Miller Land & Livestock

..Tara Miller

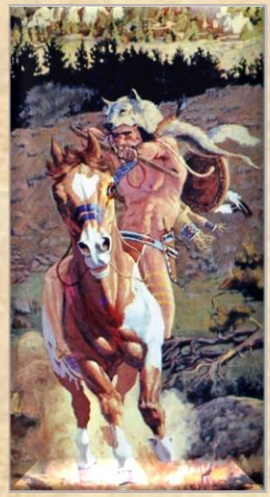
History of Miller Land & Livestock

by Tara Miller, Feb. 2010

... for our dearly loved sons, Will and Wes Miller, their good wives,
& our precious grandsons, Kaleb Robert and Weston Blu Miller

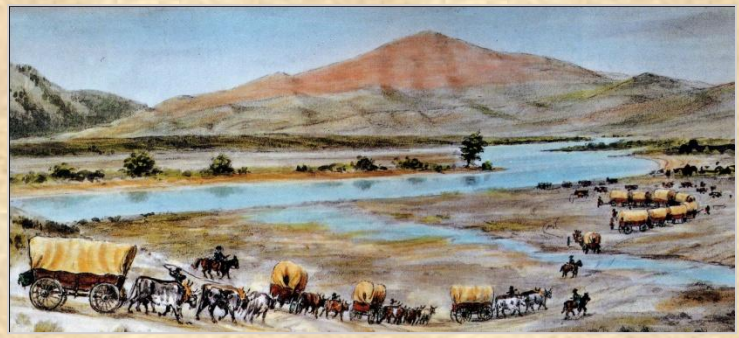
Part 1: Leifer and the Swans

On our good land that lays along the Piney creeks that originate in the Wyoming Range mountains, there is fine water and grass. The wildlife, fish, vegetation and protection here were a lure to the Indians on their summer migration. Though leaving during the harsh winter months, the Indians always returned to these creeks and to the whole Green River Valley. The explorers came, then the beaver trappers, military-survey teams, and the fur-trading companies. Next to come were military units to protect the many immigrants passing through. The Indians were too powerful for homesteaders to stay among them in what is now Wyoming, so the early settlers continued on to the Northwest.



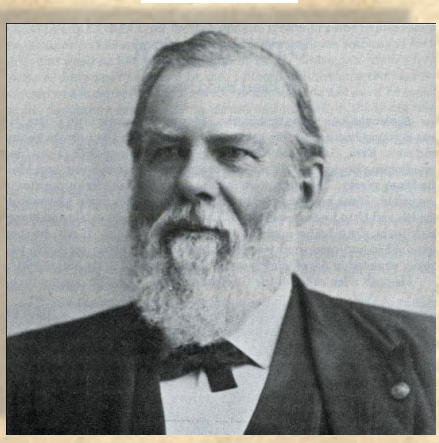
After the Indians were for the most part driven off of their land and forced to live on reservations, the cattlemen came seeking the water and grass, bringing with them cattle and cowboys.

The first of these cattlemen/cowboys to settle and homestead in what is now Sublette Co., Wyoming did so on land that later became the historical 'Circle Ranch' and the beginning of 'Miller Land & Livestock'.



In 1876, Otto Leifer joined the Swan family on their move to the Piney country. Ed Swan had passed through the Green River valley in 1863 when he was on his way to Montana from Kansas. He was Wagon Boss on this trip and commander of twenty wagons. The Indians were inhospitable at the time, trying to protect their land. But Swan was taken by the splendor of the area and never forgot it.

Ed Swan



Ed Swan, of Scottish descent, was born April 9, 1830. He left his Ohio home at a very early age, after the death of his father who was a relative of Jefferson Davis. On his first trip west, Ed crossed the Illinois Plains, nearly escaping a prairie fire. In 1855 he married Ann Bales from Illinois, where he was farming and teaching school. Mr. Swan sold their farm in Iowa and bought a farm in Kansas. To Ed and Anne were born six; four boys - Nicholas, Esdras, Caleb, and Grant and two daughters - Wilda and Gussie. Ed often left his family behind in Kansas and went out exploring to strike it rich.

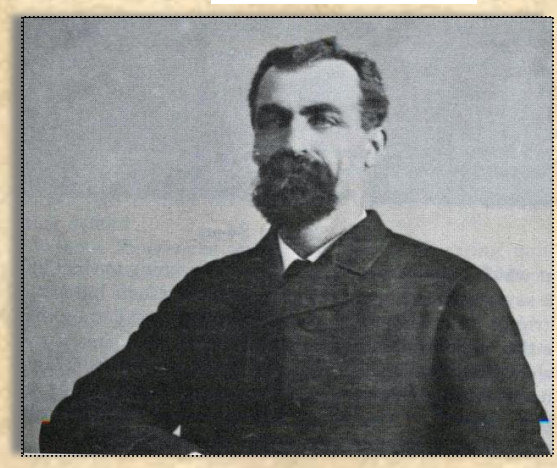
In 1860, Ed Swan with two other men journeyed to Pike's Peak by ox teams and wagons. They encountered thousands of buffalo going to the Arkansas River for water. It was an eventful trip with many Indian encounters. Making some money prospecting, Ed returned home in '61 to join the Home Guards. He was active in the service for three years and raised in rank to Lieutenant. Ed then bossed a wagon train to Montana. Several times on this trip they circled the wagons to fight Indians from behind bedding thrown against the wagon wheels. Ed made good friends and strong ties with these men and their families, they went through a lot together, and it was sad parting from them.

Next, Ed Swan pursued mining in Montana and had tormenting experiences in the deep snow winters but he was quite successful. He then went into the freighting business, buying ox teams and wagons and freighted between Virginia City, Nevada and Utah, and into Canada. In 1870, Ed sold his freighting business and brought his family to Montana where they went into the cattle business in the Galletin Valley, Montana. The family then moved to Idaho to seek better cow country.

The Swans remained in Idaho for two years and found the snow too deep and the country too overstocked for Mr. Swans' liking. So in 1876, Ed decided to move his cattle to the area he had passed through with the wagon train back in 1863, the Piney country.

In the latter 1860's, the whole upper Green River Valley was called the Piney Country by the people at Rock Springs and Green River City because railroad ties were cut at tie camps in the upper Green River area and floated down to Green River City to build the Union Pacific railroad line.

Otto Leifer



Otto Leifer was born in Germany in 1840. When he was 4 yrs. old his mother died and his father brought him to America, settling in Winchester, Virginia. When he was nine yrs. old his father returned to Germany. The overseers of the poor were ordered to bind him out on March 5, 1849 to James Carter. Binding out meant the child was bound to you until he was 21 years old, a bit different than adoption which is for life. The Carter family had other foster children. When Mr. Carter brought Otto home from town unexpectedly, Mrs. Carter was nervous of taking on another child. It was not long before they all adored this sad-faced, blue eyed boy; loving and raising him as if he was their own. His foster sister, Mrs. Sidney Gore, said "I had five brothers, all honorable and respected gentlemen, but none was more upright than my brother Otto. ...He had curly auburn locks and large blue eyes. ...from a boy he was gentle and kind."

When Otto was twenty-one he went to Iowa to attend school, and the next year, in 1861, the Civil War broke out. He did not want to volunteer or be forced into service, his foster mother did not want him to fight, so they thought it would be best if he went West.

She sadly helped him pack the things he could take on the trip and he left by an ox-team wagon train for Auburn, Oregon. His foster mother never got over missing him.

The Oregon Trail was blazed in the early 1800's by the mountain man, Robert Stewart. Brave immigrants exploring 'Manifest Destiny', the decree that Americans must push on to the western sea, traveled down the trail and through Wyoming. After these early nesters, the first large throng to come up the trial came with the big gold rush to California in the middle of the century; the trail became a congested throughway with people running after the riches, making nearly a mile-wide swath across the earth. The trail was the great demise of the Indians nomadic, pleasing way of life.

Otto's trip to Oregon in 1862 took three months. Despite the Calvary and many forts along the way, the caravan had many Indian encounters; eight men were killed and 16 wounded in Indian fights. Once to the Northwest, Otto drove a government freight wagon back and forth from Walla Walla Washington to Ft. Boise Idaho. He then worked in a Virginia City mine until 1865. Then Otto started a cattle ranch in the Bitter Root Valley of Montana which he later sold. He was wounded in a big battle against the Nez Perce Indians in the Big Hole in 1877. In 1878, Otto arrived in Idaho with a herd of cattle. In Idaho he met up with the Swans and came to what is now Sublette County where they become its first ranchers and settlers.

In 1862, the Homestead Act was passed and almost anyone could qualify for 160 acres of unspoken for land in the territories. Now a mass of immigrants joined the crowds of miners and prospectors. The largest migration in the U.S. History was from the 1860's to 1890's. This voyage was to the Plains 'sea of grass', the West's last frontier. (Eastern Wyoming is at the fringe of the Plains and the rest would be considered the Rockies.) The nesters were later to settled Wyoming than many other states since it was cold, and there remained fierce Indians that were adept horsemen and warriors.

Scoping out the country, Otto Liefer and Ed Swan, along with his three sons, Nicolas, Ezra and Grant were the first homesteaders to establish roots in what is now Sublette Co., Wyoming. There were no neighbors within 40 miles of the Piney creeks that the men settled along. The Swans and Otto Liefer picked this location with Middle and South Piney running through it rather than land along the main source of water in the valley, the Green River, perhaps for many reasons. One being the danger of cattle wandering onto the ice for water at certain times in the winter, falling through and drowning. It is also colder by the river than at the foot of the hills. They may have liked being near the Lander Trail (a cut-off from the Oregon Trail), only a couple miles away. The lay of the land was good: big open spaces for grass on one side, and the willows, in which stock could take protection, on the other. The hunting was extra ordinary with a large supply of game for meat in the hills close behind them.

And surely these earliest white settlers to venture here were lured by the charismatic sight of the distant desert bluffs, and panoramic view of both the Windriver and Wyoming mountain ranges. They came with great dreams, and had the first selection in the whole Valley for their cow- country home.

All set to develop permanent ranching operations, Nickolas Swan built his cabin on the north side of Middle Piney in 1878, out of nearby cottonwoods. At the same time, his father Ed built his cabin 2 miles east, in the middle of the present PL field. Ezra's cabin was later built in the 77 pasture. Between 1878 and 1880, Otto Leifer built a larger cabin just east of Nicolas's original small cabin from Pines brought down from the westerly hills. It is likely that Otto initially lived with Nicolas. After the building of their cabins, the men turned back to Idaho for Ed's wife and daughter and the 1700 head of cattle they owned between them.

The Swan family consisted of Ed-48, his wife Ann-40, their sons, Nicolas- 24, Ezdras -18, Grant- 14 and their daughter Gussie -4. Their son Caleb-20(perhaps died young in Kansas) was not with them on this journey. Their daughter Wilda-22 (Wildy) had married in '77. Otto Liefer was 38 at the time. It is not clear, but mother Ann and Gusssie may have lived at Green River City during the first winters of ranching in the Piney country. The group left Swan Valley, Idaho behind. The valley still carries this early Swan family's name. (No connection with these Swans and the big Swan Cattle Co. that was out of Cheyenne) .

During the Swan/Liefer outfits' first winter in the Valley, they fed 25 Indians that were starving along the river. The Indians had gotten snowed in and unable to cross South Pass to the Shoshone reservation. This may have ingratiated them with the Indians , helping Swan/Liefer get along well with them. Small bands continued to come into the Green River Valley during the summers for quite some time.

The Green River Valley country was not surveyed until the 1890's so the settlers squatted until they could get a legal description to apply for homesteads, sometimes water rights being filed on before the ground. Meanwhile, all the land around was public domain and free for the using.

Swan/Leifer's herd of cattle was made up of Shorthorn cows with possibly a few longhorns. Ed used the PL brand. Otto used the O Circle on his cows, L on his horses. Ezra used the 77 (though never recorded). 1880 census - Leifer 6 horses, 400 cow; Ed Swan, 29 horses , 700 cows. The Swan boys probabally had cows of their own).

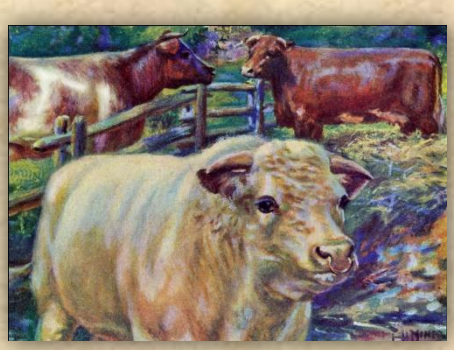
Otto Leifer House in 2010. Built in 1889. Lived in until burned in 2017 fire.

Nicholas Swan Cabin in 2010. Built in 1876.

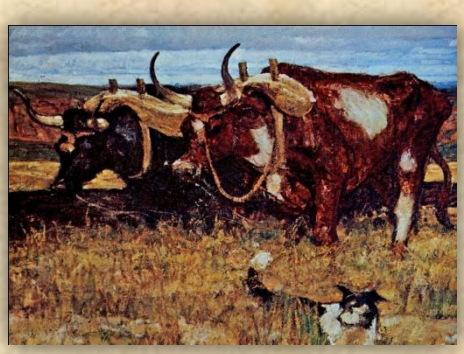
The original small cottonwood cabin still stands behind Otto's pine house which continues to be lived in on the Circle Ranch. The porch was built onto Ottos house later. These are the oldest surviving

structures in Sublette County. Otto Leifers Cabin has made a fine and cozy home for many families and Nicolas Swan's cabin has made a coal shed, storage shed, and playhouse throughout the years.

English Shorthorn were the cattle the homesteaders brought with them on the Oregon trail. The Shorthorn are a many-purpose hardy breed that were first imported to America from England in the early 1800's; they were used for meat, milk and work. Although red, white or roan, the cowmen of Swan and Leifers' day preferred the red Shorthorn. Though not exactly gentle, Shorthorns were more docile than the wild Spanish Longhorns. In the 1800's, even cattlemen in Texas crossed Shorthorn bulls with their Longhorn cows to improve the lean, stringy and tough meat.



Edward Miner Painting



"Buffalo Bones Plowed Under" -Harvey Dunn

A factor in the belated settling of Wyoming was it was not widely believed that cattle could live through the bitter winters. But the Shorthorn are the cattle that proved they could when some that were too weak to continue on the Oregon Trail had been left behind and later found to have survived on their own. Also there had been a few Shorthorns kept for their milk by trappers at early trading posts. Captain William Sublette brought the first cattle, 12 head of English origin, into Wyoming on an expedition in 1830. In another incident, cattle were abandoned and surprisingly made it through the winter of 1852. The first herd to remain permanently in what was later to become Wyoming was a Mormon herd, established in 1848 a few miles south of Fort Bridger. These were all of the Shorthorn origin.

In the Pacific Northwest, the early settlers raised Shorthorns to sell to the large railroad gangs building the line from the West and for the gold mine camps in California. By the 1870's there was a surplus of cattle in this region to the point that many had gone wild. Shorthorn drives reversed the Oregon Trail, stocking the Plains.

Swan and Leifer both brought cattle back down to Idaho from Montana. It is not clear if they knew each other in Montana or met in Idaho where they joined to journey together to the inviting cow-country Swan had remembered seeing in the Piney country.

There were many cattle in what was to become Wyoming at this time but primarily on the eastern side where the Indians had been subdued. The Texas 'Shawnee Trail' went north, herding Longhorn cattle through the eastern part of Wyoming in the late 1860's, splitting off to the Dakota's and Montana. Thousands of cattle entered Wyoming at Pine Bluffs. The cattle industry was taking hold, first in the

Southeast and then driven by the Indians to the Northeastern part of the territory. There were vast open spaces of free grass to feed cattle, and cattle were needed throughout our budding country. In the West, a large call for meat was to supply Army posts, and the Indians on reservations since the white man had killed most of the buffalo.

" Man for man, "an Injun's as good as a white man any day. When he's a good friend he's the best friend in the world." .....Charles Russell -- who spent a great deal of time among the Indians and admired them. They also admired Russell, both as a painter and a man.

As noted earlier, Swan and Leifor had no trouble with the Indians, probably because they had respect and compassion for them and their way of life which was very interesting. Here is a small example.

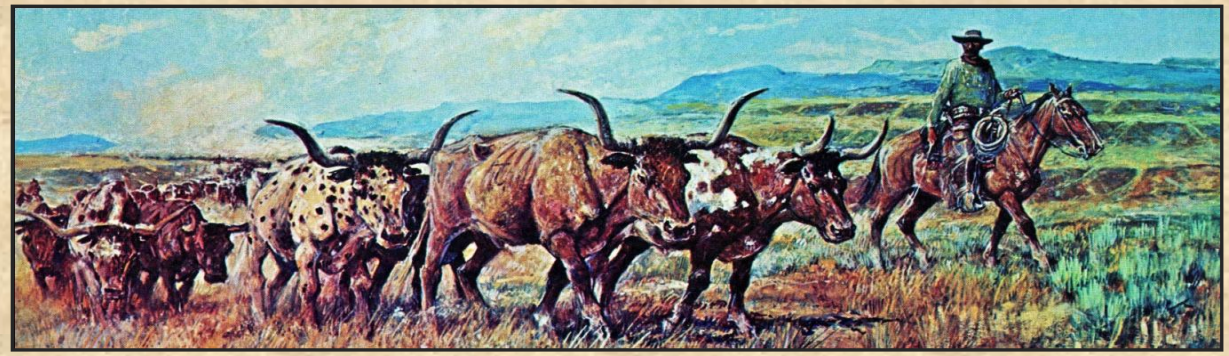
Various colors and symbols meant certain things to the Plains Indians. Green depicted growing things which meant life. Yellow meant perfection. White bespoke action. Blue meant the sky, long life or serenity. Red stood for warmth and home and Wyoming's red hills where the iron dye came from. They also mixed colors, each **having its meaning. The Indians** smeared buffalo fat on their bodies before applying the paint to keep it from running.

The various designs and how they were applied also had definite meanings. The pony tracks spoke of successful horse stealing. The hand mark showed of enemies slayed in battle. Feathers, bones, shields, headdresses - everything had meaning to the Indians.

Indian Children .... From the Poem by Anette Wyne

Where we walk to school each day
Indian Children used to play
All about our native land,
Where the shops and houses stand ... What a different place today, Where we live and work and play!

'Cattle were Gold' & 'Grass was King'. it was the heyday of cattle raising in the West, peaking approximately from 1870 to 1900. The Plains were stocked with Longhorns from the South then Shorthorns from the Northwest. There were millions of acres where cattle could graze that was public land



The two large forces in Wyoming before the turn of the century were the Union Pacific Railroad and the Laramie County Stock Growers (name changed to Wyoming Stock Growers in 1879).

The Cattleman's domain would eventually be carved up into homestead plots. But for a while, few contested the ranchers' claims to land. Great profits were made raising beef on the grasslands, especially in the late 1870's and early 1880's. Their seemed to be no limit on the nation's (or Europe's) appetite for beef.

The Union Pacific Railroad had been completed from the East to the West coast. The line met at Promontory, Utah Territory where the golden spike was driven on May 10, 1869. This was a big help to the cattle business in the west, now beef could be transported to the East. Financiers from Wall Street and Europe eagerly pumped capitol into the Great Plains. The big time of large cattle outfits around Cheyenne was rolling. Land was nearly free, labor costs low, and beef prices rising.

Though many cattle were in the Eastern part of what is now Wyoming, the Southwest corner was still quite uninhabited. Leifer and Swan had found a place where the small rancher did not have to contend with cattle rustling or the sometimes overbearing cattle barons; cow country of their own. The Indian wars were about over, and it had been proven that cattle could winter in these harsh climates: the land was just ripe for the taking.

Ranching on their adjacent homesteads, the Swans and Leifer were joined the next year, 1879, by Daniel Burr Budd, and partner Hugh McKay and hired man A.W. Smith. The cattlemen had the run for

miles around, building their herds and letting them drift to wherever there was grass. As years passed, the grass, water and open spaces continued to attract cattlemen into the Green River Valley.

In 1879, Daniel B. Budd's brother was murdered in Nevada, and Daniel ended up with his cows and horses. Daniel took on his partner, Hugh McKay, to drive the livestock to Omaha. They branded the 777 head of cows with Daniels "67" brand. (later to be McKay's brand, Mickelsons, then Millers). McKay and A. W. Smith spent the winter with the cattle along the Piney Creeks, Daniel went to Utah with the horses. The next Spring, Daniel returned and saw how well the cows had wintered and the men decided to stay. The next year, 1881, Budd brought his family with his wife, 6 boys and one girl to live on the 67 Ranch (now the Mickelson's Ranch). - *Later it will be explained how the 'O' and '67' brands got switched from the brand's corresponding ranches*.

In 1868, 'Wyoming Territory' had been created by Congress. This large tract of land had previously been claimed by a number of foreign nations, and had been a part of various territories. 'Wyoming' is a Delaware Indian word that means "on the plains" or "at the end of the plains". Up to 1868, there had not really been any law or government in this vast land. Counties were now established (though later changed) and officials were appointed. In Wyoming's first territorial legislature which was held in 1869, the woman suffrage bill passed; Wyoming was the first to give Women the right to vote and hold office. The thin populace of Wyoming needed women and hoped this would lure them there, however, still not many came to this distant frontier. The first Legislature also put a season on upland birds and made it unlawful to slaughter big game and sell it to meat markets. (Six years later in 1875 a big game hunting season was set, and in 1884 a fishing season.)

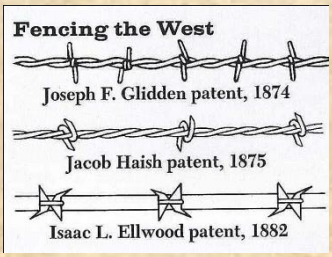
The new Territory's biggest payrolls were the railroad and coal mines near Rock Springs. The cattle industry was starting up and homesteaders steadily trickled into the Territory.

Settling in the Wyoming Territory in was still not for the weak hearted. Immediately it was necessary to ready for winter; building a cabin and perhaps barns and corrals, stocking up a great deal of firewood, and hunting for meat . Then buckling down for a long cold winter of riding herd and caring for the cows, keeping them on grass and chopping water holes. In the Spring there was rounding up and branding, then moving their cattle to summer range. Most of the settlers grew a garden. Though the cows grazed all winter, the ranchers would grub brush with a grubbing hoe and irrigate to grow more grass and a little hay for a few horses and the weaker cattle. There was continual keeping track of your cattle and rounding them up again in the fall. A rancher had to watch that their cattle had water as more died from thirst than from the cold. Wolves took their toll of stock in this part of Wyoming and often needed trapped and hunted. Homesteading could be lonesome, and many men did not think it was yet a fit place for women, children and families.

Many Indians would leave the reservations and return their old hunting grounds in the summer, often demanding and taking what they liked from the ranchers. There were also

small bands that would not recognize the reservation as their home. Early homesteaders learned how to get along with the dissident Indians.

When Leifer and Swan came, the cattle business was still in its peak years. There was no shortage of grass. Using all the unclaimed land they wished, during part of the winter they ran cattle where the 3 Bar ranch is now. It may have seemed to them as if they owned it all.

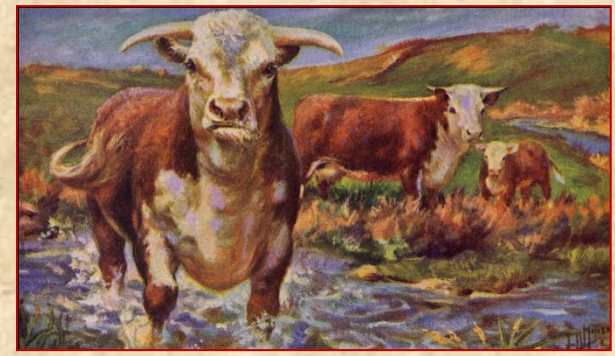


Ed Swan was reported to have been the first man around to put up barbed wire. A practical form had been developed in Illinois in 1870. Because of the great distances and lack of wood, fencing on the plains had previously been too costly and ineffective. The gradual closing off of the open range was made possible when barbed wire made it practical.

The transcontinental telegraph lines had met in 1861 at Salt Lake City but had not expanded auxiliary lines into the Green River Valley. The short lived Pony Express passed through with 40 relay stations in Wyoming, though none too close to the Valley. These first ranchers were quite isolated.

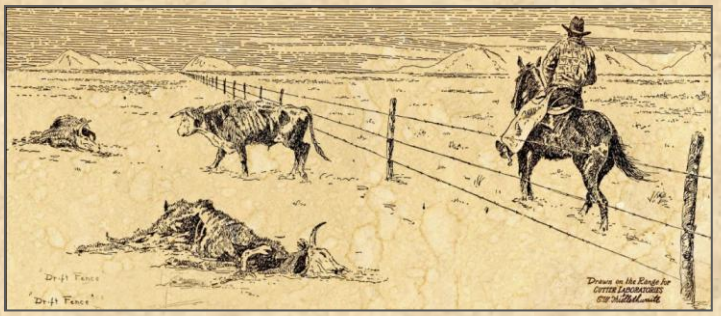
From the Green River Valley, it was over 100 miles to the nearest railhead at Green River City, then in 1882 the Oregon Shortline was built and brought the railroad to Opal, roughly 80 miles away. The ranchers could trail their steers to the stockyards and then ride with them to the market. Not having the high protein diets as calves do now, calves were still very small as a yearling . Cattle were two or three before being sold, or even older if they had been missed on the round- up. Ranchers probably made enough selling steers that they could afford to keep most of the heifers to build their herds.

Hereford cattle, with the white-faced trademark, were making their appearance on the Plains. In 1880, Swan (the Swan from Cheyenne) imported several hundred Hereford bulls. Selective bred in England, the Hereford was a great asset to American cattle. The results of using Hereford Bulls on the range was magnificent, they improved the cattle in every way and their hardiness on the plains was unsurpassed. They became and remained the elite of the range cattle for quite some time.

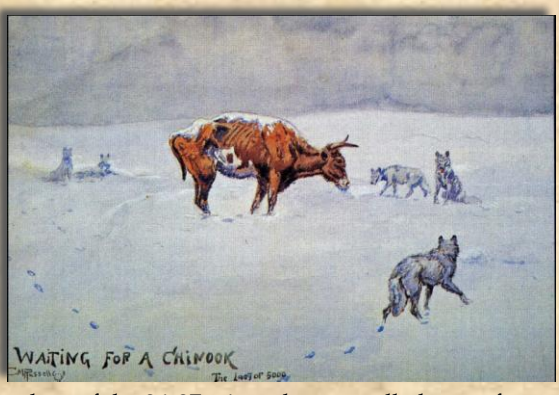


From 1882 to 1885 the beef bonanza was at its very peak and seemed there would be no end. Many big ranches over- extended. In the fall of 1885 the inevitable happened and there was a glut of beef. Cattle prices plummeted by 40 percent. Then nature added to the stockmen's woes throughout most of the Plains.

For years the grasslands had benefited from unusually moderate weather, allowing cattle to roam free and eat their fill the year round. The winter of 1885-86 was brutally cold throughout the plains (though missing the Green River Valley). Thousands of cattle froze to death. The next summer was hot and dry on the overstocked plains, bringing more starvation. In a panic, many ranchers dumped their animals on the market for as little as $8 a head, having been worth as much as $30 a couple years before. Blizzards began in November in the winter of 1886-87. In January the plains region was hit by the worst snowstorm in memory (again the Green River Valley escaped the extreme weather). It is told that in places the temperatures were nearly 70 degrees below zero. The loss of livestock was tremendous.



Cattle will drift with the head of a snow storm as far as 100 miles, when the storm breaks they are where there is something to eat. With the fences that were built, like around Cheyenne, the cattle would drift and pile up against the fences and die.



Charlie Russell was in charge of a big herd in Montana and at the close of the 86-87 winter he was called upon for a report. He responded by drawing his boss this picture and labeling it - "The Last of Five Thousand" - As he also labeled his painting

After the winter of 1985-86 many of the big outfits went under, and the big cattle Baron days with its

Lords and Lordlings had ended. This arctic weather hit as close as the Rock Springs area but did not reach the Green River Valley. But in the Valley a disastrous winter was yet to come, as weather in Wyoming is sporadic and unpredictable.

Meanwhile, Ed Swan partly turned his ranch over to his boys to run and in 1882 moved the women to Salt Lake City, making it his second home. Ed would return in the Spring with the family and stay through the fall. At some point, Nicholas went to the Fontenelle country. Ed Swan filed on water rights out of South Piney Creek in 1884 and 1885. Ed and Ezra (Esdras) were issued land patents in 1898. Ezra and his wife were also issued a patent in 1900. Grant Swan was issued a land patent in 1899 and 1900.

Ed Swan on horse

Ed kept friends in the Piney country and remained active in the cattle industry. He also believed in the growth and progress of Salt Lake City, investing in real estate. The Swans built a nice home on North St. where eventually several people from the Piney area ended up building.

This brave man of strength and great energy spent many eventful years settling the frontier. After moving to Salt Lake , Ed tenderly returned to Ohio every year to visit his mother until she passed away at the age of ninety-one.

Ranches that had been able to hold on after 1887 had cattle worth a lot, the numbers had dropped so drastically. The Swans and Otto Liefer had prospered well (though a terrible winter and big set back was coming to the Green River Valley). These settlers also benefited from the Desert Land Act of 1877 which allowed the acquisition of a 640 acre lot at 25 cents per acre, then if irrigated and cultivated it could be bought for a dollar an acre.

Neighbor, Daniel Budd, sold his interest in the 67 Ranch to his partner Hugh McKay (who later sold it to A.W. Smith in 1896). Now Hugh was using the 67 brand and Otto the O, the circle. It was 1885 when Dan left the 67 ranch and took up land that is now the town site of Big Piney and surrounding meadows. Levi Lehmer had built a sawmill on North Piney and Budd was a good customer, he built a six room log cabin, corrals, barns, sheds, a ranch blacksmith shop, and an ice house. His ranch was on the North-South road to Green River City. In Budd's home, they established a government post office on some shelves behind the kitchen door. Eventually they built a small cabin which was used by traveling salesmen, dentists and doctors and they kept building. (A homesteader named Griggs had a previous store and mail drop near where John Fear lives now. Griggs was an outlaw and invited to leave the country.)

The Green River Valley's populace continued to grow, mostly as friends and relatives of the first settlers came to see it, then staying on as homesteaders or ranch hands. More and more land was filed on, cleared and fenced in. Many of the women that came to this country came as school marms, quickly taken up in marriage, conveniently leaving a position for another prospect.

The winter of 1889 hit the Green River Valley with ferocity causing great loss to livestock. Well over half of the livestock in the Valley perished. It was a vicious natural disaster and many homesteaders lost their start. The storm rallied the remaining ranchers to form The Big Piney Roundup Association in 1890.

The ranchers were persuaded by winter of '89 that they now also needed to become hay farmers. They realized the importance of growing and storing hay for the winters.

The Roundup Association hired cowboys to travel with the chuck wagon and tend to the cows. This freed the ranchers up for other ranch chores. Gone were the days of depending on cattle running on the open range and caring for themselves.

The cows were moved to the desert where they calved in March, then drifted over around Boulder, on up through the foot of the Windriver mountains and back down around Cora, coming home in late fall. The ranchers still met up with the wagon crew to help out on the major roundups and to help work cattle. This was the beginning of the roundup wagons that later sprang up as more groups of ranchers entered the area.

Gordon Mickelson told a cute story of a early water fight. .... Daniel Budd and Ed Swan got into it over water out in a meadow. Dan took a swing at Ed with his shovel and Ed wrestled the shovel away from Dan. Ed just turned around and walked home. Later that day, Ed saw Dan down at the store and he brought the shovel in and gave it to Dan saying, "Here is your shovel", then just walked out .

Much of the land was covered with sagebrush and the Valley's homesteaders continually worked at putting it into hay fields. After the winter of '89, a lot of time and manpower in the Valley was spent on grubbing brush, plowing, irrigating, haying and feeding cows.

The house that Otto had built in 1879 was very nice for the times. He had set himself up well and felt that the Ranch was now a good place to bring a wife. In March of 1887, Otto returned to Winchester, Virginia and married Delia M. Sollars. They returned to the Circle Ranch and resided there for the next eight years . In *Progressive Men of the State of Wyoming,* Otto said " she was

Otto & Delia Liefer at the Circle

South side of cookhouse -Leifer's Home

a well-liked lady of refinement, courteous and affable".

Mrs. Leifer joined into the small but budding community. A log one-room schoolhouse was built a half mile from the Budd's ranch around 1888 for around 18 students. In 1892, Daniel Budd built onto his little town with a General Store that had a hall upstairs. This exciting hall served as a social center for meetings, get- togethers and dances. The Leifers often joined these community affairs.

Due to Mrs. Leifers poor health, 8 years after they were married, Otto put his place up for sale. The couple moved to Salt Lake City in 1895. There they had a beautiful home near the Ed Swans' at 122 N. St. with a carriage barn in the back. Otto was involved in real estate and Nevada mines, becoming President of Ben Hur Gold Mining Co.. Mrs. Leifer died July 7, 1901. Otto married Oriana Sullivan of White Cloud, Kansas. In October of 1903, Otto Leifer died of a sudden heart attack and was buried in Schuyler Nebraska next to Delia and her parents where they had had a tree farm.

Coming next - enter a Danish Cowboy, Jens Mickkelson who acquires the Circle Ranch Headquarters of the present day Miller Land & Livestock

James Mickelson