

JULY 08 TRIP REPORT

SUNDAY JULY 6TH;

With the arrival of all the guests and since most of them were repeat people getting set up and started was rather easy. We did have a wide range of people on the trip ranging from Germany, to California and Connecticut. There is always apprehension on our part since we want everything to be perfect and there are always a few surprises. The big one for us was the fact that I had come down with pneumonia, the end of the June trip and had been to the doctor twice during the week between the two trips and really wasn't doing a whole lot better. The doctor had said "I suppose it won't do any good to tell you to take it easy next week". I said probably not, but go ahead and tell me anyway. The strange thing is that I did take it easy that week! Anyway, this will probably be the strangest trip report I have ever put out since I don't really remember a lot that went on that week. Feel free to email me and straighten me out. I probably won't change the trip report anyway but if it makes you feel good, feel free to speak up. After all it is my story!

After several horse swaps during the horsemanship clinic we were satisfied and ready to start gathering cattle in the afternoon. At that point in time it was obvious that this was going to be a week filled with a lot of laughter. Most of the group had come as one booking and had known one another for years. Groups like that have no mercy on one another.

We gathered cattle off the Barker place in the afternoon and trailed the cattle to Bonanza Creek where we left them for the night to be picked up the next morning. We had no idea if the animal that had refused to go under the interstate on the June trip was with us or not. If she was, this time she went right under the interstate. The great thing about doing an afternoon gather is that we really get a chance to evaluate the horse match ups. At this point we could tell we had about 3 swaps to make before the next morning. One of our crew members got swapped out of 3 horses and we hadn't even gotten through the first day.

MONDAY JULY 7TH;

We had breakfast around 5:00am and headed to Bonanza Creek to gather the herd and trail them the 12 miles to Pass Creek before it got to hot. We had clear skies and the weather temperature was great. The herd moved right along with none of the standard problems of mixing with other cattle or having to wait for trains. After lunch we caught a few horses to rope cattle on and headed to the corrals for a branding seminar. The heat had intensified and the dust was really thick in the corrals. The branding for the most part was uneventful for the spectators. However the mare I was roping off isn't very big and played out with about 3 yearlings to go. I roped this one and she ducked in behind me as I went to the horn. I saw her ducking in behind me and gave the cue for the mare to follow the rope and spin with the animal. The ground crew saw what was happening and came running to give me a hand. Well the roped animal saw them coming and she did a complete revolution while trying to get away from the ground crew. By this time the rope was tight and the animal had made a complete revolution around me. There I was still in the saddle with the rope around my waist and me snugged up to my saddle horn. I had turned loose of the daly like I should but the rubber around the saddle horn was holding tight and the rope certainly wasn't slipping. There I was on my horse

snubbed to the saddle horn with 6 people pulling and pushing in different directions. It looked more like an ant pile that has been disturbed, everyone going different directions and accomplishing nothing but expending lots of energy. It's always amazing at how the person who signs the paycheck becomes rather important rather quickly.

TUESDAY:

Since the herd is in a pasture next to camp we didn't have to push it as hard this morning as we did the morning before. Everyone enjoyed the extra 10 minutes of sleep. It was a beautiful day and we had absolutely no problems with the herd. Today was not a day without apprehension since the cattle that we had trailed that morning were to be sold on the video auction that afternoon around 4:30pm. We sold the cattle that afternoon but the whole market was off about 6 dollars a hundred from where we were hoping. The 6 dollars equates to about \$50 dollars a head or about \$25,000.00 less revenue on the whole herd. Not exactly a drop in the bucket. The drop in the market is a direct result of the high price of fuel. Corn is the main feed ingredient used in fattening cattle. Someone else decided that we should turn corn into ethanol. This caused corn to skyrocket which forced the price of cattle to drop.

After the sale was over I headed back to camp feeling rather gloomy and bumped into a New York Times reporter who had come out to interview my father on the history of Wyoming when it was in transition from a territory to statehood. I apologize to him for not being very excited on seeing him. I had just taken a \$25,000.00 dollar hit on the yearlings and wasn't feeling at all well from the pneumonia. He interviewed me I guess, and wandered around camp and interviewed dad. A photographer showed up about dinner time and the two of them spent the night and were going to go with us part way the next day.

WEDNESDAY:

This is a real early morning and we got a good early jump on things. I woke up and actually felt much better for the first time in two weeks. Once at the Rocky Bottom we saddled up, gathered the herd and headed out of the pasture. This is where things really went south for the rest of the week. I wanted to get a tally on the number of cattle that we were taking to the mountain. It's hard to gather in the fall if you don't know how many you had up there to start with. I'm sitting on my horse, pretty close to the gate so that the cattle will flow through slow enough that I can get a good count. The trick is to use your horse as a gate and ebb and flow with the cattle as needed. Well the cattle are coming through in clumps instead of stringing through because the New York Times photographer is afoot in the gate taking pictures. My horse is not standing still as he was a new horse I had bought and was rather herd bound. All he could think of is where are the rest of the horses. I decided to give the cattle a little more room so I move on down the fence line about 30 feet and proceeded with my tally. Now Mister Alpo is not standing still at all and is prancing sideways while I'm trying to count. By adding the fact that the photographer was in the gate and my horse wasn't standing still I was losing my sense of humor. The horse was continually side passing to the right as I was trying to tally so I jabbed him real hard in the ribs on his right side. I knew he would jump sideways away from the pressure of the spur. Well he certainly did, he jumped sideways one big jump then went straight up ducking his head between his front legs, and kicking out behind, he came down stiff legged with a bone jarring hit. The sideways jump had shifted my weight off center so that I didn't really have much of a chance. I

came down in the saddle somewhat sideways, as he went up to touch the sky one more time. When he came down that time he somewhat threw me back into the saddle and for just a split second, I thought maybe I was going to get back in the saddle and ride him. I was wrong. I don't know if it was the next jump or the one after that, but I was headed back to earth, head first. I would like to say I picked my landing spot but that didn't happen either. Now almost getting back in the saddle is a little like almost not being pregnant. The end result is inevitable. The truly amazing thing is that the New York Times photographer caught the whole thing. If you want to see the picture go to the New York Times July 24th issue. Click on the story of "Wyoming the State that almost never was". Then click on the interactive slide show and then click on Parkman on the map. I try to tell people I really didn't get bucked off but there was quarter on the ground and I just wanted to get it before someone else did. I don't think anyone bought that idea. The rest of the day up the canyon was rather good and quiet which for me was really great. As I rode up the canyon I became aware of sensations that had alluded me when I picked myself up out of the dirt as I crawled back on Mister Alpo. The stinging on the inside of my arm told me that blood was running down the inside of my shirt sleeve, the throb in my rib cage told me that something wasn't right there and the dull ache in my right knee told me I wasn't going to be very mobile for a while. I was sure it wasn't a broken rib, as I had already experienced one of those and this wasn't anything like that. Other than that it was a really quiet day. As we rode into camp I noticed that the water tank had been demolished by the previous weeks herd. Well I guess I knew what I was going to be doing the next day.

THURSDAY:

It was a normal July morning with crisp mountain air and sunny skies. As long as I didn't move to fast it was a great day. People saddled up and you could tell by the looks on the crews faces that none of them wanted to stay in camp with me and work on the water tank. I chose a few luckless crew, saddled a pack horse and told them we would spend most of the day packing rock to the water tank. I had Taylor and Jake packing rock and Craig and I would shovel dirt onto a tarp and drag it over to the water tank and dump it alongside the tank to fill in the hole that the cattle had stomped out around the tank. We started about 10 in the morning and packed dirt and rock until around 5:00 in the evening without stopping for lunch. Everyone else headed up country to gather up the lead and bring them back down country. Some of the others headed clear up country into snow country where the wild flowers were in full bloom. The high country that time of year is beyond description. It's as close to heaven as you can get here on earth.

FRIDAY:

We got up early and packed the pack string so that we could get to the valley in time for the rodeo that night. We met the bus at noon, right on schedule and headed to the valley. Everyone was looking forward to a shower and a wild night on the town. Since I've done the wild night on the town during rodeo week, there is a real sense of relief knowing that I don't have to do it again. I enjoyed the rodeo with everyone, went and had a drink, then went to bed knowing that I was going to get a full night sleep. It's so hard to be chipper the next morning when everyone else is so suffering from all the fun they had the night before. Thanks to everyone who participated in the week. I have apprehension about this group coming back because every time they come back I manage

to get bucked off in front of all of them. It seems to be a habit that I really don't think I'm tough enough to continue. Thanks to all who joined us for the week.