. People would stop and say that a neighbor in Ohio, or Iowa, hearing of their trip to Yellowstone Park, would say "Be sure and stop at the Trail Shop for waffles and honey." Later the Trail Shop featured coffee and doughnuts, which were made daily. It was a lot of work, on a wood stove, but Dad knew that the trick was to get them to stop and come inside, where he could sell them many dollars worth of souvenirs and gifts.

The Wapiti School

In September,1925, all four of us registered to attend the Wapiti elementary school, five miles down the river from the Trail Shop. Virginia was in the third grade, I was in the second, and Clifford and Betty were in the first. The pitched-roof frame building had only one large room for the students, with a hallway out 'the south door, and boys and girls cloak rooms on either side of the hall. In the cloak rooms we kept our hats and coats and overshoes, as well as our lunch boxes. The teacher also used the rooms to store school supplies and what little athletic equipment we had. At recess the teacher supervised playground activities, which featured such games as "ante over" and "steal sticks." The first game involved tossing a basketball over the school house, with a team on each side trying to pitch it back without letting it hit the ground. The other game was more involved, with two teams guarding rings drawn in the dirt on the school yard. The idea was to get a stick from the opponents' ring and bring it back to your own pile. The team with the most sticks at the end of a given time was the winner. "Tagging" a would-be thief nullified his effort and he became a prisoner of the opposing team.

The school room was heated by a large pot-bellied wood stove near the back of the room. Now and then, when the teacher put a chunk of wood into the stove, there would be a loud bang! as a .22 shell exploded, after having been concealed in the piece of wood by one of the mischievous boys.

Below the school building, on the north side of the one-acre school yard, were the outdoor toilets, one for boys and the other for girls, at either end of the shed that served as a shelter for the horses ridden to school by some students and the coal and wood for the school.

There were about nineteen students in school in 1925, and we four made up a fair sized fraction of them. We were the newcomers on the river and were viewed with suspicion. Everyone knew we came from Lovell, and it was assumed that we were Mormons, as most people from that town were, and Mormons were not welcome. There was an outbreak of measles in the school that winter, and we were suspected of having brought the bug from Lovell.

There were two families with children living across the river from the Trail Shop. Hardy Shull and his wife had three girls, and his brother, Claude, and his wife had two boys and a girl. That summer, 1925, a crude wooden bridge was build across the river at our place, as the river was narrowest there and an outcropping of rock on the north side provided a good anchor for one end of the bridge. Until then they had had to ford the river half a mile downstream, or cross the water via a cable-drawn "hand basket."

Claude Shull had a Dodge panel truck with woven wire sides and roll-down curtains, and after he installed two benches in the back, this became our first school bus. I don't know how we all crowded into it, as there were six Shull kids, the four of us, four Legg kids, two Jenkins boys, and one or two others.

The three Simpers kids walked to school, and a couple of kids from below the school rode horses. Occasionally, when the school bus could not get through the snow drifts, we were hauled to school in a horse-drawn sled, sitting on bales of hay and wrapped in blankets.

In 1926 Budd and Chella Hall bought a ranch up on Big Creek, across the river from our place and above the Shulls. They took over the school bus route and also the mail delivery. The Wapiti post office was at the Trail Shop until 1938, when it was moved to the Green Lantern, owned by the Simpers family, near the Wapiti school.

The school was the social center for the community, and dances were held there about once a month during the winter, often times in connection with some other school activity, such as the Christmas program. Local musicians provided hoe-down music, and Dad called the square dances. Everyone brought lunch, and sometimes a box lunch raffle was held to raise money for school projects. About 1925, we acquired a big upright piano from a music teacher in Cody by the name of Corrine Williams. Mama loved music and was able to read music, and she enjoyed the piano very much, as we all did. We kids would gather around the piano and listen to her play and sing, with Dad joining in. Some of her favorite songs were: “There's A Long, Long Trail Awinding;” “The End of a Perfect Day;” “Love's Old Sweet song;” “In the Gloaming;” “Our Little Gray Home In The West;” and “Til We Meet Again.” We learned the words to most of them by listening to her, and I'm sure we all still love those old songs.

Mama's Illness

I mentioned earlier that the Sherwin and Legg families had been friends and neighbors on Crooked Creek. When we moved to the Northfork, Mama, who was a distant relative of Maude Legg, learned that Jim Legg's father was ill with tuberculosis. She used to walk or ride the mile down to the Legg place to help Maude take care of the old man. He was kept isolated in a tent house and Mama took little treats to him and read to him. She did not realize the risk she was taking, but after he died in 1923 she began to worry about herself and her family. She probably feared the worst before the diagnosis was confirmed in 1925, and by the summer of 1926 she had to be isolated from the family the same way that Mr. Legg had been— in a tent house some distance from the new Trail Shop of which she was so proud. By the end of the summer she was coughing constantly and becoming much weaker, so Dad decided to take her and all of us kids to Salt Lake City to seek medical attention for her. We stayed a few months there in a rented house while Mama underwent treatment.by Dr. Sechrist, who was using gold salts as a medication. There was no improvement so Dad moved us on to Yuma, Arizona, and then to Redlands, California, where she was hospitalized for a while. Dad worked in the orange groves and we went to school briefly, but by spring it was clear that Mama was dying and she wanted to go back to Wyoming.

Mama was too weak to travel by automobile, so she and Virginia, who was 10 years old by then, returned to Lovell by train and Dad drove the rest of us back in the car. That was in January, 1927. Mama spent the last three months of her life in bed at Dad's parents' house in Lovell. She died May 5, 1927, and was buried in the Cody cemetery.

Faced with the prospect of raising four small children by himself, while struggling to make a go of his first business undertaking, Dad must have had misgivings about it, but he decided to give it a try, anyway. That summer and the next, Dad hired temporary help, and some of the Huntington family helped out, too. An addition was built on the back of the house and some more cabins were built, too.

The Trail Shop Becomes A Bus Stop

The tourist business was good, and the "Yellow buses," which carried tourists through the Park, were increasing in number. One day, in 1926, some of the buses stopped to let passengers use the restrooms, and other passengers took advantage of the opportunity to buy refreshments and souvenirs. Realizing the potential economic advantage of having all the buses stop at the Trail Shop, Dad talked to the bus company officials in Cody about it. They visited the Trail Shop and told him that they would make it a regular stop if he would install more restroom facilities. Dad was jubilant, and set to work immediately on the restroom expansion. He had to put up a new building with flush toilets for men and women on opposite sides, and several shower stalls for the use of cabin customers, This also necessitated building a new cistern, to store water from

Canyon creek for all our needs, but these changes made a tremendous difference in the business activity and profitability of the Trail Shop.

The buses went “up” (from Cody train station) about midmorning, and “down” (from Yellowstone Park) in the afternoon. Sometimes there were as many as seventy or eighty buses a day with about 24 passengers each. When the call was sounded: “Here come the buses!” we all took our positions in the store and waited on customers as fast as possible. Dad knew that the Official fifteen-minute stop was not enough time to serve everyone, so he bribed the drivers to extend the time, giving them free sandwiches and coffee or soft drinks. They all had an ice cream cone, too, if they wished. After the last bus had left, Dad would count the “take” and talk to us about what we needed to do differently, to maximize the sales potential. We had a soft drinks Cooler with eight aluminum tubes running in a semi-circle beneath the ice water chamber in the center. Each tube held eight bottles, but we didn't have that many flavors, so the most popular flavors (Coke and orange) had two tubes. Warm bottles were stored in the corresponding numbered rack above the cold ones, and pushing one warm bottle down one side brought up a cold one on the other. When the rack was empty, there were no more cold ones in that tube.

Ice cream, made five gallons at a time, usually every day, was hand-dipped by two girls, when necessary. A large cone cost 10¢. There was some complaining, until they took the first lick, and then it seemed like a bargain. Cold drinks were 10¢ also, candy bars 5¢.

Clifford and I had our “rock stands” set up on either side of the front door, on the porch. We offered a tempting (we hoped) display of petrified wood and uncut agate and quartz in various colors, and occasionally a few arrow heads. Clifford had a few marine fossils on his stand, dug from a cutbank along the river down by the J.F. Kelly place. The fossils were mainly small “eagle beak” shells and some squid tips, about two inches long, smooth and dark and tapering to a point. Nina recalls that Clifford used to hold one up and solemnly assure prospective customers that they were looking at the “pechified eternals of a squid.” He got a lot of requests to repeat the explanation, and he did it over and over, without cracking a smile.

We didn't have things marked, but charged what we could get, usually 10¢ to 25¢ for a piece of petrified wood two or three inches long and well marked with knots or wood grain. Our “take” for the summer would often exceed $100 each, including the shed antlers we sold to people in their own cars, who stopped for gas or overnite. We used that money to buy our school clothes and other necessities. It was a lot of fun to pore over the catalogs in the fall and decide upon the clothes we would order, and the anticipation of waiting for the packages to arrive was almost unbearable.

The girls received a small salary for their work during the summer, to supplement the tips they got from waiting on tables, etc., and they picked out their clothes from the catalog also. Sometimes our choices weren’t too wise, as I remember, but we rarely sent anything back, probably because it took so long to get it in the first place. One year we ordered some new wool

underwear that looked swell in the catalog. These “longies” had no buttons, but a neck arrangement that had an overlapping flap on the shoulders, supposedly to make it easy to get into and out of. Instead of a drop-seat, there was an overlapping flap, split vertically. Well, they turned out to be miserably uncomfortable, and very itchy. After washing, they shrunk, and pulled on our shoulders unmercifully, not to mention the crotch.

Jenkins' Goats

Elsworth Jenkins was an eccentric in many respects. He liked goat's milk, and had half a dozen milk goats. When he sold the Canyon Creek place to the Earl Martins :n the early 30s, and built the Mountain View Inn on the highway Just east of the Trail Shop, he did not want to keep milking the goats, so he just turned them loose. For several years those goats lived along the rimrocks at the base of the South Peak near the Trail Shop, and they became quite a curiosity for the motoring public. Many people would make unplanned stops to ask about those “animals up there on the rocks,” and we'd assure them that they were, in fact, wild goats. The real story usually came out when they would question why some were white, others black, and some mixed, and before they left, these curious travelers would usually buy gasoline, souvenirs, or cold drinks. There was no billygoat with the nannies, so in time they died off, most of them victims of roving coyotes which were plentiful in the area.

Iced Milk

Our Holstein milk cow hung around the corral in the winter, except for a daily trip to the river to drink. She usually walked a few feet out on the ice to the water hole we kept open for household water, and then came back to the barn to be milked and fed in the evening. One night in about 1928, Dad went out to milk her, and she was nowhere to be found. We all set out to find her, but darkness came early and quickly in the winter, and we had to give up the search until morning.

Next morning, when we went to the river to carry some water, we spotted Bossie, embedded in the ice under the bridge, about 100 feet from the water hole. She was alive, and her head was moving about, and her barrel-shaped body had kept her from going through the ice into the deep water, but she was unable to help herself as her legs were not touching the bottom and she was a prisoner of the ice and ice water. She had been there all night, and then some.

Dad called a neighbor and we all set to work trying to rescue the cow, who mooed forlornly now and then, but otherwise seemed satisfied that help was finally at hand. We chopped through the ice all around her, after putting a strong rope around her neck, and later around her chest, to make sure she would not sink. We spread a big tarp on the ice between her and the bank, and when she was free of the ice, we all heaved and hauled and finally got her up on the tarp, and she lay there half dead, moving her legs feebly but unable to get up. We grabbed hold of the tarp and slid her over to a sunny spot on the edge of the ice, and covered her quickly with layers of

blankets, straw, and anything we could find to help warm her body, as the air temperature was well below freezing.

A couple of hours later, when we went to check on her, we found that she had been able to get to her feet, unassisted. We were delighted, of course, and hastened to cover her again with blankets until she was strong enough to walk up to the barn, 150 yards away. She apparently suffered no ill effects from the chilling experience, and to our "udder amazement" she resumed giving milk in a day or two and served us well for many more years. I believe we carried water to her after that, because she did not want to venture out onto the ice to drink,

Dudes and Tourists

Some of the Frost Ranch guests were movie people, actors, producers, and even the first movie "censor," Will Hayes. Such guests were called "dudes," as distinguished from "tourists," who were just passing through. One of their Hollywood guests, a character actor, used to like to dress up in Indian costumes and sit on the front porch at the Trail Shop when the buses stopped. He had a long, black wig, with braids, and a headband with a couple of feathers, and wrapped himself in a large Indian blanket. He didn't say much, but he allowed people to pose with him for pictures, and if they offered him money, he took it, usually giving it to us kids after the buses were gone or buying ice cream for the other dudes who had been watching his performance from a distance.

One of the Frost Ranch dudes was "Colonel" Tim McCoy, an old time western movie actor of the Tom Mix era. He fancied himself quite an aristocrat, and liked to tell of his elegant home and servants in Hollywood. "No matter how rough a day I've had," he'd say, "when I come home I always bathe, shave and change into my tweeds." That phrase became a family joke, and when one of us would return from a wood hauling trip, or from a hunting trip, we'd say, "Well, excuse me while I go bathe, shave and change into my tweeds."

Rimrock Ranch

Earl and,Mildred Martin, who had been running a dude ranch on Gunbarrel Creek, bought the Jenkins place in the early '30s and built a lodge and cabins up the creek a short distance. For a number of years they had a very successful dude ranch there, and they were good friends of Dad and Nina. Don Huntington wrangled dudes for them a couple of summers, and during that time he often posed on horseback for artist Frank Tenney Johnson, who had a studio there and spent several summers at the Rimrock. Don was tall and handsome, and sat a horse well, so Johnson liked painting him. One of our favorites was a moonlight scene of Don, riding herd on a bunch of cattle. We had many of FTJ's prints for sale at the Trail Shop, but none of the original oil

paintings. Don always bemoaned the fact that Johnson never paid him anything for posing, and Don did not even get a painting or a print out of it .

Martins had a young college graduate from the east who spent one winter at Rimrock, taking care of the place while they were visiting and vacationing in the east. "Jerry" was what we called a "remittance man," a term used to describe non-natives who had been banished from their families and who were paid to stay away. He was tall and gangling, awkward and uncoordinated. He was extremely myopic, and wore glasses that looked like the bottoms of Coke bottles. On mail delivery days (we had the post office then) he would snowshoe down from Rimrock, usually a couple of hours before the mail truck came, and make himself at home in the living room. He wore knickers and heavy felt leggings, with ankle-high boots that laced. He'd pull off his boots and sit next to the stove with his feet propped up to dry the snow-caked leggings, which smelled like a wet dog. He was in the habit of looking around for anything edible and placing it within arms reach, to feed the inner man while he read a magazine.

One day Dad decided he'd had enough of Jerry's free-loading so he made a batch of fudge and prepared a plate just for him. Dad fixed up a couple of pieces of fudge with cayenne pepper filling and set the plate near the living room stove. Well, Jerry made himself comfortable in the usual way, and helped himself to the candy. The first piece was good, and he quickly reached for a second one, which was "loaded." Jerry bit into it, paused for a second, not believing what he was tasting, and then hit the floor and headed for the water bucket! We all pretended to be busy while he got rid of the mouthful and rinsed the remains down with water. Jerry got his boots on and grabbed his coat, and waited outside until the mail came. He never came in after that, except to get his mail

Between Bootleggers

Two of our neighbors were bootleggers. The one across the river had several stills in the forest areas near his home, and the one on the same side of the river hid his stills to the south of us. It was during Prohibition, and the two bootleggers, Jack and Randy, competed fiercely for business. They disliked each other, but they both hated us. Whenever one of Randy's stills was raided by the sheriff, he was convinced Dad had "turned him in." Jack had another reason for hating us, because he lived on Canyon Creek, below the Jenkins place, and begrudged us the water we diverted from the creek to fill our cisterns. Several times, when Dad went up to the head of the ditch to see why the water had quit, he'd find that the ditch had been broken on purpose, and he'd hear shots fired over his head as he set to work repairing the damaged ditch.

One winter morning we awoke to find the sheriff's truck and trailer in our front yard, and it was pretty obvious that he had unloaded a couple of horses and had gone across the river on a mission of some sort. It was past the hunting season, so we knew he wasn't after poachers, although everyone killed game all winter. when they needed "camp meat." Late in the afternoon

the sheriff and a deputy came riding back across the bridge. with Randy in front of them, carrying a large coil of copper pipe and other items associated with a liquor still. With him was his still operator, reported to have been a chemist with a degree from Princeton, also carrying a load of incriminating equipment. They were loaded into the sheriff's truck and hauled off to Cody for booking with Randy loudly proclaiming that he was going to “get” the s.o.b. that turned him in. He let the chemist take the rap for the bust and was back home very soon.

Jack and his family were from South Carolina. His whiskey was not as highly regarded as Randy's— one of the neighbors claimed that he tested a batch by swishing a dead mouse through it, and if the skin slipped off, the booze was ready to bottle. He always attended the schoolhouse dances and carried a good supply with him for those who were thirsty and had the money. Jack also played the fiddle, but not very well. Late in the evening at the dances he would get his fiddle and ask the other musicians to join him in playing “The Devil's Dream.” It could have been the theme song for his “mountain dew.” Jack's two grown nephews, who lived with them, hated to have him play because it embarrassed them, and one night they got into a big argument about whether Jack should take his fiddle to the dance or leave it home. Blows were exchanged between Jack and the younger nephew and Jack finally decided to stay home and nurse his black eye and bruised ego.

The nephews came home from the dance pretty late and the one who had hit Jack started packing his things in the bunk house. having decided it was time for him to get out. He had his pistol laying on the bed when Jack, having heard him come home. opened the door. Jack had a gun in his hand, but the nephew grabbed his own gun and shot Jack in the chest. He fell dead in the doorway. The nephew (who soon afterward married Jack's widow) came to the Trail Shop just as we were getting up to call the sheriff. It was ruled that the young man killed his uncle in self defense and no charges were filed after he agreed to go back to South Carolina and not return.

Prohibition was repealed in 1933. and the bootleggers were out of business. Even after it was legal Dad never sold hard liquor at the Trail Shop. For a while we offered “near beer," but that was not very popular.

Peak Flags

The Trail Shop was located at the Shoshone Forest boundary. between two peaks on either side of the river. The peaks rise sharply, about 1.000 feet above the river and provided a nice landmark for our place. Soon after we moved to the Northfork. Dad decided it would be a neat idea to put an American flag on each peak. He and Don Huntington put up the first flags, provided by the Forest Service, about 1925. They had no trouble finding suitable poles up there, and there were plenty of rocks to pile around the base to keep the pole in place. The west wind blew almost constantly, so the flags were highly visible, snapping in the breeze, and lots of

tourists bound for Yellowstone would stop and look at the flags through their binoculars, usually coming into the store to ask questions, and incidentally to buy refreshments and souvenirs.

Later on we got the Rimrock Ranch people to take care of the flag raising on the south peak, and we continued to put up the other one. It got to be more and more difficult, though, because so many of the rocks were tumbled off the peak by hikers, and suitable poles were harder and harder to find, within reasonable distance of the peak.

One of Dad's favorite jokes was to tell tourists that we had strung a wire between the two peaks, to serve as a community radio antenna.

"When the sun hits it just right, you can see it," Dad would say, and the gullible tourists would strain and shade their eyes, and finally announce, "Yes, I see it now." Being over a mile apart, it would have been a tremendous task to hang such an antenna between the peaks, but maybe it would have been a good idea, considering our poor radio reception.

One summer we let people on the river know that we were going to have a fireworks display on the north peak on the Fourth of July. We got a bunch of Roman Candles, rockets, and other fireworks, and Clifford and I, with Don, carried the stuff up there. When it got dark we started the show, and it was much appreciated by the crowd that had gathered at the Trail Shop. We never did it again, however, as one of the rockets started a small fire when it fell into some dry pine needles below the peak, and the Forest Service banned fireworks after that.

We gathered a lot of petrified wood on the north peak, and we had a well-worn trail to the top. One summer I climbed to the top and ran back down in 43 minutes— 30 minutes up and 13 down. Later on that record was broken, once by Lee Scholes, and also by Tim Gunn, I believe.

The Dammed River

In the mid-'20s the ranchers in the valley built a canal, starting at the Forest Boundary, to divert water from the river for irrigation downstream. The headgate was just below the bridge across the river. The rise and fall of the river level, affected seasonally by the spring runoff and the summer weather, made the water delivery in the canal uncertain, even with headgates that could be raised or lowered to change the flow rate. The ranchers decided to build a wooden dam across the river at the bridge, believing that this would assure a good supply of water for the canal, no matter how much the overall river level varied. It was built in late summer, when the level was low, to simplify construction. A wide wooden platform was built on top of a rock fill, with a sloping apron of wooden planks a few feet below the dam. The idea was that the water coming over the dam would spill onto the apron, and the slope would drop it down to the normal channel level with very little erosion of the river bed.

Everything worked fine that winter, and we had an excellent "lake" under the bridge, above the dam, to cut ice, ice skate, etc. It wasn't until the cut-throat trout started coming up the river to spawn in the spring that the faulty design of the dam became apparent. The fish, it turned out, could not get over the dam, and thus could not reach their spawning grounds much further upstream in the small tributaries. They would jump up on the 10-foot apron and swim furiously toward the lip of the dam, but were unable to leap upward high enough to continue their journey. Game and fish regulations were very limited in those days, and the abundance of big fish at the base of the dam drew large crowds of fishermen that summer, while the officials tried to figure out a solution. The l8-inch trout would not take any bait, but it was a simple matter to snag them with treble-gang hooks. Dad discovered that the fish lying in the shallow water next to the bank, below the apron, were often so exhausted from the struggle that he could run a thumb and finger up along the fish's back to the gills and lift it out of the water. The Game and Fish department prohibited fishing at the dam, to save them from slaughter, and constructed a makeshift fish ladder on one side of the dam so that at least some of the fish could go on upstream.

The following spring, while a permanent solution was still being sought, there was an unprecedented runoff after a hard winter, and a large section of the dam was washed away. The channel was badly eroded and the ranchers decided against trying to rebuild the dam. A different design would have been required, and the expense would have been prohibitive. They solved their problem by extending the canal upstream a quarter of a mile, putting the new headgate at a bend in the river where the sweep of the current assured a more even flow for the canal.

Dad was sitting on the front porch one afternoon, looking up the river, and commented that a car coming toward us about a mile away, just east of the rock formation called “The Laughing Pig,” was going far too fast. As the car went into the wide, sweeping curve we could see it swerve onto the shoulder, and then, as the driver over-corrected, it shot across the road and down an embankment toward the canal. Dad and I ran down there as fast as we could, and the dust had not yet settled when we reached the wreck. The woman driver, whom we recognized as a dudine from the nearby Lazy Bar H ranch, was sitting on the frame of her new convertible, which was resting upside down on the thick cushion of driftwood above the headgate. She was unhurt, as the car had almost come to a stop before it toppled over the bank onto the driftwood, but she was wringing her hands in frustration because she had been on her way to a big party at another ranch down the river, and she was supposed to be delivering two cases of champagne. She was sure that it must all be broken, but as we discovered the next day, when the car was extricated, the bubbly was unharmed, in the trunk of the convertible. Back at the ranch, that called for another celebration, and it was all legal, because Prohibition had ended .

Trail Shop Dogs

We always had a dog at the Trail Shop. The first one I remember was named "Chet." He was a large, shaggy dog of the Benji type, with a perpetual happy grin on his face. His only bad habit

was that he hated cats, and would chase any that he saw. The cats lived under the house, crawling through a small gap in the logs that formed the foundation on the west side. Chet would chase them into their retreat any time he saw one. The mother cat was absent for a few days, and we thought she must have died, until one day she showed up at the back door, thin and weak, and we discovered that her tail was minus its fur and skin. The bone was stiff and dry from the cold and exposure. We caught her, and after some discussion, cut off the bone at the base of her tail. It was obvious that Chet had caught her as she was going under the house and had stripped the fur off her tail. She got along fine, but was careful to avoid Chet after that.

"Fritz" was a lovable little toy collie-shepherd cross, black and white. We named her Fritz before we knew he was a "she," and then we called her "Fritzie" when we thought of it. The trouble with Fritz was that she loved to ride in, or rather ON cars. In the late '20s most cars had running boards and a deep gap between the front fender and the hood. Fritz learned to ride on the front fender of our car, in that gap, resting her head against the headlight frame. One day she got on the fender of a car driven by one of the young men who sold pictures down at the Shoshone Dam in the canyon. ("The best dam pictures by a damsite," said their advertising.) These young fellows, usually college students, used to drive up to the Trail Shop once a day to get soft drinks and ice cream, and information about the buses. which also stopped at the dam. Fritz knew the car and did not hesitate to jump on, and the kids assured us that they would get her back safely, which they did. It got to be a habit for her to ride down to the dam with them and they would put her on a car that had stopped at the dam and tell the driver to let her off at the Trail Shop. One day, late in the summer, Fritz apparently got tired of waiting for the picture boys and jumped on the fender of an east-bound car that had stopped for gasoline, and we never saw her again. We missed her terribly, because she was a sweet and loving pet, but she was part gypsy.

"Butch" was the last Trail Shop dog, I believe. He was Russell's pal, and they were inseparable. He was a tan and white collie-cross, quite large, and very gentle and easy to train. Dad used to hang game meat in the front part of the icehouse to keep it cool and handy for use in the winter. He hung the carcasses in the shop building first, for skinning and quartering and other trimming. Butch used to lie nearby and watch the butchering with interest, and occasionally Dad would toss him a scrap or two of meat. Butch never begged, however, nor would he touch the meat unless Dad handed it to him.

One day, after skinning and trimming a deer carcass in the shop building, Dad and Nina and Russ took off for a weekend in Billings, where some of Nina's family lived. They left food and water outside for Butch, who was used to being left alone. When they returned, two days later, Butch was nowhere in sight, and his food had not been touched. Dad called and called, but could not locate him, until he heard a low bark from the shop.

Opening the door, Dad found Butch, who bolted past him toward the water and food pans. He had calmly accepted his "incarceration" and had not touched the hanging deer carcass, although

it was within easy reach. Dad felt bad about having locked him in by mistake, and made sure he got some special treats for having behaved so well.

Another dog that lived at the Trail Shop one summer was “Spud,” a beautiful fawn and white boxer, owned by Jack Hughes, who worked for us one summer in the late '20s. Spud was a clown at heart, and smart as a whip. Jack had a big Appaloosa horse, with a broad rump, and he had taught Spud to jump up there from the edge of the porch in front of the Trail Shop. Spud enjoyed riding with Jack, sitting upright and looking very relaxed. If the horse made an unexpected move and Spud lost his balance and fell off, it was no big deal. Jack would find a rock or a bank, and Spud would cheerfully jump back up. Jack and Spud and the Appaloosa were the subjects of a lot of snapshots by tourists that summer, as the two “riders” were hams at heart.

Chapt. IV – Horses and Hunting Trips

Pack Trip Into Sunlight Basin

One summer in the mid-'30s business was slow enough that Dad agreed to let Clifford and me go on a week's pack trip with Don Huntington. For many years Don had been wanting to pack into Sunlight Basin over a pass at the head of Big Creek, across the river from the Trail Shop, where the Halls had their ranch. Dad was sure it could be done, as he had hunted Bighorn sheep up in that area, and had "glassed" the terrain pretty carefully from good spotting points. The Forest Ranger, Clifford Spencer, told us that the trip was impossible, however .

“You can get out on top from this side,” said he, “but there is no way to get down into Sunlight Basin. You'll get rimrocked and have to turn around and climb back out— if you can get out.”

Well, it sounded pretty scary, but Dad gave us a little hand-drawn sketch of how he thought we could get down, and in due time we packed our camping gear on two horses and the three of us started out on a teen-age adventure we would not soon forget. As the ranger had said, we had no trouble going up the Big Creek canyon and finally out onto the snow field which filled the 12,000-ft. pass where we got our first glimpse of Sunlight Basin. We were not able to see much of what we were heading into, except a very steep and rocky slope dropping away to the north, but we did our best to follow Dad's little map.

There was no trail, but we were picking our way down the slope when we came to a down tree that the horses had to step over. It was only about eight inches in diameter, but was a foot or so off the ground. When the pack horse I was leading raised both front feet at once to jump over the log, his hind feet went out from under him and slid under the log. He came to rest with his front feet down below the log and his hind legs sticking out under it. In that seated position, there was no way he could possibly regain his footing, but fortunately he was calm and did not struggle. We got a hand axe out of his pack and started hacking away at the log, and eventually we cut through, only to find that we would have to cut the log again, on the other side of the horse, because it was jammed in between other trees. We were pretty well exhausted when we finally got the horse free and on his feet, none the worse for the experience, except for a little missing hide.

.Resuming our descent toward the distant valley floor, we worked our way toward what looked like a ridge we might follow, and soon found ourselves in a dense stand of young jack pine. At first we thought we could ride through it, as the trees were small, but as the stand thickened and the trees got larger, we realized we would have to try to retrace our steps. It was a very tense situation, as the terrain was steeply sloping and the horses had a hard time turning around and

climbing back to open ground. We were all recalling the ranger's warnings, as we rested briefly and looked around for an alternate way down. By trial and error we finally worked our way down to Sunlight Creek and were glad to find a place to camp on fairly level ground.

For the next couple of days we had pleasant riding and camping, in the beautiful Sunlight Basin, and roads and trails were everywhere, as we rode through ranches, range and forest land, exploring some old abandoned mining camps, which had been operated during the early 1900s. We camped one night at a ghost town called Lee City, above timberline. Next morning we awoke to find snow falling and as we hastily broke camp and headed down the trail the snow turned to rain. We rode in rain most of the day, and made camp early, in a dense stand of timber where we hoped to have some shelter. Next day the rain had stopped, and we spent the morning trying to dry our tents and other gear before packing up to head up over the pass to the Northfork drainage. The trail was good, and the scenery very nice, but it was a long ride down to Pahaska, where we could phone Dad and let him know that we made it He wasted no time in letting the forest ranger know of our success. As for us—well, we were pleased with ourselves for having accomplished at a tender age (I was 16) what no one had done before, to our knowledge.

Horses Good and Bad

Shamrock

Dad prided himself on his horse sense, and with good reason. He had ridden and worked with horses all his life, and was a good judge of horses. He knew how to break and train them, and never let a horse buck with him, if he could help it. But there was one horse Dad owned that almost did him in, and was a source of great displeasure and embarrassment to him.

With a name like “Shamrock” you would expect him to be tame and gentle, and at times he was, but at other times he was an outlaw, who could have been the son of Widow Maker, Midnight, or any of the other great bucking horses of rodeo fame. Dad got him in some kind of a trade from a renegade horse trader named Jimmy Tuff, who specialized in green-broke horses—just the kind Dad didn't like. Jimmy would round up a bunch of strays and unbranded colts, and have his hired hands “break” them.

This was done by roping and blindfolding the horse, putting a saddle on him, while someone “eared him down,” and then, when the rider was set, turning the horse loose to let him buck until he got tired and stood still. That was a "green-broke" horse.

Although he should have known better, as he knew Jimmy's unsavory reputation, Dad was struck by the appearance of the big, bay gelding, and thought he could make a good hunting horse out of Shamrock. Wrong! Dad taught him manners: to stand quietly while being saddled, to stand still while Dad got on, neck rein, back up, etc. But every once in a while, for no reason at all, Shamrock would begin to buck furiously, and would keep it up long after he had dumped his

rider. Don and Carl Huntington were both younger than Dad, and experienced with horses, and they tried everything they knew to break him of the spontaneous bucking sprees, but never could. One time Carl was on him when he came unglued and bucked right over a big pile of peeled house logs, sending them flying in all directions.

Eventually, Dad thought he had Shamrock trained well enough to take him on a hunting trip. It was elk season and Dad hired on as a guide with Cecil Huntington, who had some dudes lined up for a trip into the Thorofare, south of Yellowsone Park. Shamrock worked alright until they were through hunting and were packing out of the Thorofare to the Northfork. Dad was riding "drag," making sure that the dudes and the pack horses stayed bunched up, and starting down a steep trail on Eagle Creek he decided to get off and walk, leading his horse. The other horses got out of sight around a bend in the trail as Dad started walking, and suddenly, for no reason Dad could figure out, Shamrock snorted loudly and jumped right over Dad's head on the steep trail, kicking him in the chest with both hind feet as he plunged down the trail. The force of the kick flipped Dad back up the trail and knocked the wind out of him. He lay there gasping for breath and trying to figure out if any ribs were broken, wondering if he would ever catch up with the pack string. He didn't feel much like walking, and he figured that someone would see the loose horse and come back to see what had happened, and he was right.

One of the party came back, leading Shamrock, and found Dad sitting beside the trail. After trying his wobbly legs, Dad decided he could get on and ride. Then he noticed that one of his spurs was missing, and a search was started, up and down the trail from the spot where Shamrock had jumped over him. Finally, as Dad shoved his hat back and scratched his head in wonder, he glanced up to see the sun glinting off a bright object above his head. It was the missing spur, dangling from a branch high enough to require getting back on the horse before he could reach it.

"It only hurt when I laughed," Dad recalled later, but he had the imprint of two horse shoes on his chest to show anyone who doubted his story. Shamrock was sold to another horse dealer soon after that. The spurs served Dad well until he quit riding and gave them to me. I still have them, and I wear them whenever I ride my horse, Buddy. They are of great sentimental value, as well as being almost antique, now. They are at least 70 years old. Dad had a fine Hamley saddle that Clifford used, and the saddle was stolen from a cabin his family had in the forest near Spokane. The spurs, and a pair of Justin boots, are the only remaining items of riding gear Dad used .

Old Blue

The horse Clifford and I considered "ours" was a blue roan gelding named Budweiser when we got him, but everyone in the family called him "Old Blue," or just "Blue." He was a sturdy, good natured, very gentle horse, and ideal for kids, because he never did anything unexpected. Well, almost never. I remember one day I wanted to catch him, and he was standing in the pasture next to a big rock. I thought it would be neat to jump on his back from the rock, as he was dozing in the afternoon sun. As I jumped, he did too, moving toward the rock. I landed on the ground on

the far side, fortunately unhurt. Blue looked at me a little reproachfully, but did not try to escape when he saw the halter.

Blue was unflappable except he hated the sound of paper being crumpled, for some reason. One day I rode him bareback up to Mountain View, a quarter of a mile away, to get some school supplies. As I was riding back home I was teasing him by rattling the paper sack, and he would cock his ears and turn his head nervously. Then I saw our milk cow, off the road in the sagebrush, and decided I'd better herd her home, as it was almost milking time. I kicked Blue in the ribs and steered him toward the old cow, and he jumped over a sagebrush, landing on an empty cement sack that had blown in there from our place. Well, he was really spooked, and went straight up in the air. He landed in one spot and I landed in another, still clutching my paper bag. Blue was standing placidly when I brushed myself off and got back on, but I took care not to rattle the paper any more as we headed for home.

One of us used to ride Blue and the other one rode whatever horse was available when we went to hunt for shed antlers and winter-killed deer and elk heads in the spring. We would tie the horns on the saddles as best we could, trying not to poke the horse in the process. Later, when we were older, we would take a pack horse and bring the horns home that way. As Blue got older, he began to stumble quite a lot on the trail, but he loved to go, so he was a natural to be the pack horse. One morning we headed up the north side of the river, past the Spring, planning to climb up on the ridge across from Nameit creek. Blue was carrying empty panniers, but we were not leading him, as we knew he would follow closely. I looked back and noticed that he was up on the hillside behind us a short distance, so I whistled to get his attention and we waited for him to come down to the trail and catch up. As we watched, he walked out on a low rock ledge and jumped down a couple of feet, heading toward us. As he landed, the right front leg gave way, and he went to his knees, coming back up quickly, but carrying that front leg as he hobbled toward us.

We jumped off of our horses and ran back to see what had happened, and it didn't take much examination to see that he had broken his ankle. He stood quietly, but broke into a heavy sweat right away, and we knew he was in pain. We wanted him to lie down, but of course he wouldn't, and we finally decided that the only thing to do was to tie him in the shade and ride the mile or so back to the house to tell Dad what had happened. We knew that Dad would say that the only thing to do was to put him out of his misery with a well-aimed bullet, but we could not bear the thought of killing an old friend. I remember that we pleaded with Dad to see if the leg would heal, and he pointed out patiently that the horse was a mile from home, that we had no way to get there with a vehicle, to haul feed to him, and besides, even if the leg eventually healed, the horse would be usesless, as he would limp badly and probably have some pain.

Well, we assured Dad we would carry food and water to Blue, and the upshot of it was that Dad got some plaster of Paris and bandages, and we went back up there and helped him put a cast on the ankle. We made a little pen near the river, in the shade, and all that summer we nursed Blue,

hoping he would get well. It was a touching sight to see him raise his head and nicker softly when he'd see us coming up the trail to feed and water him. By the end of the summer his leg was strong enough for us to lead him slowly. back home. It was a difficult trip, because there was a steep and rocky place near the Spring that he could barely manage. He seemed mighty glad to be back to the barn, and there he spent the winter, slowly growing stronger, but the ankle was enlarged and a bit crooked, and he never went on any trail trips after that. Dad turned him out to pasture the next spring, with some other horses, and he lived a life of leisure until he died of natural causes.

Dollar

In 1923, the year after we moved to the Norhfork, a couple of men stopped one day with a team and wagon, leading an extra horse. They asked Dad if he wanted to buy the horse, and he said no, we already had a team and didn't need any more horses. They were very anxious to get rid of the animal, and said that they planned to turn it loose on the forest if they had to. Finally, Dad said, "Well, I'll give you a dollar for him." They were satisfied to know that someone would be feeding him, so they handed the lead rope to Dad and took his dollar. That old white horse wasn't much to look at, and we didn't know his name, so Dad decided to call him "Dollar."

Dad took him up to Hanging Rock campground and turned him loose in a lush meadow close to a spring, and figured that Dollar would probably stay around there that summer. A week or so later, Dad went up there to see how the horse was doing, and could not find him. Walking around the willow brush near the campground, Dad finally found him, dead. Examining the horse, Dad discovered that he had a loop of baling wire cinched tightly around his neck. The loop of wire from a bale had been hung on a branch of a forked tree, and Dollar had stuck his head through the crotch of the tree to nibble some grass, and in the process, snared himself. As he pulled back, the wire tightened, and as he pulled harder, the wire became tighter, quickly choking him to death.

First Elk Hunt

Clifford and I had a little .22 rifle that we got from the Huntingtons, and we used to take turns carrying it when we went out on foot in the wintertime to hunt rabbits and gophers. When I was 12, Dad taught me to shoot his big-game rifle, a lever-action .30-40 Winchester. That fall he let me go hunting by myself, thinking, no doubt, that going out afoot, with that heavy gun, I'd not go very far or see anything.

I knew there were deer up on the ridge west of the north peak, because we saw them every time we climbed up there in the summer to hunt petrified wood and antlers. I went up that trail and was just out of sight of the Trail Shop, maybe half a mile from home, and 1,000 feet higher, when I looked up the trail and saw a bull elk looking at me! He was about 75 yards away, uphill

from me, and standing in a little dip in the trail, so that I only had a clear view of his head and chest.

Startled and excited by the sight of that big animal, I dropped to my knees, pumped a round into the chamber, put the gun to my shoulder and fired. The explosion sounded awfully loud, and the kick almost knocked me down, but I pumped another round into the chamber, and looking up, saw the same target as before— a big bull elk looking down at me. Thinking I must have missed with the first shot, I took careful aim once more and squeezed off a round. He disappeared immediately, but as I reloaded and started up there, another bull elk stuck his head up over the hump in the trail and I fired a third time. Unbelievably, a fourth elk appeared at the same spot and once more I fired as I climbed up toward them.

When I reached the place where they had been standing, there was not an elk in sight, but there were plenty of tracks to indicate what had happened. Apparently I had hit the first one I shot at, as there was blood where he had stood, and a trail of blood leading down the draw. The others had wheeled around, one at a time, and run back up the trail, out of sight. I never saw them again.

I took in after the one I had wounded, thinking I must find him as soon as possible and finish him off. But the trail of blood was hard to follow, and at times I could see only his tracks, indicating that the bleeding had almost stopped. Once or twice I found a clot of blood where he had stopped briefly, but then the tracks turned back up the hill through some very rough and rocky country, and I began to realize that I'd better give up the chase and head for home.

It was pretty late when I got home that afternoon and told Dad what had happened. He was amazed that I had run into those elk, as they did not normally come down there until much later in the fall, and he was impressed that I had apparently hit one of them, but he told me, as gently as possible, that I had done the wrong thing in pursuing the wounded animal so hard.

“You should have just sat down on a rock and waited for half an hour or so.” Dad said, “and then the elk would probably have stopped and you could have overtaken him.” Chasing him as I did kept his adrenalin pumping and his heart action strong. Dad said we'd take horses and go back up there next morning and see if we could find the wounded bull. We had no trouble picking up the trail, and a short distance further up the ridge we found a large pool of blood where he had stopped to rest as soon as I quit pursuing him. We continued to follow the tracks for another quarter of a mile. and then we found my elk— being dressed out by a neighbor who had come upon the wounded bull and finished him off. Needless to say. I was very disappointed, but my first “hunt” had been a valuable learning experience.

Table Mountain Blizzard

A couple of years later, Dad and I went elk hunting up on Table Mountain, the heavily timbered. flat-topped mountain east of Canyon Creek and south of the Trail Shop. We were on the track of a small bunch of elk, not yet in sight, when the weather turned bad and it began to snow. The elk seemed to be moving into a stand of timber next to a big meadow, so Dad said we'd better split up and see if we could catch up with them before the weather got any worse.

We rode into the woods from different points. and planned to meet on the other side, if we didn't see anything. The snow was coming down harder and the wind was beginning to blow when I spotted some movement in the trees ahead of me. The elk looked ghostly, covered with snow, but I could see a big rack of antlers, and I hastily dismounted, pulled my rifle out of the scabbard, and fired. The elk was only 50 yards away. and as he fell. the other elk ran out of sight in a hurry.

Dad heard my shot and rode toward me. I heard him calling as I walked over to my elk, and we yelled back and forth until he found me. He got off to look at the kill with me, and shook his head in dismay. It was a beautiful trophy head, with six points on each side, perfectly matched. but the animal was not in good condition, and was not going to be very good eating. He told me I had made a good shot, right through the ribs, but was just sorry it wasn't a younger elk.

By the time we got the elk dressed out the snow storm had turned to a blizzard, and Dad said we'd better head for home and come back later and get the meat. We hung the carcass from a pole between two trees. placing the head on the ground nearby. The only meat we took home was the heart and liver.

The trip home was miserably uncomfortable and seemingly endless, as the storm continued, and next day there was no end in sight. By the time the snow stopped. it was impossible to get back up on Table Mountain, and I don't think Dad was very sorry. We had deer close by for “camp meat” and it was no great loss going without elk meat. Next spring we rode back up there to see if we could find the spot. We knew the meat would be spoiled. but we wanted to get that trophy head if possible. Unfortunately it was gone— picked up by someone who had ridden through there ahead of us. The following year, while we were attending a party at the nearby Frost Ranch, Dad noticed a library table, made with an elk head base. He commented on what a nice head it was, and Ned Frost agreed, then told Dad that he had found it up on Table Mountain, where someone had killed it and left the head and the carcass.

Grizzly Creek Wreck

One fall Dad and I hunted on the head of Grizzly Creek, northwest of the Trail Shop. We shot an elk and butchered it, and since we only had one pack horse, Dad decided we'd take half of the meat and come back later for the rest. To make a balanced load, we put the two front quarters in soft panniers and loaded them on Papoose, Nina's white horse, which doubled as a pack horse

when she wasn't riding. To protect the hind quarters from predators, we put a pole up high between two trees, and hauled the two big hams way up high with a lariat.

We had to cross a solid-rock arroyo on the way out, and were following a narrow game trail which didn't give the horses good footing on the bare rock. coming up to the lip of the ravine, the horses had to step up about a foot and a half to the grassy level ground. Papoose lifted both front feet at the same time, and that shifted the center of gravity of the pack, causing him to go over backwards and roll down the hill into the bottom of the 20-foot-deep ravine. He ended up on his back, with all four feet in the air, his head down hill, and front quarters of meat under him.

Dad and I were already up on the level ground, so we hurried back down to see what could be done for Papoose. He was very calm, and did not struggle, and when Dad cut the pack loose, he scrambled to his feet and shook vigorously, glad to be rid of his burden, however unceremoniously. We led him up the steep trail and checked him for injuries, and finding none, we carried the meat up and repacked him, and continued on home without further incident. I don't recall whether or not the “tenderizing” of the elk meat affected it, from a taste standpoint.

The hind quarters, which are the most valuable parts of an elk, containing the loins, etc., were lost, as it turned out. By the time Dad got back up there to retrieve them, he found that a grizzly bear, or maybe two, had found the meat hanging from the crossbar, and had stripped most of the meat from the bones. Dad said the bear had to have a reach of over eight feet to strip the meat away without breaking the rope or the pole.

Our Pet Cub Bear

One spring some bear hunters stopped at the Trail Shop with a little black cub bear in the back of their truck. They said another hunting party had killed a mama bear and they found the cub wandering around in the area. He was too small to fend for himself, so they brought him down, but did not want to try to keep him themselves. The upshot of it was that Dad agreed to take him, until he could figure out what to do with him.

We kids were thrilled, of course, to have a real live bear for a pet, and we joined eagerly in the game of trying to decide what to feed him, and how. Dad made a makeshift “udder” out of a leather glove, and the cub took to it eagerly, being very hungry. A collar was fabricated and a chain was found to keep him secured to the clothesline post.

As time passed, he grew rapidly, and by a process of trial and error, we found things for him to eat. He was fond of raw eggs, and when one was cracked into a saucer for him, he'd slick it up in a hurry and then lift the saucer in both paws to look underneath, to see if anything had been missed.

“Blackie,” as we called him, was a great favorite with the tourists, especially the people on the yellow buses. We had to be careful what they fed him, as a diet of candy bars and ice cream was obviously not the best for a growing cub bear. We did let him have a bottle of Coke once a day, and that was one of his favorite treats. He would hold the bottle in both paws and sit up to drink it, not lowering the bottle until it was empty. He usually got a round of applause from the spectators for that.

He learned the secrets of coping with his environment very quickly. If a dog showed up, he'd shinny up the wooden clothes line pole to the cross bar and wait there until the coast was clear. The two clothes line posts at one end of the lines were connected by a cross-bar, and Blackie could go up one pole, walk across to the other side and climb down, but his chain was not long enough for him to reach the ground on that side. Instead of jumping down and hanging himself, as most dogs would, he would go to the end of the chain, reach up with one paw and give it an extra tug, and then, muttering to himself, he'd climb back up and return to home base on the other side.

Growing rapidly, Blackie's leather collar had to be replaced in late summer, but we didn't really know what we would do with him when winter came. One day in September, when the first snow fell, we went out to feed him in the morning and found the chain broken and the bear gone. We could tell from the tracks in the fresh snow that he had gone down to the river and crossed the bridge, but we could not track him very far.

Dad was worried, because even with the new collar, he would grow rapidly and might choke to death in a few months. There was nothing we could do, however, so we just hoped he'd find a good place to spend the winter, hibernating.

Chapter VI – The Great Depression

Making Ends Meet

The stock market crash in 1929 had an immediate effect upon the tourist business. Looking back, I do not recall any hardships that we endured, but in the ensuing 10 years there were quite a few changes in the way we lived. We operated the Trail Shop pretty much as usual, but with reduced staff. Dad made quite a few improvements in the place, particularly the cabins and the grounds. There was some new activity on the Northfork, as a Civilian Conservation Corps camp was established eight miles up the river at the Clearwater Campground, and we derived some business from the officers and enrollees who were brought in to do forest conservation work. In addition, there was some highway construction being done, and Dad managed to get a contract to build some guard rail on the highway. He was good at building with logs, and there were some people in Cody who wanted to have cabins built on the National Forest, and he did that, too. As Nina mentioned in her recollections, he cut and sold cedar posts, and sometimes traded them to neighbors for things we needed, like hay or a hog, or a side of beef.

Guard Rail Work

Between 1932 and 1940, Dad built thousands of feet of heavy log guard rail, on the Shoshone National Forest and in Yellowsone Park. During the summer months Clifford and I helped out, along with Don and Carl Huntington. Old correspondence Dad saved indicates that he received 30¢ a lineal foot for the first work, as a subcontractor of Taggart Construction Company, but he did not have to furnish the material, railing and posts. Later on, when he furnished everything, and treated the posts and stained the log railing, he got up to $1 a lineal foot. The income from this very hard work was not great, but it went a long way toward making up for the loss of tourist income. One cost breakdown for a job finished in 1936 shows that Dad received $7,3571.77 for 11,679 feet of guard rail, at 63¢/ft.

The Slow Recovery

The decade of the '30s is remembered because of the depression, but also because of the events leading up to World War II. In the last half of the decade business began to improve, and as people began to go back to work, there was new interest in recreational activities, and tourist travel increased each year. There were many hew cars on the road, and the roads were much better, due to some of the depression-born construction projects.

The best business years for the Trail Shop would have followed the Great Depression, had it not been for the outbreak of the war, which drastically curtailed most of the normal civilian activities, and diverted much of the nation's efforts to military production. The recovery, from our standpoint, had to be put on hold once more.

Epilogue

The first half of the 40-year period during which the Trail Shop was owned and operated by the Sherwin family was the most interesting and exciting time for the Sherwin siblings, growing up in the wilds of Wyoming in the '20s and '30s. But there was another good reason for limiting this volume to stories of those early years.

With the end of the depression, and the outbreak of World War II, the Sherwin children scattered to the four winds, to pursue an amazing diversity of activities and occupations. Virginia, the first to marry, was Wilber's devoted wife and companion during his long career with Safeway, rising to executive rank before his retirement. Ted, after getting a degree in journalism and finishing his military service, had a long and successful career as a corporate public relations manager, with the encouragement and assistance of his wife, Helen. Clifford, obtained a degree in mining and geology, and after military service pursued a career in related fields, forming his own company to make use of his knowledge and experience in scientific fields. His wife, Marjorie, the daughter of a mining executive, was his "silent partner," who devoted her life to the duties of a wife and mother. Betty, after business school training, married Harold, with whom she shared management responsibilities in highly successful business ventures before their retirement. Russell, after leaving college, became a leader in the electronics field. He was employed in supervisory and management positions by several electronics and computer manufacturing companies before forming his own consulting business, specializing in computer software.

Looking back, we can modestly agree with a good friend of Dad's, who once commented: "Well, you must have done something right, Wylie -- five kids, and not a knothead in the bunch'"

Nina, after nearly 30 years of retirement living since the sale of the Trail Shop, now lives in Cody, close to her many friends and in regular contact with the families of the other Sherwins. It was not easy for her to give up the beautiful home Dad had built for them just east of the Trail Shop, but the State Highway Department needed the property for realignment of the new highway to Yellowstone, and it was time for Nina to move to town, where she would not have to cope with the rigors of rural life.

Yes, the Northfork has seen the last of the Sherwins, but they have left their mark, contributing much to its growth and development. There are only a few remaining residents who remember their coming to the River, but those who do would say: “The Sherwins were a fine family, and a real asset to the community.” T. B. S., Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1993