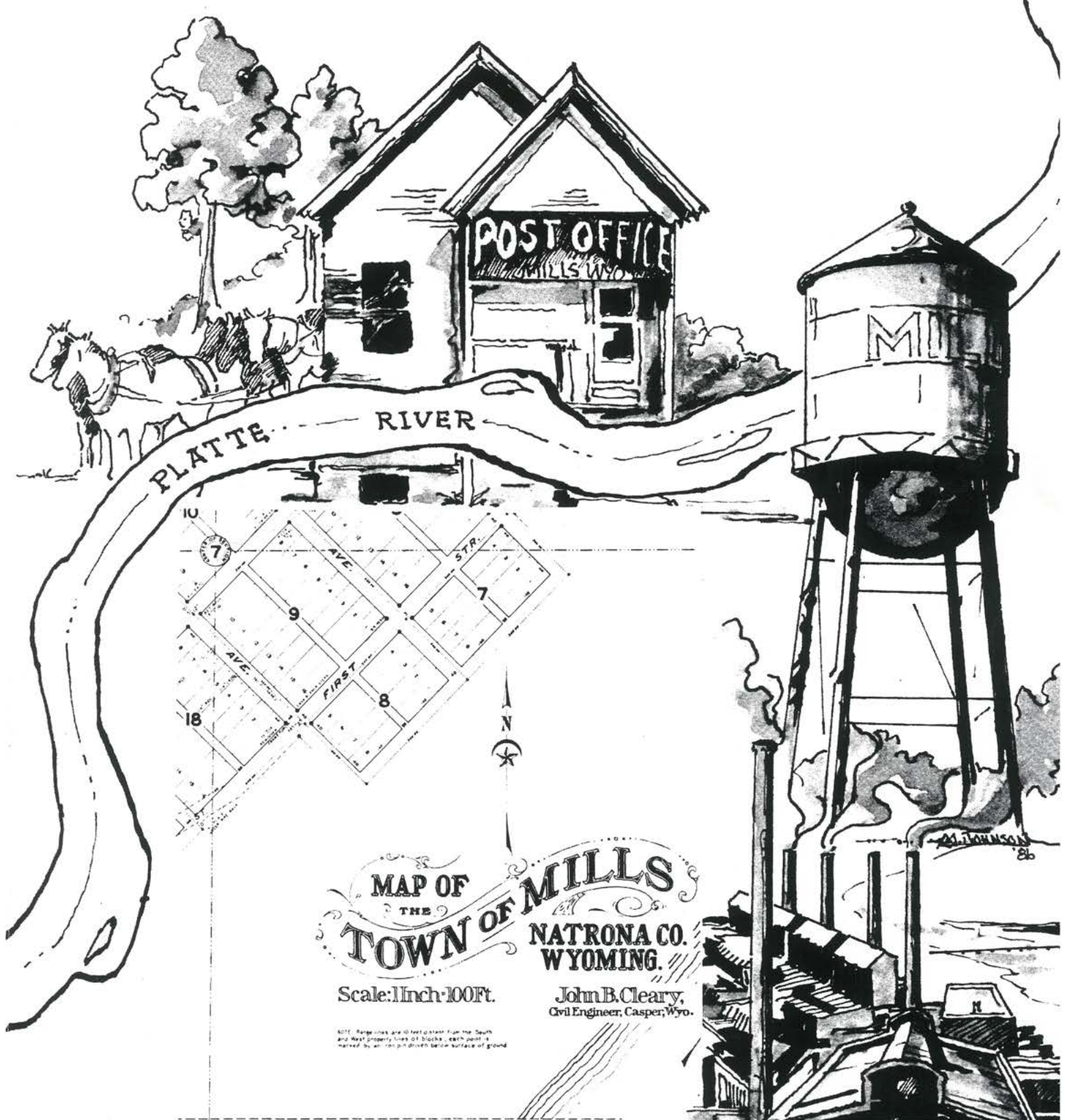


Separate And Distinct: A History of the Town of Mills, Wyoming



MAP OF
THE
TOWN OF MILLS
NATRONA CO.
WYOMING.

Scale: 1 Inch = 100 Ft.

John B. Cleary,
Civil Engineer, Casper, Wyo.

NOTE: Range lines are 40 feet distant from the South and West property lines of blocks - each point is marked by an iron pin driven below surface of ground.

An aerial photograph of Mills and its surroundings in 1978. The image shows a dense grid of streets and buildings, with a river visible in the lower right corner. A white text box is overlaid on the upper left portion of the image.

THIRD PRINTING JANUARY 2016

The artwork on the cover of this third printing of *Separate and Distinct* was created as a volunteer project by Mike Johnson, who grew up in Mills and whose father, Wes, served on the Council in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The design is a montage of many places important to the history of Mills, including the North Platte River, the Amoco refinery, the Mills water tank, Nolan's Post Office, the Mills Hotel, the Mills School and the new Town Hall.

MILLS AND ENVIRONS 1978

Separate And Distinct:

A History of the Town of Mills, Wyoming

SEPARATE AND DISTINCT:
A HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF
MILLS, WYOMING

EDITING AND LAYOUT: STEVE KURTZ, TOWN PLANNER

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THE TOWN OF MILLS, WYOMING

“The Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office as a division of the State Archives, Museums and Historical Department administers federal grant funds as part of Wyoming’s Certified Local Government Program. This book has been financed in part with Federal funds from the National Park Service, Department of the Interior. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of the Interior.”

PREFACE

This book is one part of an historic preservation program for the Town of Mills. The State of Wyoming and National Park Service have made a grant to the town to help pay for a significant portion of the program and without the financial and technical support of the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office this program would not have come to pass. The program is not a one shot activity but a process whereby the town can continue to develop and study its history.

There are several separate yet interrelated and dependent tasks within the program. The first is the creation of an Historic Preservation Commission and the adoption of a preservation ordinance. The Commission is studying the town's history and noting landmarks, buildings, and sites which are important to the history of the town and the area. This evaluation process will be a continuous one as the Commission will assist any landowner who wishes to have his property nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. Although the preservation ordinance encourages property owners to protect historic structures, the ordinance in no way restricts the use of any land or property within the town.

The project's second phase is to compile and publish a history of the town so that people will have the opportunity to read and learn about Mills. This book is the product of that effort.

The third phase is to establish a place where the photographs, documents, and memorabilia of the town's history will be available to the general public to review and study. This book contains only a small portion of the information collected about the history of Mills; the remainder of the information will be housed and exhibited at the Mills town hall. By establishing a repository for these historical documents, the town has provided a safe repository that will permit access by others. Included in the collection are several oral histories, with current or former residents of Mills who had much to tell about the town and its history.

Ultimately, this is a history project for the Town of Mills, a history published by the town. Citizens, Planning and Zoning Board members, and elected officials all willingly donated both their time and materials so this history could be written. The town sponsored the grant that helped fund this activity, but it was the hard work and contributions of its residents that makes this a true community effort.

The immediate and apparent question to ask is why write the history of the Town of Mills? Why initiate an Historic Preservation project for the purpose of writing a history and establishing a list of places of local importance, when the local landmarks

have all but disappeared? The answers lie in the fact that the Town of Mills has a separate and distinct history, a strong sense of community among its residents, and the town's unique history has an effect on the people who live there today. This history needs to be researched and written. The value of such an effort is very real, yet unquantifiable. We can survive without these amenities, but our lives are much richer, much fuller, for enjoying the benefits of these experiences. Further, to explore the reasons that prompted this project, we have to take ourselves out of the "now" time frame and think of the future. What we compile today for Mills, its history, landmarks, locations, and sites, will be the history that the next generation in Mills knows, they will also enjoy those intangible benefits of understanding where they are and where they came from. If a program is begun now to record the history of the town, in twenty years the next generation will have a history to learn from, something that the previous generations have not had.

Two different approaches, chronological and typical, were taken in organizing the history of Mills. The first half of the book explains the development and maturation of the town, using the chronological approach. Included in the text are transcriptions of oral histories with early residents and manuscripts of early residents of Mills, which tell part of the story of the town. Contributors to the text's second half are various clubs and governmental organizations. The diverse nature of the contributors gives this history a very special flavor and relates the true sense of community that is representative of Mills.

There is no attempt to represent this history as being the way the Town Council would tell the history. Any credit or discredit for the contents should be mine, as the Council has allowed the history to be written without editorial review by a committee. It is an enormous task to attempt to verify actual names, dates, and places for events that happened fifty years ago. Although the best effort possible has been made, another ten years could be invested in researching and verifying the information in this history. Some readers may be disappointed because this is not a history of families or specific people. Perhaps the groundwork has been laid for a history of this type. Time and financial constraints have determined that this history be published now; therefore, this book reflects a product of the information currently available.

Steven K. Kurtz
Mills Planner
August 1986

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book is a true community project and the book itself is just one part of the project. Many people contributed to the history project information and documents that became integral components of the book. Unfortunately, due to time and space limitations not all information and materials were used in the history. At the completion of the project much of the information will be housed in the history collection at the town hall.

This history would never have been completed without the help of the following: Norene Kilmer, Town Clerk, whose idea this has been for a long time. Norene saved items concerning the history of the town for many years. She knows everyone in town and almost everything that has happened for the past thirty plus years. Her assistance was invaluable.

Anna Darling spent hundreds of hours reading and transcribing the news stories about Mills from the local papers from the year 1921 through the forties; her volunteered effort was of superhuman proportions.

Bill Mills, who shared some of the good memories of his life so that others would know what Mills was like long ago; his sister Ann Brown who finished his work. George Adams, Bill Clapp, Mildred Steinle, George Sword, Mary Howard, and Norene Kilmer, who did the same by telling and writing of their experiences.

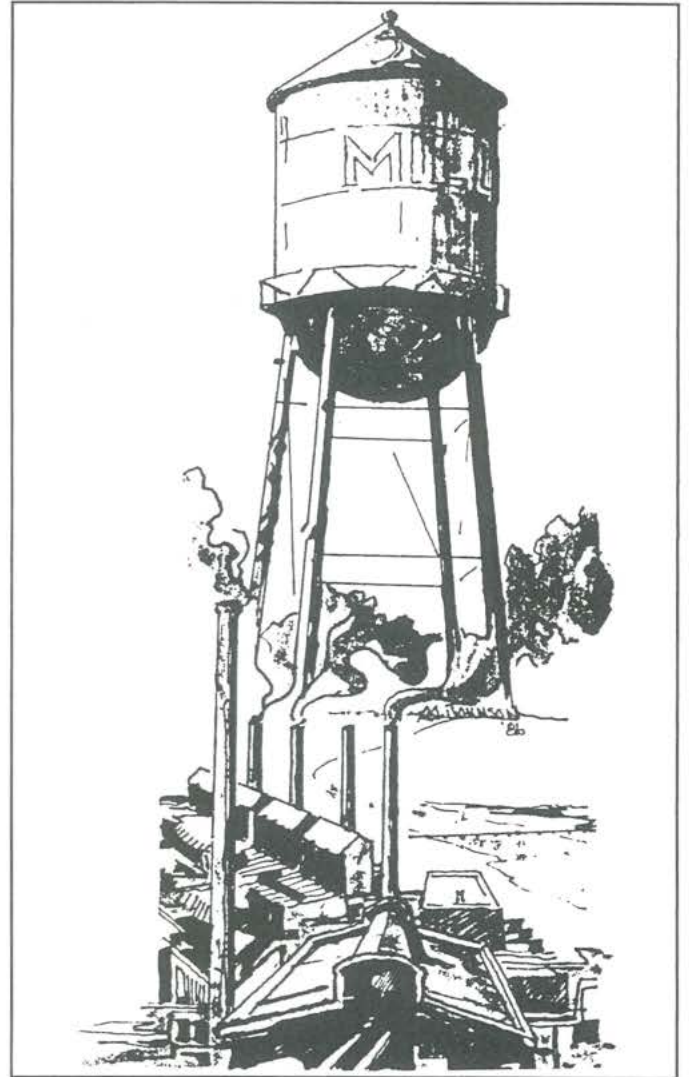
Gene George for his technical expertise on the geologic history of Mills. Those who made a special effort to help out: Fred Vanhorn, Bert Harris, Ed Greenwood, Pam Griggs, Faye Sankey, Cal Turner, Fern Schindler, Eldon Spade, Larry Edwards, Lee Underbrink, Eileen Starr of the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office, and others almost too numerous to mention who contributed information.

The Mills Council: Alan Sword, Mayor; Richard Barton, Eileen Kennedy, Mike Hendershot, and Julie Silber. These people willingly took the risk of sponsoring this Historic Preservation project.

The Mills Historic Preservation Commission, Gib Blondin, Clarence Darling, Anna Darling, Eileen Kennedy, Norene Kilmer, Cindy LaFave, Floyd Roth, Faye Sankey, and Helen Schindler.

Cindy LaFave and Jill Cox patiently typed the history, Libby Kurtz proofread. C. J. Cioc, drafted, Herb Harris, Lori Weber and Mike Johnson, artwork. Lori Weber did the book cover calligraphy. Many, many people contributed historic photographs to the history, which often tell the story bet-

ter than words. Particular thanks to Worthington, Lenhart, Carpenter and Johnson, Inc., my employer, for allowing the flexibility of time and the materials necessary to complete this project.



Mike Johnson

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PART ONE

CHRONOLOGY



Labor Day Celebration in Mills 1921, looking southeast towards Casper Mountain on Riverview Avenue. Courtesy Norene Kilmer.

THE SITE BEFORE MILLS

The history of Mills begins with formation of the site, land that would eventually form the foundation of the town, and the physical features that led to the founding of Mills. Gene George presents a detailed description of the geologic process that formed the site, as he gives us an insight into the relationship between the environment and the decisions the original settlers made:

GEOLOGY OF CENTRAL WYOMING

By studying the geology of central Wyoming, the method by which the present topographic features were formed can be reconstructed. The most prominent topographic features in the general Casper-Mills area include Casper Mountain and the North Platte River, which meanders through a flat-bottomed valley rimmed by gravel and sand dune-capped terraces.

Over two million years ago, Wyoming, including the Mills area finished a long period of stability, during which the great mountain ranges were eroded, filling the intermontane basins with sediments including those derived from many volcanic eruptions as evidenced by ash deposits. The basins were nearly filled leaving only the tops of the mountain ranges exposed. This stable period ended with a regional uplift of the earth's crust in the Rocky Mountain area. The upward movement of the crust caused the land surface to warp and break or fault. All of the major rivers, such as the North Platte River, were flowing across this flat but now uplifted surface.

At the beginning of this period of uplift (during the Pleistocene Period about two million years ago), the North Platte River began to down cut and remove the early basin-filling sediments. Before uplift, the North Platte River flowed across a flat surface which covered most of Casper Mountain. As the North Platte began to erode down through this flat surface of basin fill, the river was superimposed on the folded rocks that are seen in Casper Mountain at present. Therefore, the North Platte River cuts a canyon through the Goose Egg and Bessemer Bend area rather than taking the easier route around the west end of Casper Mountain. When the down cutting action of the river stripped away all of the basin fill sediments, a flat bottomed valley was formed as the river meandered across the soft

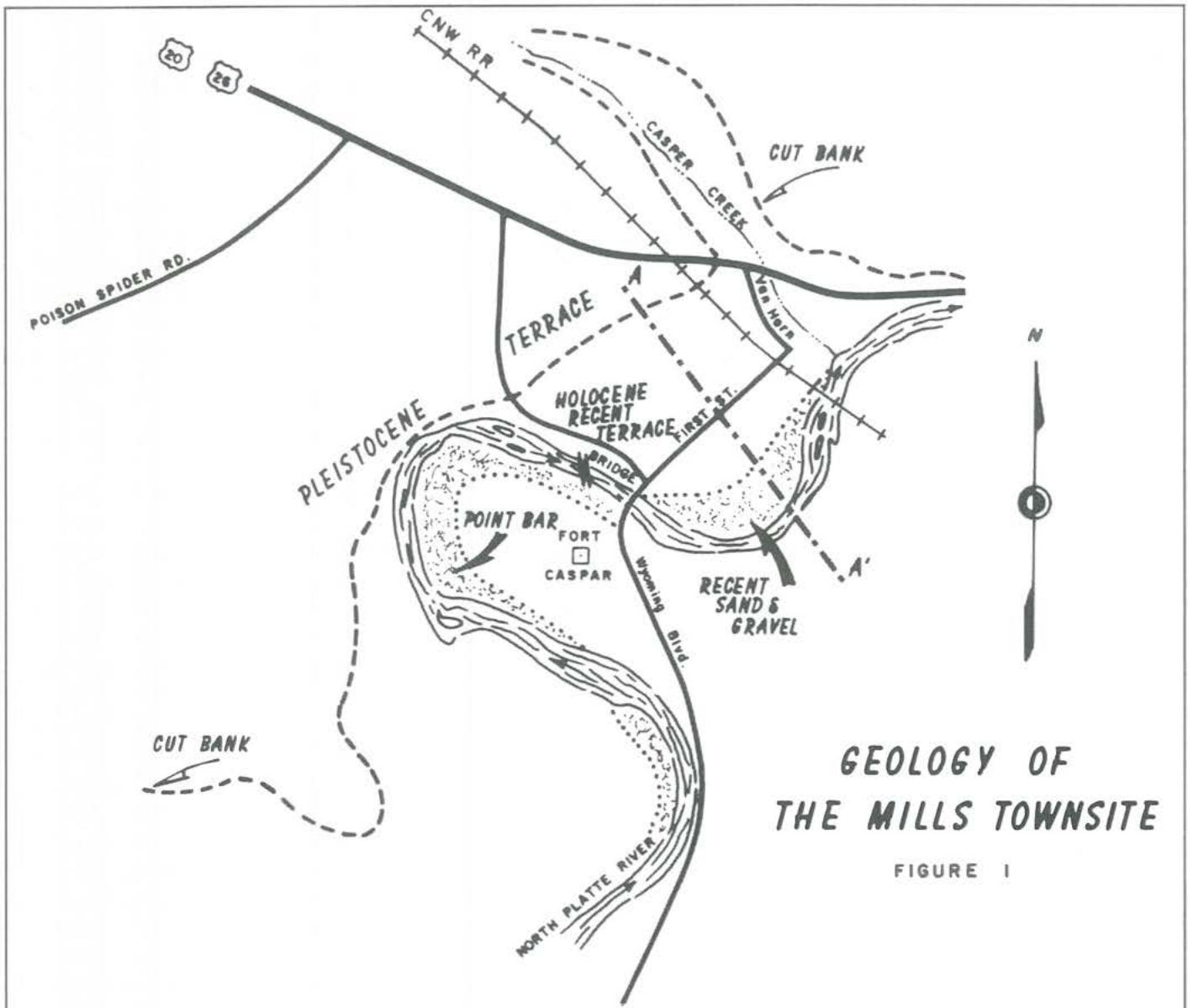
Cody Shale formation in the Mills area.

The flat meander surfaces at equal elevations on either side of a river are called terraces. A period of renewed uplift caused the North Platte River to down cut through the old river bottom leaving that flat bottom surface or terrace high above the present day river level. The terraces can often be dated by fossils or carbon remains. This terrace was capped by gravels of the old river valley. A renewed period of uplift caused the North Platte to down cut even deeper leaving the old terrace surface high above the present day river level. These terraces are often capped by gravels of the old river valley. Where the gravels contain fossils or charcoal remains, the terraces can be dated and correlated.

During the formation of the present day North Platte River valley, continental glaciers covered the northern part of the U.S. Wyoming, however, only had small mountain or alpine glaciers. There is no evidence that Casper Mountain ever had any glaciers. During the Pleistocene Period the well known "Woolly Mammoth" and other cold climate plants and animals lived in the high, relatively dry Wyoming climate. Sometime near the end of the Pleistocene and the beginning of the Holocene or Recent Period the glaciers receded and temperatures warmed. The high and dry climate continued in the Mills area as evidenced by the presence of sand dunes on the Pleistocene terraces. The age of the Casper Site in sand dunes near the Natrona County School District headquarters was determined by two radiocarbon dates from charcoal associated with a bison kill as between 9830 ± 350 years and $10,060 \pm 170$ years before present. The Casper Site indicates that the "general biologic, climatic, and geologic setting of the Casper (and Mills) area 10,000 years ago was similar to the present date" (Albanese, 1974).¹

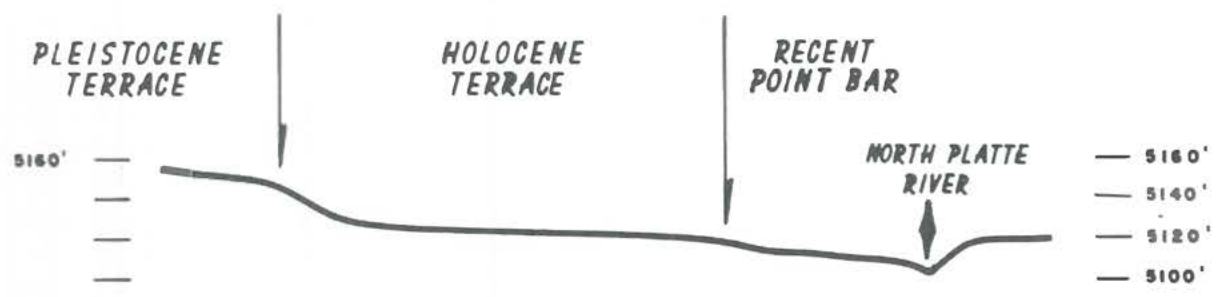
GEOLOGY OF MILLS

Mills is located on the north side of the North Platte River across from the old Fort Caspar site. The North Platte makes a tight meander (nearly a closed loop) encircling the Fort Caspar site (see Figure 1). On a river system, the current accelerates flowing around the meander loop eroding on the outside of the loop (the cutbank side) and depositing sand and gravel on the inside of the loop (the pointbar). As the river flows east from the Fort Caspar meander loop, the river channel straightens and the water velocity decreases, forming a shallow area with islands. This shallow area is the site of the Fort



**GEOLOGY OF
THE MILLS TOWNSITE**

FIGURE 1



A — A'
PROFILE OF MILLS TOWNSITE

FIGURE 2

MAP AND FIGURE:
GENE GEORGE
DRAFTING: C.J. CIOC

Caspar bridge crossing. The river then flows north and forms the Mills meander loop with sand and gravel being deposited on the inside or north side of the river and a cutbank on the south side of the river. The Chicago & North Western Railroad crosses the river as it straightens and forms a shallow area with islands.

The original town site of Mills was located adjacent to the point-bar deposit containing sand and gravel which was mined or quarried for aggregate to be used at the old Midwest Refinery site. The lower part of present day Mills is located on a river-cut terrace of Recent or Holocene age. A river terrace is formed when a river cuts down or erodes into older river-deposited valley fill. The upper part of Mills lies on an older terrace of Pleistocene age (from recent up to two million years old). The sharp break in slope between the upper and lower parts of the town (approximately along 7th street) is an old cutbank which formed the edge of the Holocene stream valley. A profile of the river and terraces shows the old and new river valleys on Figure 2. The location of the profile is shown on Figure 1.

The original site of Mills was next to the gravel mining operations of the Mills Construction Company. The terrace between the river and the cutbank slope along 7th Street provided a level site for construction somewhat sheltered from the famous Wyoming winds. However prior to the construction of Alcova and Grey Reef dams, spring flooding was a serious problem. Even today, during especially high spring flows, the lowest parts of the point-bar and terrace are threatened by flooding. The construction of these dams has helped to stabilize the cutbanks and decrease the rate of deposition of sand and gravel in the point-bar. The landforms on which the Town of Mills was built are essentially unchanged since the dams were finished.²

THE NORTH PLATTE RIVER

The major determinant in the development of the Town of Mills is the North Platte River. The river was the key to the development of the central Wyoming area as well as the town.

The river ran its course through the area for millions of years before the first men came to the area. Indians used the river to support their life-style for many years before the white man came to the region. The Indians used the river, but it remained wild and untamed, even though we don't think of it today as

a wild river.

"The origin of the name of the Platte River dates back to the earliest occupation of the valleys of this stream by the French settlers, which occurred in the year 1719. These Frenchmen discovered that the Indians called the River the Nebraska, which word in their language signified flat, which, interpreted into French, means Platte, carrying out the idea of a broad and shallow river. Hence LaPlatte river, but up to the time Bonneville made his expedition in 1832-5 it was called by most people the Nebraska river."³

The North Platte meandered through the Mills area in a series of oxbows starting at the area of what is now Robertson Road, west of Paradise Valley Addition to the City of Casper, about two miles west of Mills. The river looped north around what is now Paradise Valley in a semicircle, then back to the south around Dempsey Acres, a development just to the southwest of Mills, and through a curve of almost 360 degrees back northwest to Chamberlin Road just south of Fort Caspar. The river then again turned, this time north and east eating into the bluffs on which the current Boatright-Smith operation is located, then along another loop to the southeast and back to the north and east along the north side of the Amoco refinery. This series of loops and oxbows created major flood plain deposits of sand and gravel northeast on the future town site of Mills.

A major factor in the establishment of Mills was the opening of the Salt Creek Oil Field. The oil from the Salt Creek Field was hauled by wagon to the Midwest Producers and Refiners' Casper refinery in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The refining of oil required vast quantities of water and the only location that met that requirement was the North Platte River at Casper.

When the refinery expanded there was need for sand and gravel to use in construction of the tank farms and roadways. The Mills Construction Company had the major contract to supply sand and gravel to the refinery for this construction. They found suitable sand and gravel deposits across the river from the refinery at a homestead owned by Charles Hawks. In 1919 the Mills Construction Company purchased the homestead and began dredging sand and gravel from the flood plain. The owners of the company and their employees established residences in the area, as it was difficult in those days of horseback and horsedrawn transportation to live very far from work. With the establishment of residences near the sand and gravel opera-

tion came the beginnings of the Town of Mills.

One of the major advantages of the Mills flood plain as a location for establishing a home was that the ground water was of good quality and was easily tapped as a source for domestic water. By driving a "sand point" into the soft sand of the flood plain, a man could get a suitable supply of domestic water for his home. This resulted in the proliferation of houses with individual wells and no real need for a public water system.

The North Platte has been the major positive factor in the creation of the Town of Mills, but there is a dark side to the river's effect on the town, even today. In the early years of Mills, the river was uncontrolled. In the twenties there were major floods on the river and the Casper Creek. These floods were not noted for the amount of damage they did to personal property, but the several bridges on the river and Casper Creek suffered and the economy of the area had to adjust until things were back to normal.

The river was a place for recreation, but it was also a place of personal danger. Many times the fire department bell sounded the alarm to search for a missing person and often pealed in mourning for the loss of a child or an adult to the river.

Even with the construction of Pathfinder Dam in 1905 some fifty miles upstream and later the Alcova dam to control the North Platte, the river remained wild and the annual process of spring floods had to be dealt with time and time again.

Today, in the "modern era", the Mills people still deal with the river and its quirks. When the river freezes in the winter, the bridges often are endangered by ice jams, which back up the flow of the river and flood low lying areas. In the spring, the Bureau of Reclamation releases water from the upstream dams at Seminoe and Pathfinder. The amount of water released depends on the snowpack in the mountains to the west and the amount of springtime precipitation in the region. When the snowpack is deep and the spring wet, the water is high in the river and the local residents are mobilized to build dikes and sandbag walls along the river banks. The groundwater rises, filling basements in Mills with water until the river flow recedes.

Mills' struggle with the river will continue as long as there is a Town of Mills. The river gives the town its life and livelihood, but occasionally takes some of that life back. Scientists sometimes describe this process as symbiosis, where the town and the river give and take from each other the things that are necessary to support their mutual existence.



Monument to the unknown dead on the Oregon Trail. Courtesy Mildred Steinle.



Etta Sims and the Caspar Collins-Oregon Trail monument, at the original site of the Monument, 1922. Courtesy Etta Sims.

THE OREGON TRAIL

Several excellent books recount the rich history of the Oregon/Mormon Trail, Fort Caspar, and Caspar Collins in very specific and poetic detail. This account is not an attempt to retell these histories, only to relate them to the history of Mills.

In the 1840s and 50s there was a major migration of midwesterners to the western states. The frontier was opening up. Travel at that time was hazardous as people walked, rode horseback, and traveled together in wagon trains across the plains and the Rocky Mountains to the Oregon and California territories. The settler's route to Oregon passed through Wyoming from Nebraska and on through Utah and Idaho. This was called the Oregon Trail. This was also the route of the Mormons, who migrated west from Missouri to Utah along the same route as those bound for Oregon. The Oregon Trail became the Oregon/California Trail after 1849 when gold was found at Sutter's Mill in California. The same route was followed through the mountains to Utah and then split, with the majority of settlers after 1849 apparently heading for California.

The settlers traveled across Nebraska, following the Platte River to Fort Laramie, where during the early years of the Trail, they crossed over to the south side. They traveled the south side of the river from Fort Laramie to Glenrock. In the area between Glenrock and west to Bessemer Bend (ten miles west of Casper) were several crossing sites where the settlers recrossed the river to the north side. The major crossing was the Mormon Ferry, located near the present North Casper. The Mormon Ferry was used because the Mormons traveled by loading all of their belongings on handcarts and walking. There were regular handcart companies that provided this service for settlers. As the handcarts were quite small and could not ford the river, a ferry was established to carry them across.

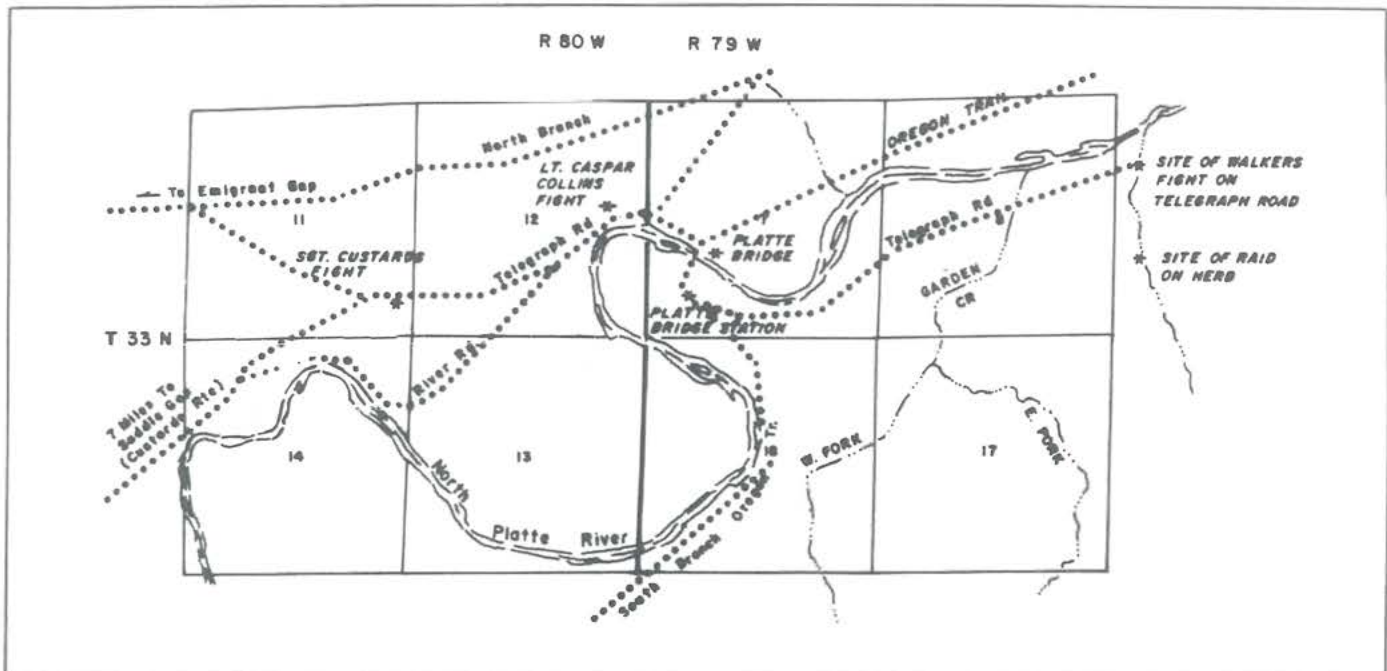
The time of travel for the settlers was spring and summer. The goal of the settlers was to travel across Nebraska and Wyoming and arrive at Independence Rock for the big Fourth of July celebration. This meant quite a load for the ferry, which just couldn't get all the handcarts across the river in time for everyone to get to Independence Rock by the Fourth. (The Platte Bridge was later built to help get everyone across in time.)

In the later years of the trail disease ravaged the land on the south side of the North Platte from Fort Laramie to Glenrock, and many settlers took a northerly route to stay on the north side all the way through Emigrant Gap. A variation of this was at Reshaw (Richaud, Richard) bridge just north of Evansville, where settlers crossed the river.

There were many routes of the Oregon/Mormon Trail through the area, and several came through Mills. Two of these, Child's (Chile's) and the Poison Spider, were northerly routes. The Child's Route stayed on the north side of the river apparently from Fort Laramie. It crossed through what is now the Amoco tank farm, across Casper Creek at the Benton Clay site, on across Mills through the Bureau of Reclamation area, and then on to the southwest.

The Poison Spider route came through Casper just north of the river, crossing the Casper Creek. It then swung through lower Mills roughly along First Street to Platte Avenue, then northwest along Platte and out Pendell Boulevard to the west. The southerly routes that crossed at Fort Caspar on the Platte Bridge joined this route in Mills.⁴

The Oregon Trail did not have a major effect on the development of the Town of Mills. However, it is another piece of the history of the town that is now all but gone. There are portions of the trail in Natrona County where the wagon wheel ruts are still visible, but not in Mills, where the trail has been obliterated through development. Even the monument to the trail and Caspar Collins is not at its original location.

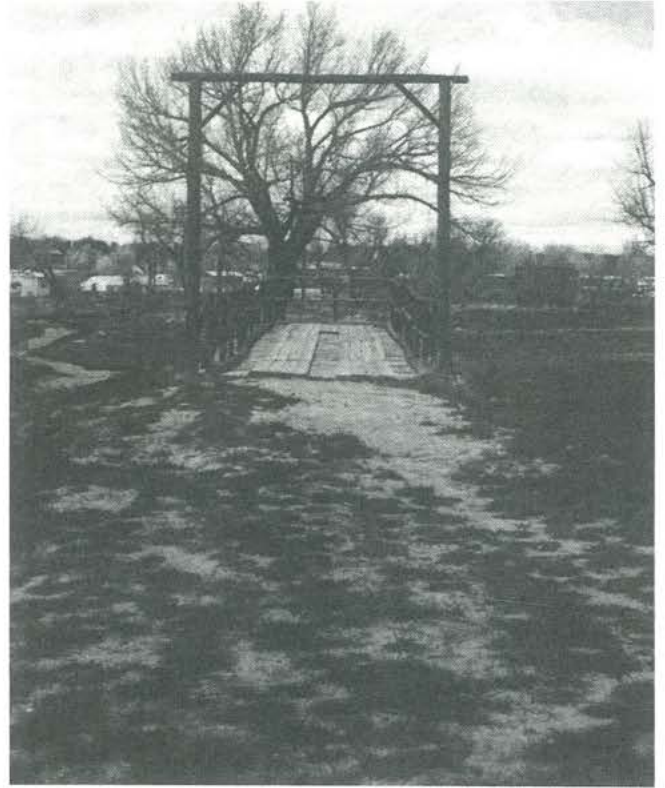


This map, from Vaughn's *The Battle of Platte Bridge* shows the relationship of the Oregon Trail to the Mills town site. The town hall is located near the symbol for Platte Bridge and Platte Bridge Station is Fort Caspar. The "North Branch" of the Oregon Trail is comparable to the Child's Route, and the "Oregon Trail" is comparable to the Poison Spider Route. Drafting C. J. Cioc.

THE PLATTE BRIDGE

The Platte Bridge was built by Louis Guinard in 1857-58 to help the settlers cross the river and get to Independence Rock for the Fourth of July. Most descriptions of the bridge indicate that it ran the shortest distance across the river due north of Fort Caspar. In Vaughn's account of the bridge, it is over 1,000 feet long with a bend to the northwest in the middle. Conjecture about this could be that the river was uncontrolled at that time and the bridge was built to cross the entire breadth of the flood plain. The river was possibly quite narrow in the winter, spreading out to be very wide and shallow in the late spring and summer, filled with snow melt from the mountains. The bridge's 1,000 foot length could have been necessary to allow the settlers to cross the river during high water without getting wet.

The majority of the bridge was located in what is now Mills, with the south end being on the Fort Caspar grounds just south of the Mills boundary. As with the Oregon Trail, there is no apparent physical evidence of the bridge on the north side of the river.



The south end of the Platte Bridge at Fort Caspar. This recreation is located approximately where the south end of the bridge was built in 1857.



Recreation-original parts of the Mormon Ferry, at Fort Caspar. The ferry was located east of Mills near current day North Casper.

FORT CASPAR

In 1860-61 a telegraph line was built through the area which connected the midwest with the west coast. In order to protect this and to protect the settlers on the Oregon Trail from Indians, Fort Caspar, or Platte Bridge Station, was established. U.S. Cavalry units were stationed there on and off during the 1850s and 1860s. As it turned out, the fort was not a very safe place to be for either the settlers or the cavalry. Indian attacks on the immigrants got out of hand in the 1860s. The Indians massacred a wagon train and several cavalymen west of the Fort on July 16, 1865. Lieutenant Caspar Collins led a group of cavalymen out in support which was also massacred by the Indians. Caspar Collins was reportedly killed at the gate of what is now Boatright-Smith and was dragged by his horse for quite a distance up along the Casper Creek. The City of Casper is named after this brave soldier, although through a mistake the spelling was changed from Caspar to Casper.

The Cavalry abandoned the Platte Bridge and Fort Caspar in 1867 and they were burned by the Indians later that year. The bridge and the fort were not rebuilt or reopened. In the 1860s the transcontinental railroad pushed its way across southern Wyoming, opening up the State and providing a quicker, safer means for immigrants to get to the west coast.⁵

There is a lesser known aspect to the history of Fort Caspar which is tied quite directly to Mills. It seems the fort was rebuilt in 1933 for a Fourth of July celebration only to be set on fire and burned down several days before the planned events. The replica was feverishly rebuilt in time for the reenactment of the burning of the fort. During the celebration one of the "Indians" fired a flaming arrow into the side of the building and the fort was burned again:

The Fourth of July in Casper was brought to a close after four exciting days of celebration. From the time the crackle of early morning fireworks by the youngsters ushered in a day of bright sunshine and fine weather until the replica of Old Fort Caspar had been reduced to glowing embers. So varied and eventful was the day's program that from morning till dusk, a constant round of activity, in which the populace of Casper and hundreds of visitors enthusiastically took part. The Fourth was a huge success as was the entire celebration. It reflected the six months of preparation,

weekly meetings and never slackening enthusiasm on the part of the 4th of July association. The groundwork of the four day jubilee and days of excitement bowing it in, was laid in January with constant development of the progress until the eve of July 1. The capture of Old Fort Caspar by the Indians and its spectacular destruction vied with the big parade in the forenoon for 1st honors as the most outstanding event on the 4th of July program. Approach of dusk was signal for brightly garbed Indians — real war bonnetted braves from Fort Washakie Reservation to steal from their tents at the old polo ground and to make rendezvous at the site of the historic old fort replica. Reminiscent of old Fort Caspar prominently identified with Casper's early history, the collection of buildings and stockade presented brave defiance to the redskins. From the ashes of the fort built after weeks of diligent labor on the part of the pageant committee, destroyed in early hours Monday by "firebugs", a larger and even more formidable looking form was reconstructed through volunteer community wide determination that the crowning event of the celebration conform to schedule. National Guard members took a large part in rebuilding the fort. Preceding the thrilling attack on the fort, Jimmie Russell, local restaurant man, old time friend of the Arapahoes, and instrumental in securing their trip from the reservation to Casper for the celebration, was crowned Chief White Hawk amid impressive ceremonies. Mr. Russell is one of only a few white men ever to be accorded such an honor by the Arapahoes, once one of the most fierce and warlike tribes of the Rocky Mountains. As the coronation came to a close and dusk deepened, the Indians stalked the fort. They stealthily approached over the hill, in a fashion once familiar and a source of heart freezing terror to settlers and pioneers. Circling the fort, they finally swooped. The crackle of gunfire could be heard by the crowd gathering in a giant semi-circle at some distance from the fort. The exchange of hostilities was on, with the members of Casper's National Guard headquarters troop guarding the fort as once the Federals of the Eleventh Ohio Cavalry had defended the real Fort Caspar. The roar of bombs was reminiscent of cannon fire. Finally the gleam of fire could be seen in the fort. Evidently one of the burning arrows sped by Indians had found lodgement and the fort was doomed. Soon flickering flames reached to the sky. The glow and pillar of billowing black smoke could be seen in all parts of town. Accordance by Casper citizens and visitors eclipsed the most optimistic expectation. A wide area encompassing the fort site was blanketed with cars and traffic to and from the site, both before and after the pageant, and consumed much time. Special police and sheriffs officers were hard pressed to prevent congestion. (The celebration also had a rodeo, parade, piccadilly circus midway downtown, concerts, and games of all types and ball-games.) (*Casper Daily Tribune*, July 6, 1933.)

THE REASONS FOR MILLS

There are many factors that affect where people establish communities. Many of these are physical: location on a waterway as a port, location along major roadways and railroad lines, location in an agricultural region as a market center, and availability of adequate water.

Mills became a town because the physical requirements were present and because of the construction of the Amoco Refinery. The oil boom in the Salt Creek field required refining and shipping the oil to market. The oil was hauled to Casper, where the North Platte River provided the vast quantities of water necessary to refine the oil at the refinery, located either side of the river about a mile west of Casper. Building and operating the refinery was a tremendous job. Many men and huge quantities of construction materials were needed.

The Mills Construction Company had the contract to construct the tank farms adjacent to the refinery and roadways within the refinery itself starting in 1919. They needed a place to get gravel and sand, and found that place on the north and west bank of the river adjacent to the refinery in Section 7, where the river had deposited the sand and gravel over millions of years. In addition to getting sand and gravel from Section 7, the company sold much of the land to the oil refiners for tank farm development. The company began to dig the sand and gravel out of that location and the rest of the story is the history of the town. It was really too far to travel into Casper after work in those days, and those who worked for the company needed a place to live near their work. Lots were laid out for the workers to buy and build homes on. After the area had grown, there was need for organization, and the majority of services needed to support a community were available. It was logical to incorporate and the people incorporated as the Town of Mills, Wyoming.

Over the years Mills has been home to many of the people who worked at the refinery, as it was close to work and a good place to live. The development of Mills is a rare process in Wyoming; a small town adjacent to a larger one serving a very specific need. Nearly the same process occurred, however, in the development of Evansville, located just east of Casper where that town was established adjacent to the Texaco Refinery and many of the employees of the refinery settled in Evansville. Mills and Evansville have different histories, but their origins are similar.



Fort Caspar today.

EARLY DEVELOPMENT

The Mills-Baker Construction Company purchased the Hawks Homestead, Section 7, Township 33 North, Range 79 West, in 1919 to excavate the sand and gravel from the flood plain of the North Platte River. The men who worked for the company needed a place to live and the company had their surveyor, J. B. Cleary, lay out and plat lots for homesites. In 1919 the company platted the Mills-Baker Addition to the City of Casper, which set out about ten blocks near the Chicago and North Western Railroad. In 1920 there was a second Mills-Baker Addition and later a third addition, the three of which comprised an area from the railroad to the Mills School and from First Street to Fourth Street. The distance between Mills and Casper at that time was over a half mile, but the plats were drawn up as annexations to Casper. However, there was no real intent to become part of Casper.

The area boomed, and reports were that as many as five hundred people lived in the additions in 1921. The land sold quickly, houses were built, and everyone was busy. There was so much activity that by 1921 the people in the area decided there was need for some local government, and, as outlined above, the move for incorporation as a town began.

THE ROARING TWENTIES

The "Roaring Twenties" was a television show from the 1960s that glorified the wild life of the dec-

ade of 1920s. It seems the decade of the twenties in Mills was no exception. During the twenties the Town of Mills came to be, grew and flourished in a wild manner, then almost ceased to be. It was a boom time, a boom caused by oil that was the major, if not the only reason for the town at that point in time. The bust was not necessarily for lack of oil, but a worldwide depression. This cycle of boom and bust has been and will be repeated again in the history of Mills. Later booms and busts don't appear to have been as severe as the boom/bust of the twenties, but by the same token, the pace of life in Mills will probably never again rival that of the decade of the "Roaring Twenties."

Mokler's *History Of Natrona County* provides a clear and concise summary of the very beginnings of the Town:

"The Town of Mills, located about two miles west from the City of Casper, is the second largest town in Natrona County and was the third town in the county to be incorporated. The land upon which it is situated is described as the northeast quarter of the southeast quarter of Section 7, Township 33 North, Range 79 West of the Sixth Principal Meridian, and was homesteaded by Charles M. Hawks on December 21, 1906. Mr. Hawks sold the land to the Mills Construction Company in 1919, and this company put up some buildings on the land where headquarters were established for their construction works. It was known then as the Mills-Baker Addition to the City of Casper. Engineering work prepa-



Mr. William Mills Sr. (right) and Mr. Fred Hutton in the Mills Construction Company Office in the D&S Building in Casper, 1921. Courtesy Ann Brown.

ratory to the platting of the land into lots was commenced on April 3, 1919, by John B. Cleary, under the direction of James Mills, William Mills, Thomas Mills, and Floyd E. Pendell, who were the officers of the Mills Construction Company.

On account of the desirable location, it being situated immediately north of the Platte River and on the Northwestern railway line, many people bought town lots and established for themselves homes, and in the fall of 1920 the village had a population of about 500. Then a petition for the incorporation of the Town of Mills was filed with the Board of County Commissioners of Natrona County. Favorable action was taken on the petition, and an election was ordered by the county commissioners, to be held on May 10, 1921. At this election George E. Boyle was the successful candidate against Clyde Riley for mayor, and Fred Hunter, Fred Shackelford, G. W. Lindsley and Michael Kennedy were elected as councilmen. At the first meeting of the new town council, held on May 14, 1921, officers were appointed as follows: Wm. Mills, clerk and treasurer; Floyd E. Pendell, attorney; Luke M. Wilkerson, marshal; W. R. Hunt, police magistrate. No other business was transacted at this meeting.”⁶

The events of the year from May 1921 to May 1922 seemed to go well for the town. A new school was built in the fall of 1921, a newspaper was started, there was effort to do some street work, and the town hall, complete with jail cell, was finished in the spring of 1922.

TOWN HALL

“The town hall and town jail, a two story concrete building, was finished in April 1922. Town Council meetings and other meetings of a public nature are held in the upper rooms of this building and the ground floor is used for obstreperous violators of town ordinances and those who do not conform to the laws of the state and the nation.”⁷

It is not known where the council chambers were during the year that there was no town hall. The minutes of the council for that year indicate that the council met regularly in the council chambers, but as with many other locations, it seems that everyone knew where the council chambers were and no one needed to write it down. Possibly the council chambers were in one of the Mills Construction Company offices or at another business establishment.

The construction of the town hall was quite an exciting event, particularly the jail itself, which was in the basement. “Because of inclement weather, all work on our new jail building on First Street and

Benton Avenue has been halted. The basement is well under way and will soon be ready to receive the two steel cells which are on the grounds awaiting installation. It will be reinforced concrete and cement block and be approximately 1,200 square feet of floor space. Our correspondent informs us that when this building is finished, it will be a good place to break into, but a mighty poor one to break out of.” (*Casper Daily Tribune*, March 2, 1922.)

“The City hall is now nearing completion, being all ready except for the roof. The building is also wired for electric lights. Watch your step unless you want the honor of being the first occupant.” (*Casper Daily Tribune*, March 23, 1911.)

The town hall was, at best recollection, a sixteen by twenty four foot rectangular building located in what is now First Street Park at First and Benton. It was basically a one room meeting hall upstairs, and one room basement with the jail cell in the corner. Some claim only one person was ever incarcerated in the jail. Others have proof there were many. Mills Town Ordinance Number 6 allotted about three dollars per day to the town marshal for feeding prisoners. There is no dispute the jail was at least used for Boy Scout meetings.

There were no offices of any kind in the building, it was used only for town meetings, Boy Scout meetings, and keeping of “obstreperous violators of town ordinances”. The building was used as a town hall until the new fire hall was built in 1953. It was later torn down, apparently without much ceremony, as few remember this event. The jail, a metal eight by eight box with bars and two spartan bunks attached to one wall, survived the demolition and is presently located at Fort Caspar. It is said the town purchased the cell from Casper for one dollar, it had originally been located in South Dakota, and had held Calamity Jane or some other female desperado. The jail cell is one of the few landmarks of the town that still stands today.

The town offices, in those days and through 1978, were actually the home of the presiding town clerk, who was on duty twenty four hours a day and conducted the business of the town from the front room of his or her home. This applied to the police department also. The jail cell was in the basement of the town hall, but the police department was located in the police vehicle and at the house of the marshal. There was no office for the police, who made do until 1978 without a place to hang their hats. Today there is an office for the police department, but there is no jail in Mills. “Obstreperous violators” are detained at the Hall Of Justice in Casper.

THE WATER BONDS

Things went rather smoothly in Mills until the town decided they needed a water system to provide public water to the many homes and businesses that had sprung up. There was a vote on water bonds, in the amount of \$70,000 as part of the May 1922 election. The vote was 128 to 40 in favor. It seems some folks that didn't like the idea of an assessment being placed on their property, whether for a water system or anything else. One of these folks was the sister of the mayor who apparently disliked anything her brother was doing. The following news articles, taken from the *Casper Daily Tribune*, detail the conflict over the town's first public improvements:



To the right and behind these two girls is the original town hall. This rare picture of the building was taken looking south along Benton Street in the twenties. Courtesy Mildred Steinle.

April 1, 1921 Mills, Wyoming once an addition to the City of Casper, decided overwhelmingly to incorporate the town according to the return of a vote which was taken at a special election held this week. The total vote cast was 131 of which 122 were for an incorporated town. The action of the new town will be certified to the board of County Commissioners here at the next meeting. When preliminary details are completed, a regular election to fill official positions will be held. It is probable that the election will not be held till late fall.

May 6, 1921 The dining room of the Mills Hotel in Mills, Wyoming was packed to capacity last night for the good roads rally which was staged to get support for the good roads bond election which will be held May 10. Ambrose Hemingway, J. E. Frisby Squires, Charles B. Stafford and Attorney Perkins each delivered short talks in behalf of the bond issue. Floyd E. Pendell presided at the meeting. The Mills rally was the first of a series of events which are being staged under the auspices of the Chamber of Commerce to stimulate interest in the bond election.

April 13, 1922 The following proclamation has been made and posted for the information of the residents of Mills, Notice of Election: To the duly qualified electors of the Town of Mills, notice is hereby given that pursuant to the statutes of the State of Wyoming in such case made and provided, there will be a general municipal election held in the Town of Mills on Thursday May 9, 1922, for the purpose of electing one Mayor for a term of one year and two Councilmen for a term of two years, that said polling place shall be at the town hall of Mills and that the polls shall be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Dated at Mills, Wyoming the 8th day of April 1922. G. E. Boyle, Mayor; William Mills, Town Clerk. Vote for the water bond.

April 13, 1922 The Town of Mills has been authorized to borrow \$70,000 and issue 140 coupon bonds of said Town of Mills. Each of the said bonds to be \$500 and

payable in 30 years from the date of issue, redeemable at the pleasure of said town after 15 years and to bear interest at the rate of 6% per annum.

April 29, 1922 Mrs. Florence McCane of the Independent Party and her brother George E. Boyle of the Citizen's party, are running for the mayor seat. On the water issue Mrs. McCane said. "You fellow citizens of Mills. I would like to tell you just why I am on the ticket, why I am a candidate for election. As far as I know, I am the only candidate opposing the present incumbent of the mayor's office. I cordially assure you that I intend to do my best to improve conditions here if elected. Now in regard to the water bond, \$70,000 to my way of thinking is entirely too much for the Town of Mills to be taxed. That would mean a cost of \$300 per person living in Mills. Economic conditions must be taken into consideration when launching on a project of this kind. The questions to be determined are can we afford it and will the present wage scale hold up? We incorporated the town to keep down expenses. Think it over, Mr. Citizen, and determine before it is too late. True, our present water supply is not the best, but it is adequate to the time we will be able to afford a more pretentious system. It is told us that the taxes won't be too large the first year. If they are too large then the strain will be even more apparent in the years to come when the interest piles up. If the undertaking is too large now and we are unable to pay for it in 15 years the interest will have exceeded the principal. Think it over, then act."

April 29, 1922 To the Editor, "When citizens went to register for the coming water bond election, at the Mills Construction Company office, they were informed that if they voted down the bond issue, they would get something worse. So the cat is out of the bag at last. The Mayor has said, "What would we do if all our wells were sealed up and we would be compelled to haul water in barrels?" Where we would haul it from we could not say unless from the Mayor's dry land farm out Salt Creek way. If Mr. Boyle was understood correctly in his statements at the meeting of the other evening, he said he would be willing to sign a \$5,000,000 bond to pipe the water from the main into the houses at \$25 per lot. If this be true, why should it cost \$70,000 for the mains, standpipe, pumps and wells for a small town like Mills? If Mr. Boyle is reported correctly, he said the taxes would amount to \$300 per year. At present wages no man or family can add another dollar to the amount he is already taxed and get by. Most of us want City water but we don't want to be taxed to death to get it. We want sewerage too but if water costs as much as its estimated we cannot hope to have anything else in the way of public improvements until our population is vastly larger. On the Independent ticket which means independence of all politics, Mrs. Florence McCane is a candidate for Mayor and R. J. Beaver are worthy of support and will give the town of Mills and the people a square deal if elected." Signed: A taxpayer in Mills.

May 4, 1922 On Monday May 1, a second mass meet-

CERTIFICATE OF RETURN

At an election held in Mills, Butrona County, Wyoming on the 8th day of May, 1922, the total number of persons voting was 180 one hundred and eighty following named persons received the following number of votes next to their respective names for the following offices:

For Mayor -- George E. Boyle 138 one hundred and thirty eight votes.
 For Mayor -- Florence E. McCane 40 forty votes.
 For Councilman -- Fred T. Shackelford 120 one hundred and twenty votes.
 For Councilman -- G. W. Lindaley 174 one hundred and seventy four votes.
 For Councilman -- R. J. Beaver 38 thirty eight votes.
 For Councilman -- G. L. Elmore 40 forty votes.
 For Mayor Julius Jensen 1 one vote.
 For Councilman Perry Hunter 1 one vote.

ATTEST:

Mrs. M. H. Kennedy Richard Taylor
 Judges of Election.
Thos. J. Hunter
 Clerk of Election

Dated at Mills, Wyoming, this 8th day of May, 1922.

attest William Mills For water 128
Town Clerk at Mills 40

Official returns from the Mills election of May 8, 1922. Note that the two candidates for mayor are brother and sister, and that the water bonds were passed 128 to 40, as attested by William Mills, Town Clerk.

ing was held by Mayor Boyle regarding the water bond issue, refuting certain erroneous statements claimed to have been made on pollution of wells from cesspools. O'Donnell, county health officer, followed giving a very interesting talk on pollution of wells from cesspools and outhouses and emphasizing the necessity of obtaining pure water for domestic use. Walter Hunt then read a manuscript which he had prepared setting forth several convincing arguments for the proposed water system. This was very well received by the audience. Floyd Pendell, city attorney for Mills, also gave a talk at the conclusion of which he invited and gave direct answers to questions put to him by several of those present. The meeting warmed up to quite a pitch when one questioner attempted to frustrate Mr. Pendell in regards to the rights of electors. Before adjournment of the meeting, Mayor Boyle announced the candidacy for re-election of himself as Mayor, G. W. Lindley and Fred Shackelford as councilmen.

May 10, 1922 Voters of the town of Mills just west of Casper, went to the polls yesterday and authorized a bond issue of \$70,000 in winding up a heated campaign in which the improvement assessment was made a big issue and as a result the town will have a modern waterworks system. At the same time, George E. Boyle heading a party which sponsored the bond issue, was re-elected over Mrs. Florence McCane, a opponent of the water issue. With the sale of the bond issue, a modern plant will be installed at Mills and distribution mains will be laid in the town, thereby dispensing with the necessity of using water wells, which advocates of the improvement pointed out, is a menace to the health of the community.

June 22, 1922 Mrs. Florence McCane and her husband were arrested for burning of Kirk Walter's house, the town marshal. A note of warning was also sent to Mayor Boyle. In a note she sent to Mayor Boyle earlier she stated, "As you don't seem ready to come and see us I will tell you from the start you and your bunch have ruined us by placing a \$70,000 mortgage on our property. I will ruin you if we don't sell out in a few weeks. This is not idle talk either. I don't want your dad to enter into this. I will swallow my pride and put him where he belongs and should of been, only I was soft enough to let him off. But I can put him there. Its never too late. Study this over carefully, as you don't want to act too quick, only the quicker the better, for in a few days I will turn what I have to say over to my attorney". Dated May 25, 1922.

June 23, 1922 Sealed bids were opened for the contract on the new waterworks. They ranged from \$96,000 to \$62,000, the latter made by the Mills Construction Company and was accepted.

July 29, 1928 Clyde Riley of Mills had the misfortune of turning his car over near Glenrock while on his way to the Black Hills, South Dakota. His left hand was injured and he secured several bruises.

Frank Stamper had the misfortune of being run over

by a car while walking home from work. He was not hurt severely but secured many bruises and several bad cuts.

August 10, 1922 Work on the water works system is well along, the suction pipe being already installed. The 100,000 gallon tank is expected sometime this week and will be installed immediately on its arrival. The report that \$4.70 to \$3.70 per day was being paid for labor is entirely erroneous as \$.50 per hour is minimum wage being paid by the Contractor.

The water system was finished apparently without much trouble. Mrs. McCane was correct, however, in foreseeing financial difficulties with the bonds, which were a major financial burden to the town for years to come.

BRIGGS & BRIGGS
ASHLAND, OREGON

November 10, 1938

Carrie Thomas, Treasurer
Mills, Wyoming

Dear Mrs. Thomas:

I wish to thank you very much for the list of bondholders which you sent.

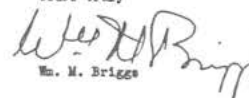
At the present time we have most of the bonds deposited, except numbers 24, 36, 37, 38, 41, 42, 43, 44, 54, 109 and 110. Perhaps you could tell in your records to whom checks were sent for payment of coupons on these bonds at some time or other.

I have written the city council enclosing in the letter to them a statement which I trust you will be able to fill out and return to me within a day or so after the same is received.

I expect to be in Mills within a couple of weeks and I trust the Council will have some meetings and discuss the problem as to what they can do relative to retiring these bonds, for the time has come when something will have to be done, as the bondholders are not going to permit the matter to drift any longer.

Thanking you for your previous cooperation, and assuring you of our intention to be fair in the matter, I remain

Yours truly


E. M. Briggs

EMB
lvs

Letter from purchasers of the Mills water bond issue, requesting payment, in 1938.

BILL MILLS

William, Bill, or Billy Mills was the son of William Mills, one of three brothers who owned the Mills Construction Company and who founded the Town of Mills. In the following transcription of two oral histories with Mr. Mills, completed in July of 1985, is captured the vibrancy and vitality of the twenties in Mills, as well as a sense of the human value of the times. Mr. Mills died not long after these interviews and his sister Ann Brown helped to finish them. In them, left for us, is a direct link to the early days of Mills:

I was born in Cole Camp, Missouri, May 17, 1916 and came to Casper, Wyoming with my family in the spring of 1918. My father worked for the Mills Construction Company, which did earthwork contracting. My father was the construction manager of the company and we moved to Greybull, Wyoming in 1919 where the company built the tank farms and roads for the refinery there. We survived a terrible flu epidemic there in 1919. We then moved to Laramie, Wyoming, where the company completed similar work on the refinery there.

We then moved back to Casper in 1919 after the work was done in Laramie. The Mills Construction Company at that time was my Uncle Tom, my Uncle Jim, and my father William Mills. They had a surveyor named Cleary who worked for them. They had the contract to do the dirtwork for the refinery, which was the Midwest Refining Company at that time. They purchased the Hawks homestead, Section 7, that had been homesteaded by Mr. Charles Hawks in 1907. He ran cattle on the place and did have a cabin or two on it when the Mills Construction Company bought it. They bought the land to get the sand and gravel necessary to build the tank farms and roads associated with the refinery.

People needed a place to live near their work, and the company had Mr. Cleary lay out lots to sell for people to build houses and live near the river. My dad had a book, in which he wrote down his sales of the lots in the town. Most of the lots in the town were sold in a matter of days. He wrote the lot and the transaction in his book and that, with the contract of sale, was the entire record. I have the book today. When we came back from Laramie, we lived in Casper for a while, as the house we had built in Mills had been rented out and we moved to Mills after a short stay in town. The house was at Third and Benton, 227 Benton. Alex, my youngest brother, was born in our house in 1921. It was the only house

around that area, except for Clyde Riley's house, which was across the street from us. Mr. Riley was one of the foremen of the company.

Everyone in the Mills Construction Company decided to name the streets in Mills after places in Missouri. Morgan, Wasatch, Benton and some of the other street names were taken from names of counties and places in Missouri. The town was incorporated in 1921 and in 1922 a bond issue was passed to pay for a water system. The Mills Construction Company was the low bidder at \$67,000 and built the first water lines in town. A vote was taken and the town was named Mills, which won out over Riverview.

We used to send our mail, quite an event for people around here, on the train on an arm. The train would come by, usually with one baggage car and two passenger cars, and the mail sack was hung up on an arm or hook on a post by the track. There was a hook, with kind of an hour glass shape attached to one of the cars, and the mail pouch would get hooked in this device as the train went by. It never failed to work. People would go out to watch the mail get picked up this way. It is sad that the trains have lost out to progress. Progress a lot of times is a Hell of a lot of regress it seems to me.

People were happy in those days and were a lot smarter because there were no televisions and you had to communicate with each other. With TV people stopped talking to each other. That's when you limit yourself to your own intelligence, when you stop talking to each other. There was no such thing as dumb people then. They all had some area they knew better than you. People were, in all honesty, socially more intelligent than now, especially in being honest and love thy neighbor. We never used to lock our doors. It was a delicious time to live under those conditions. Nobody was looking to steal anything.

The Mills Construction Company moved from where they had an office in Casper to an office at Third and Riverview in Mills. The Mills School was built in 1922, as a six room building, shortly after the town incorporated at its present site. One or two years we went to school half a day, we would go in the morning at 8:00 and would get out at noon. In the afternoon the kids from Mountain View would go to school. Later, when the Mountain View School was built, those kids went to school at Mountain View and we went back to full days. I was six years old when the school was built. We kids used to go over and play on the scaffolding, the place was lousy

with kids, but no one got hurt.

I was three when my family moved to Mills in 1919. I hung around with my dad from the time I was three as my mother worked with my dad in the real estate business and at the Plunge. She also was often called to help deliver babies and delivered many. My brother Bob was eighteen months older than I and my sister Ann was three years older than I so they were in school most of the time while we were first in Mills. Since I didn't start school until three years after we moved to Mills, I spent most of my time at the Mills Construction Company office. My job was to stay out of trouble. There were no women secretaries then, all the people in the office were men. The men took good care of me. One showed me how to print and another showed me how to write my name. They all talked to me and cared about me as a person. When I started school I could write my name, so they put me ahead and I didn't have to go through all of the first grade. I didn't hang around with the kids my age much then, I was always around the men. I benefitted from their help. The times were such that all the adults helped raise the kids. If I swore, they would spank my butt, and when I got home my dad would spank me again for one of them having to spank me. That doesn't happen anymore, you don't dare touch or even talk to someone else's kid nowadays. In all honesty, today we have a dumb society, we watch too much TV, we are smart in our own endeavors but dumb in worldly ways.

The men who worked construction in those days were rough and tumble people. There was a lot of quitting and a lot of firing. If you abused your horses or wagon, you got fired. The bosses were tough, but fair, and when you did something wrong you got fired. Often if you came back and apologized you could get hired back the next week because there was a lot of work and they needed a lot of men.

In 1922 there were 500 people in Mills, no building codes or planning or anything like that. You put your house wherever you wanted; on the back of the lot, sideways to the street, there were no restrictions. These men worked hard all day and many of them saved enough money to buy a lot and start building a house. They would drive a sand point down into the ground to start a well, put a pump on it, build a kitchen around the pump, and build the house around the kitchen. They would do this at night as soon as they got off work and work on their house all night long. Once the house was ready they would send for their wives and families to come live

with them. What your house looked like depended on the quality carpenter you were and how much you could afford to put into it. There were some real nice houses and there were some tarpaper shacks.

The Midwest Refining Company sold out to Standard Oil Of Indiana in 1926. At that time there were 1,000 men working at the refinery. They mostly worked with the coke and paraffin or wax. There was an oil canning plant built in St. Louis a while back and the wax business stopped here at the refinery. The oil from the Salt Creek Field at Midwest, Wyoming comes from the Pennsylvania sand, so if anyone is bragging about the oil from Pennsylvania, it's no better than the stuff we've got right here.

The Mills Construction Company had reserved all the land on top of the hill here, above the flood plain of the river, for the future north-south railroad. There was going to be a major north-south railroad which came right through here and a roundhouse was scheduled to be built up in this area, with river water being used for servicing the trains. This is the area from Seventh Street west and west of Wyoming Boulevard. There was no development up here for a long time because the land was reserved for the railroad. The railroad never happened, however.⁸

A WALKING TOUR WITH BILL MILLS

The following passage is taken from a tour of the original part of the town. Walking this passage around the town will lead to a lot of Mills history:

Sprague-Nisley Company was located south of Wagon Wheel, it was a construction company. Then it became the stables and headquarters for the 58th Brigade (cavalry) of the Wyoming National Guard. Standard Oil was also located south of the Wagon Wheel. During the years I was eight to twelve I fed the eighty horses of the 58th Brigade before and after school and cleaned the stables also, as the mascot of the Brigade.

The "35" was a big gravel pit near the Wotco buildings straight off the end of Riverview. There was a big dredge which dug the gravel out of the pit from under the water. The gravel then was run along a conveyor belt and carried on boats to the gillion screen, which was a cylindrical drum tilted at about a forty five degree angle. There were holes in the gillion screen, smaller at the top and larger at the bottom. As the gravel slid down the cylinder, which turned like a cement mixer, the smaller gravel fell

through the holes in the screen into bins. The holes got bigger toward the bottom and the gravel was sorted this way into the different bins. Each bin held about one yard of gravel. The gravel was sorted this way to be used on different types of construction, in concrete and other materials used in construction of the refinery. A horse drawn wagon with a one yard capacity was the method used to move dirt and gravel at that time and when a load of gravel was needed the wagon driver pulled under the appropriate bin at the gallion screen, and released the trap door which dumped a sorted one yard pile of gravel into his wagon. The 35 was the gravel pit from where most of the gravel was taken. It was called the 35 because it was thirty five feet deep. It was one of the best places for the boys to swim and play at that time and many exciting things happened at the 35.

We boys used to take a potato and a fishing line with us in the morning down by 35. Someone would start a fire and we would coat the potatoes with mud and throw them in the fire to bake. We would put our fishing lines in the river and inevitably catch a sucker to put in the fire. We would jump in the river and swim downstream to the railroad bridge, where we would spend the morning playing on and around the bridge. We would do this until about noon when the passenger train came down the track on its return from Lander. This was the highlight of the day as we would dive in the water to get out of the way of the train.

There was a bum who hung around under the bridge that we knew. There were lots of bums, but the boys remembered this man because one day we talked to him at about eleven o'clock and then at noon when the train came it squealed to a halt on the bridge and the we saw the bum roll down off the track into the ditch. He had apparently fallen asleep on the tracks and the train had hit him. The trainmen loaded the man on the train to take him to town. After our swim we would walk back up to 35 and have our lunch of potatoes and suckers and continue our daily activities around the bog along the river.

One of the boys was Billy Diehl, who was used as a gang scout when the boys were involved in gang activities. Diehl kept watch for the activities of the other gangs in the woods along the river by 35. Diehl's training during his boyhood along the Platte turned out to be useful to him later when in World War II he was an army scout who captured many prisoners and was given field promotions from Corporal through the rank of Captain.

This was a time of horses. Everything was done with horses. The people were there to construct the

refinery and the oil tanks. All construction was done with horse drawn equipment, pulled by teams of big draft horses, not as big as the Budweiser horses, but still big and strong. The horses pulled the gravel wagons and the wagons that carried all the materials from 35 and the other stockpile areas down what is now First Street in Mills, across a pontoon bridge over the Casper Creek, down east along the old highway to the refinery bridge and then back for another load. The Mills Construction Company had many horses and it was a tremendous job feeding and taking care of them. The horses pulled the sixty five or so wagons that the company owned. For each horse at work on any particular day you had to have another which was being rested because the work was hard and the hours were long. For the larger loads more horses were added to the team pulling the wagon, and out of this came the social order of the day. The drivers of the wagons, and there were lots of them and lots of men who would like to drive, were called teamsters. A man driving two horses was paid two dollars a day. If he drove a two team hitch, four horses, he was paid four dollars and on up to the one man who drove the thirty two team hitch, but only got paid twenty dollars a day. Twenty dollars was tops and the best driver was the only man to get paid that.

Everyone wanted to be a teamster and to drive more horses. It was common to see the teamsters practicing with larger teams than they drove, in the dark after work.

The first Mills Construction Company office was located at First and Riverview. Tom Bassett, my cousin, was the first postmaster at a location near there and the second post office, with a postmaster named Hunter was located near First and Riverview. The post office then moved to the home of the Nolans with a Mr. Birch as postmaster. The original Mills Construction Company barns were located approximately where Wotco's major shop is located today. They were very large, almost as large as the Wotco building. The blacksmith shop, for shoeing and taking care of the many company horses sat in front of the barns about where Wotco's office is. The Mills Hotel was located a little to the east of the blacksmith shop and some of the foundation may still be at that location. There was a large circular corral located between the office and the barn which was used for breeding of the horses.

In the early days of Mills the river ran two chan-

nels where there now is one. The main channel flowed between what is now the town shop and town wells south of Wyoming Boulevard and a north channel, about thirty five feet in width, ran where Wyoming Boulevard is today. The two channels created an island where the town shop and wells are which was used for recreational purposes by residents most of the time. The original Mills well which supported the water needs of the entire community was located on the island. The channels rejoined at a location south of Third Street's intersection with Wyoming Boulevard. Although Pathfinder Dam was built in the early 1900s the river still was uncontrolled and flooding was not uncommon. The construction of Alcova Dam in the late 1930s was the beginning of flood control on the River and with it came the end of the two channels and the island disappeared and became part of the town again.

The Mills water tank, located at Ninth and Wyoming Boulevard, was built in 1924 and served as the supply for the town's first water distribution system. It sat at that location alone as Mills did not grow up over the bluffs and out of the flood plain for years after that.

To the north of the water tank along what is now Wyoming Boulevard was the Sinclair Refining plant and tanks. To the north of that along the railroad tracks, the C&NW today, was a horse meat rendering plant. A man named Hill owned the plant, which processed only horse meat for dogfood and shipment of horse meat to France for the people to eat. The time and place were wrong for the plant. Although the horses killed were wild horses caught on the range the people had no sympathy for the process, which cast a horrible smell across the area. This was horse country and horses were noble animals necessary to the daily activities of the area. The plant closed after a short time because no one would work there and Mr. Hill couldn't get any employees.

I sold newspapers around Mills. A paper cost a dime, which was good money then, and I made about two dollars a day. Babe Ruth was in his prime then and every day at the top of the front page was listed the number of homers Ruth had hit that season. Most of the men were very clever and asked to see the paper before they bought it. All they wanted to know was how many homers Ruth had hit, so I started rolling the papers with the front page inside and no one was allowed a free peek.

The original home of the Mills family was 227 Benton, at the southeast corner of the intersection at Third and Benton. The house at the southeast

corner of Third and Riverview was at one time the Mills Construction Company office and later housed one of the two newspapers printed in the town. I worked for the *Mills Journal* for several years as a teenager.

The Nolan's home and post office was located two houses to the east of Fifth on Riverview, across the street was the Nellis Merchantile and next to that was the town frog pond. The pond was very shallow and made a great place to get muddy and have a good time. Riverview went right through the middle of it. There was a bakery at 302 Third, Brakebill drug store at 300 Wasatch across from the fire hall, and the Bassett drug store, which was also the first post office, was at the southeast corner of Fourth and Wasatch.

Parts of Fort Caspar are located on twenty acres the Mills Construction Company gave to the City of Casper as a park many years ago. There is a plaque at the fort commemorating this contribution.⁹

MILDRED STEINLE

Mildred Steinle is the wife, now widow, of Fred Steinle, who served as Mills mayor from 1943 to 1947. The Steinles were among the earliest Mills residents and were very active in town politics and everyday life for many years. Mrs. Steinle retells the story of life in Mills over the years with enthusiasm, humor, and vitality that bring life to the words and vivid images to mind.

I, Mildred Steinle, was a resident of Mills for many years. With the exception of two brief sojourns elsewhere, I lived in Mills from March of 1923 until September of 1947. I was sister-in-law to the late George E. Boyle who, in addition to being in business here at the time, had a good deal to do with getting the town incorporated and, following that, served during a term of two years as its first mayor. I am also sister-in-law to Hedrick Cromer Nelson (now 85 years of age and resident of Las Vegas, Nevada) who published a small newspaper here for a while (at some time during 1923 or 1924 as nearly as I can remember) and who also served as chief of the first fire department our town ever had.

These two men were husbands of my husband's two sisters, though the Nelsons were not married until a couple years after I became acquainted with the family.

When the Midwest Oil Refinery (later the Standard of Indiana, and now Amoco) was under con-

struction a great deal of their hauling of materials was done with horses and wagons. Not many trucks were around at that time, and there were no roads to adequately accommodate them in any case. So the Midwest established stabling for their many horses over between the railroad track and Casper Creek.

Teamsters and caretakers, and later many others as well, went directly across Casper Creek to the refinery. The creek, being dry much of the time, was no trouble and it did reduce the distance considerably. Cars going that way, as many of them did then, had rather more difficulty because of the deep sand. But that wasn't always bad. I remember that some of the time there were planks laid in the wheel tracks to enable cars to get through the few feet that were really a problem. There was a better road and a make-shift wooden bridge, up stream, close to where the highway presently crosses the creek, but it was farther to go, so a lot of people took the short-cut and went straight across.

There was no road across the railroad track then, and the area to later become the town of Mills was reached by following a trail that paralleled Casper Creek to down near the North Platte River and then went under the end of the railroad's river bridge. I don't know when the road was put in across the track. It was there in the spring of 1923, but I don't know how long it had been there.

In spite of which inconvenience and many others as well, most of the Midwest teamsters and others of their employees too found it to their advantage to establish some sort of residence here in order to be close to their jobs. I think some even lived in tents, at least temporarily, and I know that many of them either constructed or bought and moved in, shacks of just about any kind. They figured on "baching" in them only during their employment at the refinery which most of them assumed would be brief.

My late husband, Fred Steinle, found such a shack, bought it and moved it onto a half lot that he had on what is now Benton Avenue, across from where the George Sword family now resides. I remember his telling several times of the difficulty he had getting that shack through under the railroad bridge.

George Boyle lived with Fred in that shack for a while and, of course, Fred's brother Ernest and their father Adolph Steinle stayed there too whenever they were in town. All of them, except George, had homestead claims in Converse County, north of

Douglas, near to where Bill Post Office is now, and they took turns coming to Casper and entering into employment here, in order to obtain money for necessary improvements on those future homes. They were not ordinarily all three here at any one time, but alternated as each found himself in need of a bit of cash. Somewhat later Fred's sister, Betty, who later became Mrs. George Boyle, was also here — not intermittently — and working at the refinery (she was secretary to the then superintendent.) She "boarded" with friends in Casper, but may also have passed some time with her brothers in their "baching" quarters.'

After Fred and I were married I too lived for a time in that shack, though at first we rented an apartment (in the Floyd Vance residence, on Riverview Avenue) for a few months, and then spent most of the following winter on Fred's homestead in Converse County.

We had to go there at the time. When filing a homestead claim to land, a person had to declare his intention of living upon it and making it his home. There may have been . . . I think there was, a period of six months or so allowed right at the first for the construction of buildings, — before you were expected to occupy them! But, I think Fred had also obtained, and used, some extension of that time allowance for the stated purpose of working away from his claim to obtain money for improvements.

We knew that our stay at the homestead would have to be curtailed somewhat by our need for more money. But then it was shortened a good deal more than we had even dreamed of. For the bank that held our small savings closed its doors. Dad Steinle couldn't help us either, for the money dad had stashed aside for the following year's expenses was on deposit in the same institution. I don't know what cash he may have had on hand, but as I remember it, what WE had was less than five dollars.

That money was eventually paid back to us, but not soon enough to do us any good in our emergency. Fortunately, our period of required residence on the homestead was already met, so we were free to go, and we needed a source of income as soon as possible. Fred had the promise that he could get his job back when he wanted it, so of course we had to count on that and returned to Mills as soon as we could.

We had money enough to pay our fare on the train from Douglas to Casper, but first we had to get to Douglas. A friendly neighbor who owned a Model T Ford — with one seat, no top, and only half a windshield — was going to town and said that if

I could sit that long on Fred's lap we could ride in with him. There was no alternate choice.

But that ride is something to remember. I think Fred's legs were probably soon numb from my sitting on them, but he had at least the shelter of my body as protection against the cold wind, so it wasn't ALL bad. I had no shelter of any kind! I bundled my face up in a shawl as best I could, but I was sitting too high for that half windshield to do me any good.

But the worst of it was when the engine of that little car spluttered and died — when we were less than halfway to town!

That was a slow road; mostly just a set of wheel tracks, graded in just a few short places, and with a bit of gravel also in places as you got closer to town. Traffic was almost nonexistent; just maybe three or four cars in a day — and that not until you got closer to town.

But we weren't that close!

Fortunately the Model T was a simple machine and nearly all men in those days — or COUNTRY men anyhow — knew at least a little something about what made it run. The owner of this one and Fred, together, soon discovered that OUR trouble was a leak in the line that carried gasoline to the carburetor. Fortunately a small leak. But what to do about it? We tied a rag around it and the car started off okay, but the gasoline soaked through the rag and very soon stopped us again. It just wasn't the answer. We tried to think of other possibilities, but none of them seemed at all promising. Could it be that chewing gum would hold it? One had to try.

The chewing gum did not hold for as long as we would have liked, but it did hold for a while. After a few miles of that engine's faithful chugging, the gasoline cut the gum so that it could no longer hold, so it dropped off and we were stopped again. Since it was the only thing available that had held at all, there was nothing to do but renew it.

It had to be chewed and Fred and I both worked on that. I do not know how we came to have a plentiful supply, but we had, so we both chewed industriously all the rest of the way to Douglas. We had to stop after every few miles to place newly chewed gum on that gas line, and renew the supply in somebody's mouth for more chewing, but we did get into Douglas.

Within a few days we were back in Mills, plenty glad that our little black shack was available and with Fred reinstated in his job at the refinery. He'd

had just enough difficulty getting back on to indicate that, if he wished to keep that job he had better not again interrupt his service. He did not interrupt it any more either — not for twenty-six years.

Our shack had been rented, so it needed a bit of cleaning, but Fred gave its walls and roof (inside of course) a coat of kalsomine and we weren't long in getting moved in. We stayed there too, for around three years. In fact the first two of our babies were born there. And I do mean THERE too — they were not born in the hospital.

I do not remember either of us ever complaining very bitterly about the absence of accommodations and conveniences in that place. A description of it may be of interest to those accustomed to modern living.

It was about twelve feet wide by sixteen or eighteen feet in length, with a "leanto!" at one end which added eight feet or so to its length and served us as a kitchen. Its construction was of eight-inch boards (I think it was called shiplap) running up and down with a horizontal 2 × 4 at the top and bottom and in the middle. Its outside was covered with a heavy, black, rubberoid roofing material and it had pink building paper — anyhow, that's what we used to call it — on the inside. The rubberoid was held in place by big-headed nails with little tin washers around each. Inside, the building paper had laths along all seams, plus a row of laths in the middle of each expanse of paper. The kalsomine over all tended to make the laths a bit less noticeable.

Our floor was of naked pine boards, their barrenness somewhat relieved by my scattering of small bright colored rag rugs. There was no ceiling. Three or four braces ran across the rafters, near their peak, at a little above ceiling level. We some times used them to hang things on, and they contributed some little stability to the shack when Wyoming winds were howling.

We used coal oil lamps for light and they were NOT smoky! There was electricity available in Mills at that time, but many of the houses were not wired for it. Certainly ours wasn't. But when a coal oil lamp smokes, you are either using a poor grade of coal oil, or else the wick needs trimming, and you don't have to be a genius to correct either one. We found that we could obtain a somewhat better light from our lamp by elevating it a little, as by placing it on an inverted lard pail, or something like that on the table. The chimney should, of course, be kept clean and shiny, but if you keep the wick trimmed you don't have to wash the chimney nearly so often

either.

For comfort we had a heating stove in the front of our shack, in addition to the small cookstove in the kitchen. Both of them burned both wood and coal. There was natural gas available in town too. I think it had been brought in at the same time that pipes were laid for the new municipal water system. But many people had not brought it into their houses, and our shack was one of those that didn't have it.

We didn't have the municipal water in on our place either, so that was, as usual, a problem. We had a well and a small pump in it, the same as most people had then, but we used that water only for cleaning purposes. Many Mills residents at that time kept a few chickens and several even kept a cow or two. Those cows found very good browsing then down by the river where the big machine shops are now. We bought both eggs and milk from our neighbors and a lot of other people did too. We got those products nice and fresh.

But in addition to the many out-houses then still in existence (for several years there were only two houses in town that I knew of that had bath-rooms) there were many small livestock sheds and corrals and chicken runs and coops too around town.

And those wells were all pretty shallow. You only had to dig fifteen feet or so to get plenty of water. So in-coming residents were always becoming alarmed about possible impurities in the water and would insist upon having it analyzed. Strangely enough, so far as I know anyhow, none of those tests ever did reveal any contamination. And many families continued using that well water for general purposes, but to us it didn't look very appetizing. So for drinking and cooking we carried water from a hydrant located on a lot on the other side of our block and facing Northwestern Avenue.

I think the water was not then metered, or else the monthly allowance was so very generous that nobody ever exceeded it, because nobody then ever objected to another person's getting water from their hydrant. I believe the lot "our" hydrant was on was not occupied at the time anyway. Nothing was fenced and we had a well defined path running over there.

That path went past our outhouse which, like everybody else's, was on the back of the lot, on across the alley and more than half the length of the next lot, so it was close to being a full block in length. But it was okay. The ground was so sandy that most all of the path stayed dry most of the time, and Fred

had laid scrap boards that we could walk on in the spots that did sometimes get muddy.

For bathing Fred had the convenience of the showers in the bath house at the refinery, and I either sponge-bathed (that is, I washed myself all over, but one spot at a time, and in a very small amount of water) or else I used a washtub. It wasn't luxurious, nor even convenient, but we did manage to get clean. Though we sure didn't bathe every day as we do nowadays.

When there was laundry to do, we carried the water the night before, so as to not have too much work to do in one day. I did it on a scrubbing board, the same as at the homestead, and like many others, I usually boiled the white things and then gave them one more good sloshing before I considered them clean. But CLEAN they were. Electric washing machines were in existence at that time, but they were far from common. A few women had them, including Fred's sister, Betty. But we were saving every cent we could to buy things for our homestead in Converse County; and we considered a washing machine an unnecessary extravagance.

House payments we did NOT have either. They were a thing unknown to us and, for that matter, to most of our neighbors as well. Most of the people in Mills then had either had their houses built, or had constructed them themselves.

I think some of them lived in shacks about like ours, or only a little bit better, though most of them had houses better than ours, some were quite nice, and a few even somewhat pretentious. As I said, I knew of two of them that even had bathrooms. Some of the men were beginning to look upon their jobs at the refinery as more than the temporary arrangements that they had at first been, so they were also regarding their homes as more permanent and fixing them up accordingly.

Since some time prior to 1923, the refinery had been operated by the Standard Oil Company of Indiana, and when I first came here Mills residents were just about all refinery employees or families of employees.

George Boyle worked at the refinery too. His mother had come here to live with him and two of his sisters, Clara and Mary, were with them some of the time. He had also an older, married sister living here.

He, and Betty Steinle, my husband's sister, were married in 1920 and when I met the family, in 1923, they had a store — dealing in groceries mostly, but offering also certain items of clothing and some com-

mon household equipment — at the corner of Benton and Second Street.

George worked shifts at the refinery, so was at home in daytime more than he would otherwise have been. So with Betty's help, and that of other members of the Steinle family too, he was able to manage the store all right and other things as well.

His mother was no more than middle aged, but after the birth of George's and Betty's baby (George junior) she was always known to most of us as Grandma Boyle. She continued to live with the little family (they had living quarters in back rooms of the store building) and to do the cooking for them, so that Betty was free to "mind the store" whenever George wasn't there.

Grandma was a fabulous cook. So whenever my husband was working in town, before I met him, he worked additional hours in that store for no wages, in exchange for the privilege of sharing in the good meals she prepared. And his brother Ernest and their father both sometimes did that too. His younger sister, Rose, who later became Mrs. Nelson, was also at the store for some time, but she was a regular employee.

Of course there were at various times other businesses in Mills too, though I'll have to admit that I don't remember very much about any of them.

There was a pool room at the corner of First Street and Riverview that I remember because it had a dance hall in connection with it where dances were held about every two weeks or so, and I met my husband at one of those dances. I was doing maid work at the hospital — it was Natrona County Hospital then — and some of my fellow employees persuaded me to come out to a Mills dance with them.

The dance hall was fair sized and was attached to the rear of the building, to enter it you had to go through the pool hall. I remember feeling very adventurous and worldly going in there, even brazen. You had to walk the whole length of the place and I couldn't have done it except that I was with a group. Prohibition was in effect then, so I suppose the place probably was a speakeasy. Most places catering to men were speakeasies in those days, and women stayed out of them.

I don't remember much of anything more about that place, but I do believe that it continued in business for some time.

There was a hotel built by the refinery company — whether the Standard or still the Midwest, I don't know — for the accommodation of its employees. It was over by the river, south of about where Wasatch

intersects First Street. It later became the Mills Tavern and was notorious all over the West as a real "Hell hole." I was once questioned about it in Seattle, Washington! But it was in the beginning at least decent, and was patronized exclusively by employees of the refinery.

There were also several boarding houses around town, run by wives of employees and mothers of employees of the refinery, who had started by furnishing meals to friends who did not wish to "bach" or stay at a hotel, and who had gradually grown into a boarding business.

And there was at one time (I think in 1923) a plunge or swimming pool opened over in the west side of town, near the river. I think there were plans to build it into a full fledged amusement park. And about the same time there was a short-lived moving picture theater on Wasatch Avenue. Neither of them was in business for very long. And a man by the name of Brakebill, had for a time a grocery store over in the west side of town too. I think that, in addition to the natural competition, there was bad feeling of some kind between him and George, for they exchanged insults and ill treatment for awhile. I never met Mr. Brakebill, but I don't think he was in business for very long.

Much later the Joe Rosslow family had for several years a grocery store on Wasatch Avenue, up near Fourth Street, I believe. And Art Claughton and his wife Mae had a grocery and soft drink establishment at the corner of Wasatch and First, for a lot of years — I couldn't say how many years. But Boyle's store was out of existence for many years before either of these was established.

I don't know just when George started that store except that it was at some time before 1921. He accommodated his customers — they were also his neighbors — in many ways.

For one thing, he and Betty had about the only telephone in that part of town. There probably were a few others around, but I know that whenever we needed to make a call we went over to the store and used their phone, and lots of other people did the same. Phones weren't used for visiting then as they are now.

And for some time, in the beginning, George also picked up the mail in Casper for people who asked him to. A "run into Casper" was not then nearly the simple thing that it is now, so many would have got their mail pretty seldom if George hadn't got it for them. It was a help to have it waiting for them at the store. At one time George fixed up a wall of

pigeon holes in a room at the back of the store and placed people's mail there so they could get it for themselves. I think he later held for a short time a formal appointment as postmaster too (When Rose Steinle and Hedrick Nelson were married — in 1925 — he applied for that appointment and got it, and they established Mills' first regular post office in their residence, at the corner of Fourth and River-view.) but I believe George had the appointment first. And I know that he brought mail out from Casper for a number of families, just as an accommodation, for some time before there was any post office.

And at that time nearly everybody expected to buy their groceries on credit from payday to payday too, and that is what most of us did. Extending credit had the advantage of assuring a grocer the continued patronage of the favored customer, so it worked pretty well so long as customers continued in steady employment.

Though our population count later — along in the latter thirties — dropped to no more than around four hundred souls, we had at the time of incorporation, in the neighborhood of twelve hundred or a few more than that.

I don't really know whose idea it was to incorporate our town. Billy Mills (Mr. William Mills Senior) and George Boyle, together, promoted the idea but I don't know which of them originated it. I think they had been associated in some real estate dealings previous to that time too, but I'm not sure. They hired Casper attorney Floyd Pendell to draft the necessary legal papers and to usher Mills through

the legal procedures, holding an election, etc., of incorporating. The town was named for Mr. Mills. He was our first town clerk and treasurer, remaining in office I think for several terms after George had declined to run for another term. But George was the mayor when I first got acquainted here.

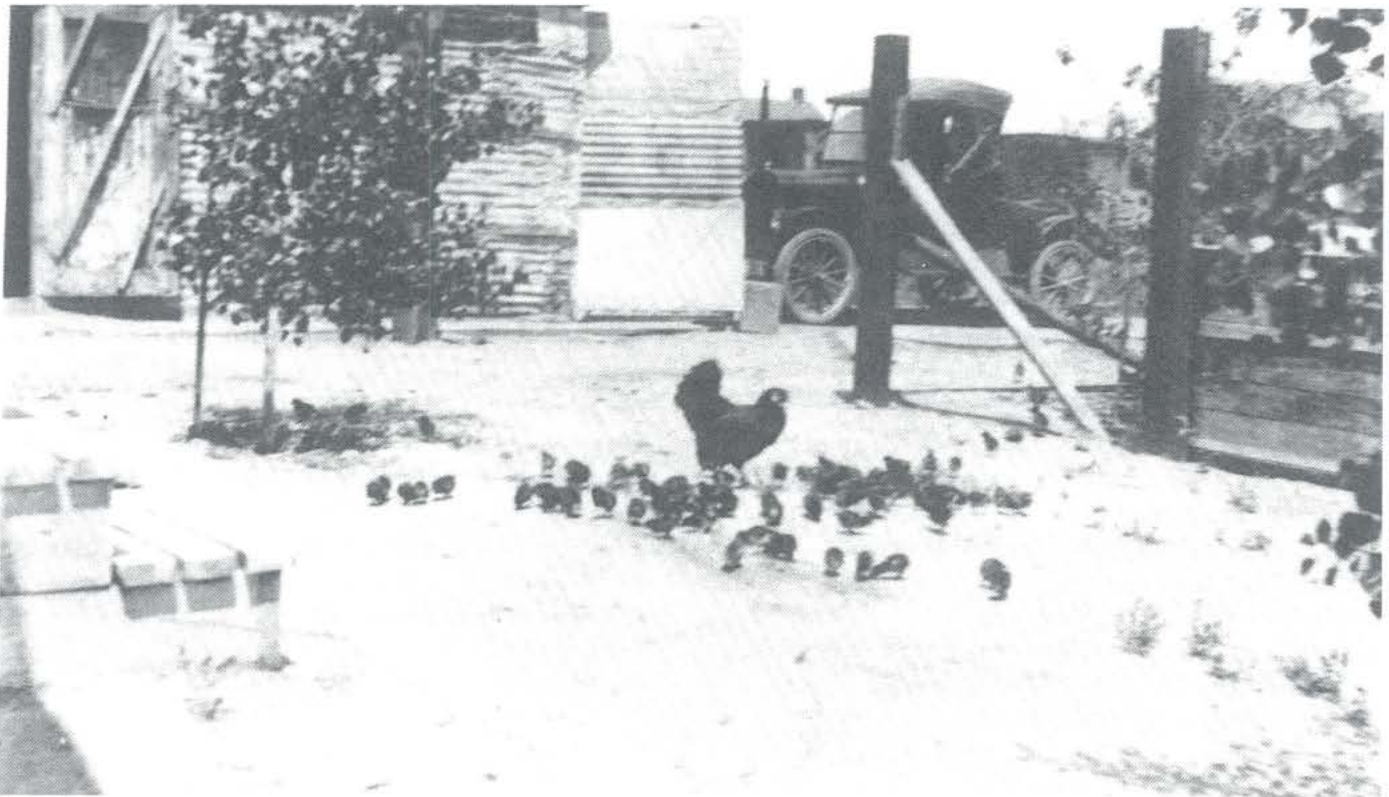
Again I don't know just when either electricity or telephone service was made available here, though I'm certain that it was quite early. But I have the idea (not for sure) that the natural gas lines may have been laid at the same time that the ditches were opened to receive lines for the municipal water system; and of course I do know that the water system was installed during the time that George was serving as mayor. The contract for it was let to Bill Henning who had then for some years a plumbing business in Casper.

The streets were not paved until quite a bit later than that. They had quite a bit of natural gravel, so were not too bad most of the time. I believe they were given a small treatment of gravel — and later oil, of course — just as needed in particularly bad places, for several years. During wet weather it could be pretty bad. People in Casper called Mills Bogtown and of course they had some reason for it. The middle of the streets mostly remained solid enough to support a car all right, even when it had rained quite a bit, but if you chanced to meet someone, and if you went to the edge of the street to let him by, there was no guarantee that you wouldn't stay there for a while!¹⁰



Above: Mildred and Fred Steinle with their son Delmar at their ranch in the early sixties. Courtesy Mildred Steinle.

Below: Looking across the neighbor's yard and chickens to the Steinle Model T "Liza Jane" at a later Steinle home in Mills.



PROHIBITION

In January of 1920, the Congress of the United States adopted the 18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which made the production, possession, transportation, sale, and consumption of alcoholic beverages illegal. Mills was not exempt from conflicts between those who took exception to this law and those required to enforce the law. In Mills sometimes those who enforced the law and those who took exception to it were the same people.

The most notable locations of purported violations of the law were the Hotel and some of the pool halls and stores. As George Adams recalls:

“During prohibition the school kids seemed to know most everything they weren’t supposed to know. We seemed to know long before anyone else where the next raid was going to be, either at the Hotel or somewhere else. The Hotel down by the Mills Construction Company barns had a band all night long quite often and a prostitute or two. We knew what was going on but really didn’t make a big deal out of it. That’s just the way things were.”¹¹

Another early Mills resident remembers as a boy finding bottles of whiskey beneath the porch of one of the local pool halls. He and some friends made off with the bottles and sold them back to the proprietor, who we assume stored them in a better place next time.

In the spring of 1923 the Mills town marshal was charged with bootlegging and of operating out of the Avery Pool Hall: “Direct information has been filed in District Court by the prosecuting attorney against Luke “Missou” Wilkerson, town marshal of Mills, charging him with violation of the liquor laws following a raid which was said to have uncovered a two gallon jug of moonshine in Wilkerson’s possession. Wilkerson asserted that he had taken the liquor away from some men at a dance in Mills, but the statement evidently was not given much credence by the prosecuting attorney. Jack Pendleton, Clarence Viola and Lee Myers were arrested on the same raid, all three being charged with gambling. All four men were released on bail of \$1,000 each and their trials are being set for the fall term of criminal court.” (*Casper Daily Tribune*, May 22, 1923).

Wilkerson came out of this scrape pretty well, however, when his trial came up in the fall. He is described at this time as being the former Mills marshal, whether his brush with the law had anything to do with being former is not known:

“Luke “Missou” Wilkerson, former town marshal of Mills was acquitted by a jury in District Court

Thursday following an instructed verdict by Judge R. R. Rose of a charge of violating the liquor laws. The case of the prosecution was weakened by the absence of most material witnesses who had since moved to Texas and could not be subpoenaed for the trial. Wilkerson was charged with having a large supply of liquor on hand when a raid was made on a pool hall in Mills last May.” (*Casper Daily Tribune*, October 12, 1923.)

The Pool Hall was in the news again in 1927: “Padlocking for one year of one alleged liquor joint and filing of abatement proceedings against another for similar violations marked the course of prosecutions today in District Court, The Union Pool Hall at Mills was padlocked today upon the issuance of an order by Judge Bryant S. Cromer in District Court. Upon a permanent injunction and abatement petition presented by W. J. Wehrli, County Prosecuting Attorney, Judge Cromer ordered the place to remain closed and locked up for one year. The pool hall was operated by Frank, J. R. and E. M. Avery, it was said, the three being named in the petition. Closing of the place was the outgrowth of a series of raids conducted by the officers resulting in finding of liquor and the arrests of the owners at various times, it was stated.” (*Casper Daily Tribune*, September 15, 1927.)

To add insult to injury, the following appeared in the paper soon after these exciting times. “Morris Avery is suffering from a broken arm, injured when he was cranking his car.” (*Casper Daily Tribune*, October 9, 1927.) Congress repealed prohibition in December of 1933, putting an end to a very troublesome period of American history.

THE HISTORY OF NATRONA COUNTY

Alfred Mokler wrote a history of Natrona County covering the late 1800s through 1923. This book was amazingly comprehensive in its coverage and is still the standard reference on the origins of the county. Mokler captured the essence of Mills in his short coverage of the town. Many of the details known about Mills are known only because of Mokler’s efforts, which is particularly extraordinary because Mokler published his book in 1923, two years after the town was incorporated. The following news release explains Mr. Mokler’s work in Mills: (*Casper Daily Tribune*, June 8, 1922)

An interesting visitor in Mills Wednesday was Alfred J. Mokler of Casper, who spent the day gath-

ering data for history of Natrona County. Mr. Mokler has been at work on this history for the past three years and anticipates another year's work on same before it will be ready for publication. The work will consist of about four hundred pages of three columns each and will cover Natrona County from the time of its organization in 1890 and will also go into historical events as far back as 1840 when the Mormons passed through. The three columns will be profusely illustrated and Mr. Mokler estimates the cost of compiling this work will be in the neighborhood of \$7,000.

Some of the details of Mokler's book not covered elsewhere:

On May 25, 1921, the Mills Construction company was granted a franchise to supply the town of Mills with electric lights and power but the franchise was turned over to the Natrona Power company of Casper and light and power, both day and night, was furnished the new town at once.

The Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph company on October 26, 1921, was granted a franchise to erect poles, string wires and do all other things necessary for the establishment of telephone service in the town, and during the month of June, 1922, service was established in the business houses and residences, connections being made from the central office in Casper.

R. E. Wertz of the Producers and Refinery company on October 27, 1921, was granted a franchise to furnish the town with gas for heating purposes, and during the early fall of 1922 this company extended its pipeline through the town and supplied gas to those who desired it. The Producers company has built a large reducing plant along the Yellowstone Highway, just north of the town of Mills.

During the first three years the town enjoyed a very substantial growth in population and many creditable business buildings and modern dwellings have been erected, among which may be mentioned a splendid three-story hotel, an up-to-date moving picture house, concrete block post office building, McGillivray's store building, Boyle's store building, the Brakebill store building, McKnight's store building, and many others. There is also a splendid swimming pool in the town, with 135 dressing rooms in the building. The pool is 126 X 143 feet, and is liberally patronized by the people of Casper.¹²

THE AUTOMOBILE

Mills was a town of horses in the early days. Horses were the mainstay of the construction companies that built the earliest refineries. As the twenties progressed toward the thirties, the automobile came on the scene. It was a wild time in those days to drive and maintain an automobile. The automobile and the accesses into Mills changed the life style in Mills and if the automobile, and particularly the Model T, had been available sooner, there may have not

been a Mills, as the workers could have driven into Casper for lodging. This is conjecture, but it is not conjecture that automobile accidents made the newspaper in that day. It is also not conjecture that the news stories depict some bizarre and often amusing incidents: (*Casper Daily Tribune*)

April 13, 1922 An Oldsmobile truck owned and driven by G. W. Lindsley was run into by a Burlington switch engine Monday afternoon. The entire front end of the truck was totally wrecked. The force of the impact drove the car 40 feet. Mr. Lindsley escaped with only slight injuries.

April 30, 1922 Emmett James suffered a severe and very painful injury last Sunday evening. In attempting to open the windshield of his car, his hand slipped and his left wrist was very badly cut. He was rushed to the state hospital where an operation was performed. According to last reports he is getting along very nicely.

July 29, 1928 Clyde Riley of Mills had the misfortune of turning his car over near Glenrock while on his way to the Black Hills, South Dakota. His left hand was injured and he secured several bruises.

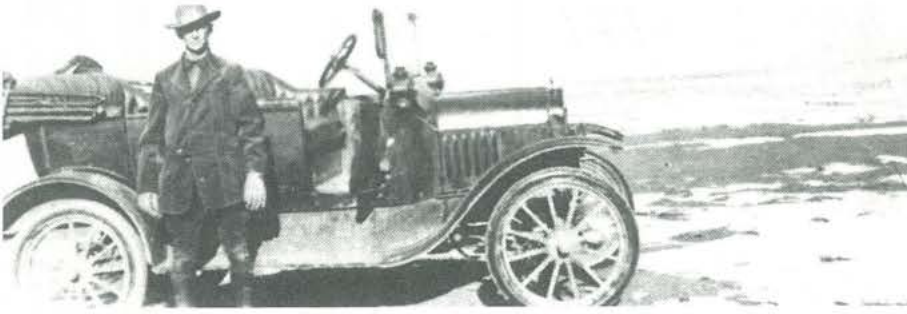
Frank Stamper had the misfortune of being run over by a car while walking home from work. He was not hurt severely, but secured bruises and several bad cuts.

BUS SERVICE TO MILLS

There was bus service to Mills in the twenties, provided by the Casper Motor Bus Line. It is not known for sure how long this service lasted, but judging from the news stories, not very long. There was a later bus service in Casper, which ran through the 1950s, but it is not known if that service was provided to Mills. From the *Casper Daily Tribune*.

July 27, 1924 The Casper Motor Bus line yesterday completed a transaction in which it purchased the Mills-Casper bus line. Under the new management the buses will operate on 30 minute schedule leaving the corner of Second and Center streets on the even hours leaving Mills on the quarter and three quarter hours.

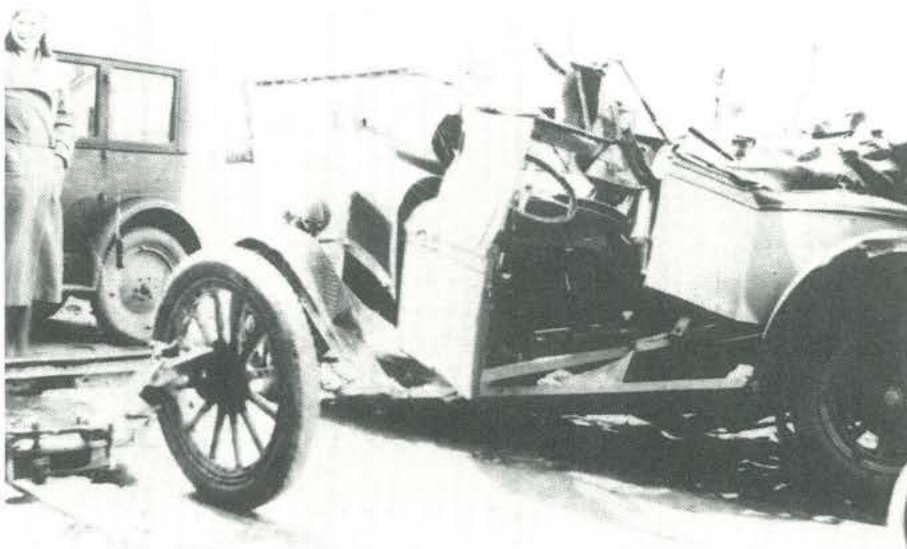
September 10, 1924 The Casper Motor Bus Company has no intention of discontinuing its Mills service according to a statement by the management today in commenting on a press dispatch from Cheyenne stating that authority for such action has been granted by the Public Service Commission. The Commissioners ruling affected the Mountain View service only, which proved unprofitable after a few weeks trial and has been discontinued. Buses will continue to be operated between Casper and Mills and these will also help in serving Mountain View since the route turns off the highway approximately one mile this side of this growing addition.



William Mills (Senior) and his automobile. Automobiles were a rare prized possession in the early days of Mills. Courtesy Ann Brown.



R. C. Christiansen (left) with automobile the day he bought the lot at 509 Wasatch, 1920. Courtesy Etta Sims.



Automobile accident in the earlier days of the automobile. Courtesy Bill Yant.

HORSE MEAT

One of the most unusual things that occurred in Mills during the Roaring Twenties was the establishment and operation of a horse meat packing plant along the Chicago and North Western Railroad, just north of the Town:

"Construction started Friday on Casper's newest industrial plant, a horse meat packing plant which is located near the Town of Mills and Mountain View, the plant to have a capacity of about fifty horses per day. The products will consist principally of tallow, hides, ground meat, and bone for poultry and animal foods. No edible products at this time as this form of packed meat is only shipped to foreign countries and the market is too uncertain to permit the manufacture of this product. Burton Hill of Topeka, Kansas, who is the owner of this new plant, has twenty years experience in the packing business. He will employ about twenty men, with fifteen to twenty in the local plant and maintaining others on the road." (*Casper Daily Tribune*, September 11, 1927.)

"Three hundred horses were driven here from Cheyenne River Country by Bill Dorr for disposal at the plant of Hill Packing Company, Campbell Christian, livestock inspector, said today. Another herd of about fifty horses were trailed here from Douglas by Jeff Scott. They were inspected Thursday." (*Casper Daily Tribune*, March 2, 1928.)

It is quite contrary at first glance that a horse meat packing plant would be located near Mills during the 1920s, when this was horse country and particularly when the Mills Construction Company alone was employing hundreds of horses to pull their sand and gravel wagons. Amoco had its stables in Mills, and even the 58th Brigade of Wyoming National Guard, a cavalry unit, was located in the Vanhorn area. Horses were noble beasts as work animals and best friend to some individuals.

There were at that time apparently, large herds of wild horses that roamed the Wyoming plains. The packing plant was able to get these horses for little or nothing by having them rounded up, so the packing plant may have had some economic validity in the beginning. However, the plant had a hard time getting employees and every eye witness to the site says you could smell it forever and that it was one of the worst experiences they can remember. Eventually, the plant went out of business, possibly because there wasn't enough of a market, maybe the herds of horses ran out, or maybe the whole business just wasn't at the right time and place.

THE NEWS

Thanks to the research of Anna Darling, several

of the sections of this history are closed with news items taken from the Mills column in the *Casper Daily Tribune* (*Casper Tribune Herald* after 1930). These items reflect the life and style of the times in Mills, particularly because much of the material was not written by reporters but by Mills people. The language and style are colorful and at times more direct than would be permissible today. Only those items which help define the history of Mills or reveal new information are presented here, and there are many more which aren't in this volume. There are specific news items in the chronology which concern different events or organizations which are discussed in detail in the second half of the book. For example, there are news items in The Thirties: The Great Depression, concerning the Boy and Girl Scouts and there are more news items in the section on Boy And Girl Scouts.

January 13, 1922 Big athletic card at Mills, eight boxing bouts and two wrestling matches are scheduled tonight. For the purpose of attracting crowds to Mills at 8:00 o'clock tonight the Mills Athletic Club had decreased the admission price for the sports card which will include eight boxing numbers and two wrestling matches to \$1.00 top admission. The general admission for men will be \$.75, women \$.50 and children \$.25. The bill is being staged under the auspices of the Mills Booster Club and it is understood many good fights will be staged. Special taxi services have been arranged from Casper. All cars will leave the corner of Second and Center Streets at regular intervals. A transportation charge of \$.75 both ways will be made.

Sept. 29, 1923 Mills and all people west of the Standard Refinery were cut off from traffic communications this morning as a result of high water in the Platte and a raging torrent in Casper Creek which is ordinarily dry. The cement bridge across Casper Creek has been broken down in the middle and will not bear vehicle traffic even after the approach is repaired, which was washed out about 8:00 p.m. last night. The approach on the south end of the Platte bridge was also washed out in the morning and the Standard Refinery placed 200 men to work repairing both structures. Men have also been placed to work on the Chicago and North Western railway bridge fixing it so that it may be used for automobile traffic until the other bridges can be repaired. Work was being done this morning on the south bank of the Platte adjoining the pavement next to the refinery. The bank is being reinforced with rocks so that high water will not wash over the pavement. If the water raises another foot and a half, it will be well over the pavement. Motorists are being stopped a quarter of a mile west of the Burlington spur and warned of the danger.

Oct. 12, 1923 Municipal elections were held in Evansville and Mills yesterday, John D. Sheehan being chosen as the new Mayor of Evansville and James Stewart achieving the same honor in Mills. The Mills mayor will be supported by Julius Jensen and Clyde Riley, new councilmen, who were elected yesterday. The Town of Mills yesterday awarded an \$18,000 contract for graveling streets and installing sewer lines to Tom Mills.

April 12, 1925 The regular monthly health conference will be held in Mills at the Free Methodist Church on Thursday of this week from 9:30 to 11:30 o'clock in the morning. The location for this meeting was selected for the convenience of mothers of Midwest Heights, Mountain View, and Mills. Many children are found with nutritional disturbances which, if not corrected, affect the bones, causing bowl legs, knock knees, and chest deformities, according to the Natrona County Health Department. Then there are cases of rheumatism and heart diseases which are caused by bad tonsils and teeth. Only a physical and dental examination by doctors and dentists can reveal the exact cause of these ailments. Physicians, dentists, and women's clubs of Casper and Mills, and Natrona County Health unit cooperating with the state board of health through its divisions of maternity and infancy and child hygiene, make these examinations possible to show the physical condition of children examined and to indicate ways by which their health and vigor may be improved.

May 2, 1926 At a meeting of the Citizens' Party held last week in Mills, Dan McDaniels was nominated for Mayor and Ohmer Davis and Russ McNeely for councilmen. The election will be held May 11, 1926.

May 12, 1926 Roy Heald of Evansville and D. M. McDaniel of Mills are the new mayors of their respective towns following elections held Tuesday. Mayor-elect McDaniels of Mills headed the Citizen's ticket which made a clean sweep against the Progressive ticket. Ross McNeely and O. C. Davis were elected councilmen. The vote was Citizens', D. M. McDaniel 99, Russ McNeely 109, O. C. David 131. Progressive, M. D. Campbell (for Mayor) 77, Ray Gilbert 44, Harvey Palmer 62. Heald succeeds John T. Sheehan and McDaniel succeeds A. T. Allen.

December 12, 1926 Little Elmer Mullen suffered painful injuries when two of his fingers were caught in the electric washing machine wringer Tuesday but he is getting along nicely now.

Dec. 19, 1926 Billie Hunt of Mills had the misfortune of freezing his ear while hunting this week.

Judging from the crowd of young folks that spend

the evenings at the Hokanson brothers, the radio must be in very good condition.

Dec. 26, 1926 Little Leroy Palmer sampled some medicine kept for the chicken pox and Dr. Platz of Casper was called. He pumped the child's stomach in time to keep him from suffering any ill effects from the poison.

May 11, 1927 Horace Evans was elected Mayor of Mills by a decisive margin and Arthur Winkes and Robert Brewington were elected members of the council for the coming term. There was no opposition to the ticket elected at Mills. No Progressive ticket was reported there.

May 12, 1927 The Citizen's ticket was successful in the municipal election held Tuesday in Mills instead of the Progressive Party which made no filings, it was stated today. Horace Evans will be the new mayor.

April 29, 1928 There will be a city election in Mills, May 8. The Citizen's Party has nominated Charles Kranning for Mayor, John Hodgins and Hugh Brower for councilmen. The Mills Boy Scout Troop #10 is going on a hike to Camp Carey Saturday afternoon.

May 9, 1928 Forty-two votes were cast at the Mills election but there was only one ticket in the field. Charles Kranning was elected Mayor, polling 35 votes and John Hodgins with 39 votes, Hugh Brower with 42 votes were elected councilmen. There were no candidates on the Citizen's ticket.

May 5, 1929 Tuesday evening a meeting was called at the town hall for the purpose of nominating a mayor, and two councilmen. Arthur Winkes was nominated for mayor with Joe Rosslow and Joe Kasper as new councilmen.

May 12, 1929 Tuesday, May 14, there will be held the spring election at the town hall. The Progressive Party ticket consists of Roy Wingert for Mayor, Roscoe Dockham and Dennis Juneaux for Councilmen.

May 15, 1929 Roy Wingert, Progressive candidate was elected Mayor of Mills in the Municipal election held in that town Tuesday. The Progressive Ticket made a clean-sweep of the Mills election and named Dennis Janeaux and Roscoe Dockham as new city councilmen for the ensuing term. John Hodgins and Hugh Brower remained in the council as holdovers. The following votes were received by the candidates in the Mills election: Progressive Ticket, for mayor, Roy Wingert, 80, for councilmen, Dennis Janeaux, 63, Roscoe Dockham, 53. Citizen's Ticket, Mayor, Arthur Winkes, 23, for councilmen, J. Rosslow, 30, Joe Kasper, 48. Charles Kranning is the incumbent Mayor of Mills.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

MOUNTAIN STATES INSPECTION BUREAU
W. J. ROLP, MANAGER
301-350 GAS AND ELECTRIC BUILDING
DENVER, COLORADO

MILLS (NATRONA COUNTY) WYOMING.
RINDL (S) CLASS

INSPECTED: AUGUST 1930.

W. MULLIGAN, ENG.

CHANGE IN CLASS OF PROTECTION: FROM EIGHTH CLASS TO NINTH CLASS
 BECAUSE OF DEFICIENCIES IN FIRE DEPARTMENT AND FIRE PREVENTION ORDINANCES.

POPULATION: 1930 CENSUS, 357. TOWN HAS RETROGRADED
 SINCE 1925, WHEN POPULATION WAS ESTIMATED
 TO BE 500.

ALTITUDE: 5,170 FEET.

LOCATION: CENTRAL PART OF TOWNSHIP ON THE C. B. & Q.
 AND MILWAUKEE RAILROADS, 2 MILES WEST OF
 GARDNER, WYOMING.

REVENUE AND GENERAL: TOWN CONSISTS OF PRINCIPALLY OF RESIDENTIAL
 AND SUBURBAN TYPE BUILDINGS. CITIZENS
 ARE GENERALLY EMPLOYED IN OIL REFINERIES OF
 THE COMPANY AT GARDNER, WYOMING.

PREVAILING WINDS ARE FROM THE SOUTH-WEST
 AND HIGH VELOCITIES ARE FREQUENT. TWO
 MONTHS OF THE YEAR HAVE AVERAGE TEMPERATURE
 ABOVE 50 DEGREES AND THREE MONTHS PER YEAR
 HAVE AVERAGE TEMPERATURE BELOW FREEZING.
 MAXIMUM RECORDED TEMPERATURE 109 DEGREES;
 MINIMUM, -30 DEGREES. AVERAGE TOTAL ANNUAL
 SNOWFALL 65 INCHES.

TOPOGRAPHY: LEVEL.

STREETS: 4 1/2 FEET WIDE, ELECTRIC LIGHTED, UNPAVED
 AND IN POOR CONDITION IN WET WEATHER.

TOWN REPORT-
MILLS, WYOMING.

M.S.I.B., DENVER.

BUILDING CONSTRUCTION: THERE IS NO ESTABLISHED BUSINESS DISTRICT.
 SMALL RETAIL STORES ARE OF FRAME CONSTRUCTION
 WITH WOOD SHINGLE ROOFS, GENERALLY
 DETACHED FROM OTHER BUILDINGS. DWELLINGS
 ARE OF SMALL SIZE, OF FRAME CONSTRUCTION,
 GENERALLY WITH WOOD SHINGLE ROOFS, DETACHED
 25 FEET. MANY BUILDINGS ARE VACANT OR
 POORLY MAINTAINED.

FIRE RECORDS: NO RECORDS ARE KEPT OF FIRE LOSSES, BUT
 NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS INDICATE LOSSES HAVE
 BEEN MODERATE IN RECENT YEARS.

FIRE FIGHTING FACILITIES

WATER SUPPLY

GENERAL OUTLINE: OWNERSHIP IS MUNICIPAL. SYSTEM IS DIRECT
 PRESSURE TYPE WITH PUMP SUPPLY FROM WELL IN
 RIVER BED AND ELEVATED TANK STORAGE. NO
 PLANT OF SYSTEM IS AVAILABLE. SYSTEM IS IN
 CHARGE OF WATER SUPERINTENDENT WHOSE PRINCIPAL
 DUTY IS TO MAINTAIN ELEVATED TANK STORAGE.

SOURCE OF SUPPLY: WATER IS PUMPED FROM WELL LOCATED ON ISLAND
 IN RIVER BED OF NORTH PLATTE RIVER. SUPPLY
 IS UNFAILING AT ALL SEASONS OF YEAR.

PUMP HOUSE AND PUMP: ONE STORY CONCRETE BUILDING PRINCIPALLY
 BELOW GRADE IS LOCATED ON ISLAND IN NORTH
 PLATTE RIVER, SUBJECT TO INUNDATION.
 EQUIPMENT CONSISTS OF CENTRIFUGAL PUMP, 250
 GALLON PER MINUTE CAPACITY, DIRECT CONN-
 NECTED TO ELECTRIC MOTOR.

50,000 GALLON STEEL TANK ON 100 FOOT TOWER
 IS ELEVATED 110 FEET ABOVE GRADE OF TOWN.

DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM: NO PLANT DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM IS AVAIL-
 ABLE. 4 INCH SUPPLY MAIN FROM ELEVATED
 STORAGE TANK SUPPLIES 4 INCH LATERAL MAINS
 WITH TOTAL OF APPROXIMATELY 16,000 FEET
 OF MAIN SUPPLYING FIRE HYDRANTS.

HYDRANTS: TWENTY-ONE STANDARD TWO-WAY FROST-PROOF
 HYDRANTS ARE SUPPLIED BY THE DISTRIBUTING
 SYSTEM. DISTRIBUTION IS ADEQUATE TO PROTECT
 RESIDENT BUILT-UP AREAS.

THE THIRTIES: THE GREAT DEPRESSION

The Town of Mills exploded onto the scene in the early twenties and very nearly breathed its last in the late twenties. The Depression, a worldwide failing of economies brought on by forces that are apparently controlled by governments today, brought the world to its knees. There were no jobs to be had anywhere. The Mills Construction Company and the other construction companies lost everything. The county took back most of the lots in Mills for non-payment of taxes. A lot could be had for five dollars if you paid off the taxes. The problem was no one had five dollars.

There is very little information available about the thirties in Mills. There were three hundred fifty or so people left in town in 1930 and the town barely grew over the decade. School enrollment was cut in half, the Hotel and the Plunge were torn down, and the only thing Mills did during the thirties was survive.

The 1930 Town Report by the Mountain States Inspection Bureau is a good thumbnail sketch of the town in the Depression:

VALVES:

NO RECORD OF VALVE LOCATION IS AVAILABLE.

CONSUMPTION, PRESSURE AND FLOW: IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 20 ACTIVE SERVICES, WITH AVERAGE DAILY CONSUMPTION OF 15,000 GALLONS AND A MAXIMUM OF 40,000 GALLONS. STATIC PRESSURE OF 5.5 POUNDS AND RESIDUAL OF 28 POUNDS WITH 270 GALLONS PER MINUTE FLOWING.

FIRE DEPARTMENTORGANIZATION:

NO ORGANIZED FIRE DEPARTMENT. RESPONSE BY VOLUNTEERS.

HOSE HOUSES AND EQUIPMENT:

APPARATUS IS HOUSED IN A ONE STORY BRICK BARN AND TRUCK BUILT IN BLOCK 10 NEAR CENTER OF TOWN. EQUIPMENT CONSISTS OF TWO HAND-DRAWN ROLLER PUMPS TOTAL OF 700 FEET OF 1 1/2 INCH PIPE HOSE, HOSE TRENCHES AND HOZELLS. LADDERS EQUIPMENT CONSISTING OF ONE 12 FOOT ALUMINUM LADDER, 14 FOOT ALUMINUM LADDER AND 15 FOOT ROPE LADDER ALL 4 FT WIDE IN APPARATUS. HOSE IS IN GOOD CONDITION, BUT NO HOSE-DRYING RACK IS PROVIDED.

FIRE ALARM:

HAND OPERATED BELL BELL IS USED FOR GENERAL ALARM OF FIRE.

ORDINANCES:

NONE.

THE GAS COMPANY

One exciting thing that happened in 1930 was the residents' quarrel with the gas company over rates. Some things never change; death, taxes, boom, bust, and conflict with the gas company. Apparently there was no resolution of the problem at that time and no record of any further discussion:

CLAUDE L. DRAPER
CHAIRMAN
C. H. McWHINNIE
F. CHATTERTON

The State of Wyoming
Public Service Commission
Cheyenne

W. O. CARLETON
SECRETARY

October 31, 1929

Carrie Thomas,
Box 3,
Mills, Wyoming

Dear Madam:

This office is to-day in receipt of a Complaint or Petition, signed by various users and consumers of natural gas in Mills, Wyoming, in which complaint is made in regard to rates charged by the New York Oil Company.

It is necessary that all formal complaints be verified, and we are, therefore, returning the one you sent us, and will ask that you have three signers of the petition sign and acknowledge the form we have attached at the back thereof. If you will then return same to us, the Commission will give it their prompt attention.

Very truly yours,

W. O. Carleton

Secretary

LL
Enc.

Dec. 27, 1929 The Wyoming State Public Service Commission will convene here January 20, to conduct a hearing on natural gas rates for the Town of Mills. Citizens of the town have complained that the rates charged by the New York Oil Company are too high.

Jan. 19, 1930 The New York Oil Company will hold a hearing January 20, 1930 at 9:00 o'clock at the city hall in Casper in regards to the gas rates in Mills. All parties interested or having any complaints to file will be present.

Jan. 20, 1930 The members of the Public Service Commission of Wyoming today dismissed the case brought against the New York Oil Company by the Mayor and other residents of the Town of Mills when complainants failed to appear at the city hall for the hearing in connection with the charges made that the oil company was charging excessive prices on natural gas distributed in Mills. Fenimore T. Chatterton and C. H. McWhinnie, members of the Commission, representing its majority, were here for the hearing and endeavored to communicate with Mayor Roy Wingert of Mills and others but were unable to find them, they stated. After waiting for one hour, during which time no complainants appeared, the case was dismissed. A complaint was sent October 31, to the P.S.C. by Mayor Wingert and 68 other residents of Mills stating the gas rates charged by the New York Oil Company were excessive and illegal, resulting in an unfair earning by the company on gas delivery. They also charged that the gas was not of the same BTU as it was in the beginning. The oil firm filed an answer to this complaint on December 19 and the case was set for hearing in Casper today. Fred W. Layman later wrote the Commission that Mrs. Carrie Thomas, Clerk of the Town of Mills, desired to have the complaint dismissed because residents of Mills were not financially able to employ an attorney to represent them. The Commission informed Mills people that an attorney was not an indispensable necessity and that the Commission would hold the hearing as ordered, expecting complainants to be present in person to testify. The Oil Company was represented this morning but none of the complainants were present.

THE MILLS HOTEL

The Mills Hotel was a two story wooden structure located on the Wotco site off First Street, about where the Wotco shipping and receiving building is today. The hotel had a glorious history, just how glorious depends on your point of view. The hotel was a center of activity in the boom days of the mid twenties in Mills.

The Mills Hotel, if it stood today, would be possibly the most representative landmark in Mills of a time that epitomized the boom of chaotic activity and growth, of wild times. The following March 11, 1931 article from the *Casper Daily Tribune* characterizes not only the hotel, but the wild early days of the Town of Mills, a description that defies belief when one considers that today the town is a quiet place with no notoriety, a place to live a good life:

"Another symbol of the days when Casper, at the magic touch of black gold, was wild and lusty and a boom town as ever rolled in sudden wealth is gone. Mills Tavern, across those gambling tables small fortunes often changed hands at the single roll of the dice or the turn of a card, is being razed. What lumber in the structure of any value is being salvaged. Its passing marks the further severance of Casper, the modern city and commercial hub of the state. From the picturesque era of a riotous, booming frontier town another landmark has disappeared. Mere mention of the Mills Tavern will recall many memories of glamour, the pulsant rage of life, that at one time dwelt within the walls of the barnlike, two story building, now no more. It had a devious history. It started out resplendent fashion, a smart hotel hurriedly erected to care for the hordes in pursuit of their fortunes. It ran the gamut of open handed patronage, gamblers, surging throngs, beautiful women — a slice as it were, of the frenzied boom period, becoming in later years, its feathers bedraggled, a speakeasy, dancing hall, gambling den. Then oblivion. What scenes its scarred bar must have seen in days gone by — scenes which if transferred to canvass or celluloid, would mean the mimic's fortune.

Nights when money was recklessly gambled away, "easy come, easy go," adventurers lured by the oil fields, intermingled with cold eyed gamblers and staid businessmen of the town, nights when liquor flowed freely and lent its fiery inspiration, the dancing swaying throngs filled the halls to capacity and making it tremble with their concerted motion. Then much of the existing glamour that ever surrounds some landmark of a time and a place that is making history, ended. The Mills Tavern, before the wreckers demolished it, was the most consequential building in the little Town of Mills, virtually a suburb of Casper on the outskirts of the city.

Who could read in its forlorn stairs, its weatherbeat-

en warped frame walls, in the faint characters bleached by wind and weather, that spelled "Mills Tavern", the glistening new hotel that sprang up ten years ago? Section 36, destined to be known as one of the greatest light oil fields in the world's knowledge, was yielding with its rich harvest, the tremendous forest of derricks had been created at Midwest. Soldiers of fortune, oil scouts, roustabouts, veteran drillers, were pouring in from everywhere. Casper's mushroom population far exceeded the size of accommodations, elevated from the role of a cattlemen and sheepmen's community to a boom city.

Mills quickly came into existence. More slowly by far has it faded. But the town that was overwhelmingly prosperous, it needed a hotel, and it got one, as fancy an establishment as hurriedly could be afforded. The tavern of early legitimate fame came in later years to assume the notoriety of more devious character, that of a gambling house and dance hall, universally popular but nevertheless of a different stamp than the wonton hostelry that the boom produced. That era has subsided to a whisper — and still fortunes were won and lost, hard liquor splashed on the bar as of yore, as throngs danced till the building swayed, even in recent years.

It succumbed to the last of a series of raids in early 1926. Since then it had served only as a reminder, a landmark, to the "days that were." Perhaps there are those who read this and remember when silver dollars were stacked upon the "crap" tables in enormous piles so high that one would have difficulty fitting a bushel basket over the whole. Who remembers how gay, laughing dancers jammed into the main hall in sardine fashion, circled the floor to music that could scarcely be heard, who remembers a thousand and one anecdotes, escapades and roof lifting parties that had their source in old Mills Tavern.

The ground floor was given over to the bar and dancing. The gambling tables, at one time, in the basement and later upstairs, were never without their patrons. Two roulette wheels (roulette was a novelty in the raw western town), the big green baize table covered with dice, Sundry poker, blackjack and fantan games were favorite gambling lures we are told."

The hotel was torn down in 1931, an outward sign of the hard times the town had fallen upon. It also symbolized the end of the town as a separate entity unto itself, a time after which the town would look to Casper and other parts of the county for services. There would be only one other motel in the Town of Mills through 1986, the Red Arrow, behind the truck stop on West Yellowstone, a small, quiet operation.

Two ladies enjoy the sun on the porch of the Mills Hotel. Courtesy Norene Kilmer.



The Mills Hotel, located on First Street and facing to the northwest. Courtesy Norene Kilmer.



THE PLUNGE

One of the most famous places in the Town of Mills was the Plunge, a swimming pool and dance hall located in what was known as Riverview Park. This amusement park set up was located at the corner of Second and Platte, where the Bayou Bar stands today. Before the Bayou this establishment was Pearl's Tavern and the Mills Tavern.

The Plunge was a very large swimming pool with a dance floor, and a bridge across the north channel of the Platte River connected the whole area to an island which made it part of the park. The north channel of the river then ran where Wyoming Boulevard was constructed, which locates the island where the town maintenance shop is today. Hundreds of people would gather for Fourth of July and other summertime celebrations at the Plunge. They celebrated hard and went home tired.

"Announcement has been made that the hole for the big cement swimming pool, 60 by 100 feet, has been dug and the cement will be laid immediately. The pool will be opened to the enthusiasts of aquatic sports within the next two weeks if plans mature. The pool is one of the main attractions of the Riverview Amusement Park being established in Mills along the river bank. The park is five blocks off Yellowstone Highway pavement and is easily accessible to Casper people. The park is under the management of Delany and Schulte. Mr. Delany has recently come to Casper from Tijuana, Old Mexico, where he was in the same business. He has had experience in the amusement park line for sixteen years. The Plunge, furnished by the D & S Amusement Company will be maintained in the

highest modern and sanitary manner. The water in the pool will be changed according to city regulations three times a week. Suits will be carried all of the time. Two hundred individual bathing houses will be built around the Plunge for the use of the swimmers and will be kept in immaculate order at all times. Special afternoons will be set aside for children, who may enjoy the water without charge on Saturday afternoons. Special arrangements will be made for private parties in the afternoon.

Besides the pool, an outdoor dancing pavilion, an enclosed pavilion and roller skating rink will be run by the same management. Concessions for eats will be held by different companies and the whole park will be run in regulation order as in larger cities. (*Casper Daily Tribune*, June 22, 1921.)

The next summer the Plunge was back:

"Riverview Park opened, including many new conveniences for the bathers, including well lighted housed over dressing rooms, heated water and concessions where soft drinks, crigars and cigarets may be obtained." (*Casper Daily Tribune*, May 5, 1925.)

The Plunge continued strong into 1925:

"Riverview Park will be the scene of some keen competition this evening as Red Roe, director of swimming contests and instructor at the Plunge supervises the scheduled aquatic sporting events. Races of various sports will be staged with cash prizes offered the winners of each event. No change in the price of admission will be made, and spectators will be welcomed. Rawhouser's Orchestra, Kings Of The Syncopaters, will furnish music for dancing at Riverview as usual. Those who have danced at Riverview know that this means the finest music of any dance hall in the city.



The Plunge swimming pool and dance hall, looking out over the dance floor, 1921. Courtesy Norene Kilmer.

The floor is superb, and there is no cooler or more delightful place in which to spend an evening. The contest tonight will be supplementary to a big water carnival to be held during August. Competition is keen in the various events, many of the best swimmers in the city will take part in the feature and novelty races. (*Casper Daily Tribune*, July 9, 1925.)

Not everyone succeeded in having fun at the Plunge,

"Arthur Line, thirty five years of age, died yesterday as a result of a skull fracture received when he dived from a height of ten feet into one foot of water at the Mills Plunge. The body is being held at the Shaeffer-Gay Chapel. It will probably be shipped to Pleasant Grove, Utah, which is the home of the deceased." (*Casper Daily Tribune*, July 25, 1923.)

Why it was possible to dive from a height of ten feet into a one foot deep area of the pool is a good question that needed to be asked in 1923.

The Plunge succumbed to the Depression along with most of the town and was torn down. The river channel has changed and the island is gone now too. It is said that part of the walls of the plunge were found when the Bayou Bar was built. Other than that small bit, there is nothing left of this landmark of the town.

THE NEWS

The best way to get the story of the Thirties in Mills is to read the news from the *Casper Daily Tribune* and *Tribune Herald*:

July 16, 1929 Alta Dunham, age 12, drowned in the Platte River near the Mills pumping station while swimming with several friends. Her parents are the Roy Dunhams. Clyde Riley recovered the body 1/2 mile downriver. Efforts by Dr. L. D. Johnson and Dr. H. L. Harvey and members of the Mills Fire Department Pulmotor team failed to resuscitate her. Survivors are her father, sister Dorothy, brother Ethelbert, stepsister Mrs. William Foulks, stepbrother John Dunham of Wheatland. Alta's mother preceeded her. Burial will be in Wheatland beside her mother.

November 24, 1929 The Mills Missionary Society met Thursday evening for the purpose of packing boxes of clothing, cookies and popcorn balls for the Life Line Orphanage of Kansas City.

Clifford Semmens, who has been spending the last year and a half at the Island of Aruba, Dutch West Indies, arrived in Mills Thursday. He is the brother of John Semmens of Mills.

January 26, 1930 W. Slim Shoplan has been confined to his home on account of his hand which was frozen during cold weather.

The small son of Mr. and Mrs. James Gray is ill with the scarlet fever.

Among those who will go into Casper from the Mills School this next semester are Reba Wallace, Dole Huls, Gerald Drollinger, and Bruce Hunter.

February 1, 1930 A large crowd of young folks of Casper and Mills enjoyed a sleighing party Friday evening, being entertained at the close of the evening at the home of Mr. and Mrs. George Boyle.

February 9, 1930 The Mills P.T.A. will meet Thursday evening February 13, a very interesting program has been arranged. There will be a box supper and a social hour. Everyone is urged to attend.

Mr. and Mrs. L. C. Smith and family enjoyed radio music at the home of Mrs. Arch Vail after the pot luck supper Thursday evening.

The railroad camp which is located on Northwestern Avenue between First and Second Streets, was removed the first part of the week, the men having completed their work on the new bridge.

April 24, 1930 The population of Mills is 357, Evansville is 174 and Mountain View 147.

May 13, 1930 Roy Wingert, present mayor of Mills is candidate for election as councilman, on the Independent ticket. Clay Hill is candidate for Mayor on the same ticket and Hugh Brower, Independent who seeks re-election as councilman. On the Citizen's Ticket, Joseph Rosslow is candidate for Mills' chief office and S. H. Billingsly and Kinlock are candidates for the offices of councilmen.

May 18, 1930 Clyde Riley was appointed water commissioner and Perry Hunter appointed Judge, following the election. Mrs. Carrie Thomas was retained as clerk.

June 24, 1930 The two year old son of Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Grey of Mills was struck by an unknown car yesterday afternoon. The baby was brought to Casper for treatment of injuries which are not considered serious, although one eye was badly bruised and the child suffered considerable shock. The first the parents knew of the accident was when they heard the child screaming in the street and then saw his prostrate body.

Headquarters Troop, 115th Cavalry will board a special train next Saturday night for the annual encampment of Wyoming National Guards at Fort Francis E. Warren, beginning next Sunday. During the first week of the encampment, the time will be spent on the rifle range at the fort and the troop will go to Pole Mountain.

July 30, 1930 While returning to Midwest on Sunday evening, Bob DeFrance had the misfortune to meet with an accident when his car turned over with him causing injuries to his face and limbs. Bob is getting along nicely at his home in Mills.

Thirty years ago *December 28, 1900*. It is reported that about five feet of snow fell in the Salt Creek country. The sheepmen, who had their flocks in that part of the country, had been praying for snow about six weeks, but if the report is true they probably prayed once too often.

August 12, 1930 The tax levy for Mills in 1930 was based on valuation of \$35,737 - Levy 8.0 Total \$285.90.

August 13, 1930 (This was in the paper as "THIRTY YEARS AGO") A party of ranchmen lynched Bert Charters on Snake River in Carbon County one night last week. Charters was a stock thief. The ranchmen did the right thing at the right time. There are others it is said who will be suspended between heaven and earth at the end of a rope if they don't quit stealing stock or quit the country.

August 17, 1930 Mr. and Mrs. C. T. Willeford are enjoying a new Hupmobile coupe.

August 24, 1930 Orin Dockham and Walter Beyers returned Sunday from Pole Mountain where they were at camp with the National Guards.

September 7, 1930 Mrs. Emma Carpenter resumed her duties as instructor at Meadow Acreage.

November 30, 1930 Republican legislative and county candidates will sponsor a meeting at the Mills School at 8:00 o'clock Monday evening. The meeting which is open to the public will be particularly for the people of Mills, Mountain View, and Midwest Heights. Refreshments will be served.

December 14, 1930 Mayor Clay Hill of Mills returned home from Montana where he had been confined on account of illness for some time.

January 28, 1931 Word has been received from L. C. Smith who is at Mayo Brothers that he underwent an operation on his leg and is getting along as well as can be expected.

March 6, 1931 The community of Mills is pleased to hear Mayor Hill was able to return to his home during the past week from a Denver hospital, where he underwent a successful operation.

June 14, 1931 Little Merton Wright was able to have his arm set during the past week and is getting along nicely.

June 7, 1931 The City Council of Mills met on Thursday and the usual business was transacted. The Council decided that all water bills not taken care of by June 25 will become delinquent.

June 31, 1931 H. Billingsly was appointed the new water commissioner, succeeding C. Riley.

August 9, 1931 The community of Mills wishes to extend heartfelt sympathy to the Stamper family in their late bereavement. Mr. Stamper had been ill for a short time before removing him to the Natrona County Memorial Hospital where he passed away Thursday morning. Mr. and Mrs. Stamper and family resided in Alamosa, Colorado before coming to Mills to make their home for the past eight years. Those left to mourn Mr. Stamper's death are his wife, Mrs. Mae Stamper, and daughters, Mrs. Glene Towers of Oakley, Kansas; Mrs. Gladys Chapman of Grinnell, Kansas; three sons, Rob and Roy, twins of Boulder City, Nevada and Ted of Mills. Funeral services will be conducted by Dr. Wilson at the Gay Mortuary Monday morning at 10:00 o'clock.

August 9, 1931 Mrs. Alice Phillips was badly bruised when her car overturned on the highway Wednesday when she was returning from Riverton. Mrs. Phillips is confined to the Memorial Hospital.

September 13, 1931 Word has been received by friends and relatives that Roy McNeely is improving nicely after undergoing an operation at St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester, Minnesota.

Monday evening fire destroyed the Dunham home. The alarm was spread and the Mills Fire Department responded promptly. But little of the property was saved. Mrs. Dunham was burned about the arms requiring medical attention. The B. Foulks' and Mrs. Dunham were cared for the rest of the night by neighbors.

April 17, 1932 The Girl Scouts of Mills School planned a hike Thursday afternoon after school but due to inclement weather decided to remain at the school and have refreshments and a good time.

Among those who represented the Mills School at the Marble Tournament in Casper held Friday afternoon were Charles Smith, Billie Forrester, and Junior Boyle.

April 24, 1932 Mr. and Mrs. William Belding of Casper have moved into the Ludtke house on Fourth Street.

Tom Mulling who has been a patient at the Fitzsimons Hospital for the past three months, was able to return to his home the first part of the week.

Mr. and Mrs. Art Claughton and son, Roy, are moving into their home here in Mills from Casper.

The Boy Scouts of Mills were again disappointed on Thursday when showers during the afternoon made it impossible for them to carry out their plans for a hike and picnic. So the boys and parents stayed at the Clover Leaf Club and enjoyed a good time. Prizes were awarded to the boys for flag making, winners were Orin Craig, Alex Mills, and Leon Winkes. After the necessary work was accomplished, the boys enjoyed a real picnic dinner served by Mrs. A. Winkes, Mrs. R. McNeely, and Mrs. C. Hill. Among the scouts and others present were Jim Hill, Buddie Hill, Babe Hill, Leon Winkes, Twila Winkes, Bob Humberson, Charles Smith, Frank McNeely, Kenton McNeely, Orin Craig, Claude Boatman, William Hulse, Alex Mills, Howard Williams, Lee Thomason, Frank Jancaux, Mr. A. Winkes, and Mr. R. McNeely.

May 1, 1932 A number of women in Mills have been enjoying the Kitchen Chautauqua, which has been held during the past week at the Arkeon.

May 8, 1932 Municipal elections will be held Tuesday May 10 in three Natrona County towns: Mills, Edgerton, and Evansville. The candidates for Mills are: for mayor, Hugh Brower, now council member, and for council, Fred Steinle and Joe Kasper.

May 12, 1932 Quiet elections in three Natrona County municipalities were conducted Tuesday. Edgerton, Evansville and Mills were the scenes of the contests, the closest of which was at Evansville, three miles east of Casper. At Mills, Hugh Brower, present councilman, was elected mayor with 55 votes, his only opposition coming from four other persons whose names were written on the ballot and who each received one or two votes. Fred Steinle with 62 votes and Joe Kasper with 60 votes were made councilmen.

June 12, 1932 The Cub picnic and field meet was greatly enjoyed by the Mills Cubs. The Mills Cubs carried off the bacon in the field meet winning two first and

two seconds. The first event was the potato race, Mills taking second place. Those running were Alex Mills, Leon Winkes, William Huls, Junior Boyle, and Howard Williams. In the pyramid building first place was taken by Mills, Relay race, Mills being second with Mills, Huls, Winkes, Williams, and Boyles being runners. Fourth event, ball throwing contest, won by Howard Williams of Mills. After the games, a picnic dinner was served. Later in the evening, a big campfire was built and the boys were awarded their badges by Mr. Edwards, Cub Commissioner. Buffalo Bill stories and wild west stories were told. Taps was sung and the boys departed for home.

July 3, 1932 Richard Black was able to have the clamps and bandages removed from his head the first part of the week. Richard was accidentally hurt while playing a game of horseshoes a few weeks ago.

September 12, 1932 A. Henry Billingsly, the water commissioner at Mills, attended the Brooks community water meeting at Mountain View Thursday evening.

January 22, 1933 Miss Dorothy and Donald Simpson were pleasantly surprised by a number of young friends Wednesday evening at their home, the occasion being in honor of their birthdays. Bunco was the diversion of the evening. Lovely refreshments were served by Mrs. Simpson, at the close of the evening. Those bidden were: Lola Brown, Garnet Anderson, Rosalie Borland, Geraldine Gilstrap, Thelma Kick, Nellie Anderson, Tracy Blackey, William Carrol, Bill Proctor, Percy Dockham, Robert Carrol and Bernard Blackley.

March 9, 1933 We are glad to report that Mr. Lewis Kulage is expected home in the near future. Mr. Kulage has been a patient at the Fitzsimons Hospital since last August, when he had the misfortune to have his right leg broken while at work on his ranch.

June 13, 1933 W. K. McKane of Mills reported Monday to county officers that 22 chickens and a bundle of linen including table cloths, dresser scarfs and towels were stolen from his home during the fatal illness of his wife. He said that since her death, seven of the chickens have been returned.

June 25, 1933 Former residents of Mills and now of Highland spent one day last week in Mills. Among them were Willis Shroyer, Noah Enyeart, and Reverend G. Rickard, former pastor in Mills of the Free Methodist Church.

July 2, 1933 Mr. and Mrs. Roscoe Dockham entertained an aluminum dinner at 6:30 Wednesday evening. Those who enjoyed the dinner were: Mr. and Mrs. J. McNeely, Mr. and Mrs. B. Matthews, Mr. and Mrs. T. Faircloth, Mr. and Mrs. L. Smith, Mr. and Mrs. H. Baugh, and Mr. and Mrs. R. Dockham.

October 24, 1933 The attendance of the local Sunday school obtained a new record for the assembly year when there were "fifty-four" present at Sunday school the past Sunday, October 22. An interesting climax was reached when the winners in the church fund contest were presented with Bibles by the pastor of the church. This contest lasted for four months, terminating October 8. A Bible was awarded to the member of each class who contributed the most to the fund. Those who received Bibles were: Mrs. E. Sieler, Miss Lucille Harris, John Bennett, and June Dockham.

November 9, 1933 On Tuesday afternoon October 31, the first, second and third grades at the Mills school enjoyed a Halloween party. Songs and games were played after which Halloween refreshments were served. Prizes for the best costumes were received by Vernon Patterson, Bobby Yant, June Dockham and Ruth Large.

November 23, 1933 The children of the fourth, fifth and sixth grades enjoyed an outing supper at the old Mills Tavern site on Wednesday evening. Treats were presented to the children by the teacher, Miss Welch. Those who attended were: Roma Large, Edith Smith, Elvira Yant, Jean McIntyre, Margaret Beyers, Wanda Coughlin, Darlene Sterner, Emily Christiansen, Irma Wingert, Billie Dielman, Alex Mills, Fred Bennett, Bob Smith, Bobbie Vail, Buck Dielman, Frank McNeely, Frank Janeaux, Billie Yant, Charles Humberson, Dickie Jackman, John Bennett, Bob Parker and Leon Wallace.

February 5, 1934 A large number of Mills folks and their friends attended the President's Birthday dance Tuesday evening at the Clover Leaf Club. The donation proceeds taken at the dance amounted to \$6.00, which will go toward the fund being raised for a hospital for children suffering from infantile paralysis.

March 25, 1934 Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Perkins and Mrs. M. Ward have rented the Perkins house and moved

to Mills from Casper.

Merial Drollinger had the misfortune to be thrown from a horse Thursday thus suffering a very painful dislocated elbow.

July 22, 1934 The excavation for the basement of the Parsonage in progress of building by the local church, has been completed this past week. The building committee hoped to have the forms up and be running concrete in a very short time.

July 30, 1934 The many friends of Miss Grace Newman will be sorry to hear of the serious accident in which she suffered a broken leg and four fractured ribs. Miss Newman who was missionary minister at the Mills Presbyterian Church for three years, is now extension secretary of the Chicago Industrial Center.

Those attending the Montgomery Ward picnic from Mills were Mr. and Mrs. Henry Deilman, Mr. and Mrs. A. T. Allen and Lyle Welch.

Mr. and Mrs. S. W. Douglas and Romana and Mr. and Mrs. A. T. Allen had a picnic dinner on Casper Mountain at the Pathe cabin which is being occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Marrett and children. Ice cream and cake were enjoyed by all in honor of Master Marrett's sixth birthday. The evening was spent at Eadsville.

August 12, 1934 The Sunday school class of Reverend Ross held their class picnic Thursday evening at Twin Springs. Present were: Sara and Jeanette Stromberg, Geraldine Gilstrap, Lyle Matheson, Winnie Dockham, Jessie Chapman, Dale Huls, Lorene Wallace, Jim and Oscar Stromberg, Louis Kane, Marjorie Vail and Reverend Ross.

September 6, 1934 The enrollment for the Mills School which opened Tuesday morning, was 52 pupils. Miss Shumaker and Mrs. Hotchkins are the new instructors for this year.

Grandpa Burch, who was moved to the Memorial Hospital, is improving nicely from an infection caused by his teeth.

September 17, 1934 Reverend C. C. Burton of Dilmer, Kentucky, has been conducting revival services at the Mills Nazarene Church during the past week. The pastor reports a good interest and solicits the attendance of the public at all church services. Reverend Burton will continue services each night at 7:30 throughout the coming week.

October 14, 1934 The Girl Scouts of Mills met last Thursday at the school house to plan for their fall and winter meetings and activities. Mrs. Hotchkiss is the leader of Troop #1 with the assistance of Mrs. Percy Large and Mrs. Roy McNeely. Among the troop members are: Wanda Coughlin, Margaret Beyers, Mary Pauline Sanders, June Foulks, Ruth Large, Norene Tromble, June Matthews, Irma Wingert, Roma Large, Emily Christiansen, Marjorie Vail, and Edith Smith.

October 28, 1934 Mrs. Thelma Valentine entertained the Norris Beauty School and students at her home Tuesday evening. Mrs. John Ford read the past, present, and future of those present by means of astrology and palmistry. Dainty refreshments were served. Those present were: Misses Peggy Perritt, Lola Dozah, Nadine Clark, Martha Higgins, Bette Williams, Margaret Wegher, Mr. and Mrs. William Sanders, Miss Elizabeth Norris and J. E. Norris. Mrs. Valentine was assisted by her daughter, Miss Eleanor Valentine.

For some reason the Mills column didn't appear from 1935-1937 and the news continues in 1938:

May 12, 1938 Fred Steinle and Fred Allen, refinery workers, were elected to the town council of Mills, a suburb of Casper, by votes of 90 & 71 respectively in the election held Tuesday. Losers in the race for council positions were Chester C. Coughlin with 51 votes, who sought re-election, and R. C. Christiansen who polled 46 votes. Holdover council members are Joe Holt and Roy Wingert. Mayor G. C. Simpson was not up for re-election this year. Mrs. Carrie Thomas, town clerk, said a record number of ballots were cast in the election.

June 2, 1938 Among the high school students who are graduating are Lorene Wallace, Betty Hunt, Leon Winkes, and George Boyle, Jr. - 309 graduates total.

July 20, 1938 Ted Stamper has been working on the streets in Mills the past week and has oiled some streets.

Twila Winkes had the cast removed from her arm on Friday. Twila had the misfortune to break her arm while at play the later part of May.

August 30, 1938 Among those from Mills who attended the water carnival at Alcova last Sunday were Mr. & Mrs. A. C. Winkes and family, Mr. & Mrs. Fred Allen and children, Mr. & Mrs. Howard Miller, Mr. & Mrs. C. A. Simpson, Mr. & Mrs. Floyd Wilcox, and Mr. & Mrs. Joe Miller.

September 9, 1938 Members and friends of the Mills Nazarene Church were very sorry to learn on Sunday that their pastor and family have been transferred to the Nazarene Church at Butte, Montana and expect to leave the latter part of the week. Reverend and Mrs. Neece have made many friends both in their church and outside during their short stay in Mills.

September 13, 1938 Reverend and Mrs. Paul Dodds are expecting to move into the parsonage at the Mills church the first of the week. Reverend Dodds has accepted the call to the Mills church as their pastor since Reverend Neece, their former pastor, has been transferred to Butte, Montana.

Mrs. Alexander has been appointed to take Mrs. McCarthy's place and Mrs. Dumbleton will substitute for Mrs. Hotchkiss, who has been transferred to Park School from Mills School.

September 28, 1938 Reverend Paul Dodds, pastor of the Mills Nazarene Church, is improving nicely following an appendectomy last Thursday at the Memorial Hospital.

A large number of people from Mills have been attending the Harper revival meetings.

The posts were set last Thursday with the names of the streets on them.

October 25, 1938 The rooms for occupancy of the sixth and seventh grades at the Mills School have been made ready for the pupils on Monday morning after attending school in Casper for the past six weeks.

January 3, 1939 Bennie Keller, small son of Mr. & Mrs. Bill Keller, has been suffering pain from an infection in his hand, which was caught in the wash wringer a few days before Christmas. His hand at present is showing improvement.

March 10, 1939 Mrs. Frances Peterson and son, Albert, moved into the Schimpf house.

March 19, 1939 Friends are sorry to hear that Mrs. H. E. Baugh and daughter Barbara are confined to their home with the mumps.

Troop #1 of the Girl Scouts enjoyed a party Friday evening in the scout room at the Mills School. The evening was spent in singing and games. Refreshments were served, and among those present were the scout leader Mrs. Dodds and scouts Betty Law, Missie Holt, June Fowlks, Elenor Struck, Mildred Christiansen, Velma Coughlin, Mary Bennett, Pam Dittman, Ann Clemons, Helen Bowman, and Arlene Baker. Mrs. Roy Parks was a guest for the evening. Percy Dockham spent a few days last week with Donald Simpson at Sand Draw.

March 26, 1939 Mr. & Mrs. Deward Dollinger moved to the Walden place west of Mills.

April 5, 1939 Mr. & Mrs. Clark and family of Mountain View have moved into the Gellatly property he recently purchased.

April 12, 1939 Mr. & Mrs. Herbert Harris moved into the Joe Miller house.

May 11, 1939 Election day was calm in three Natrona County towns, Edgerton, Mills, and Evansville, devoid of fist fights or other excitement sometimes witnessed in former years. In Mills, G. C. Simpson was re-elected mayor on the Homeowners ticket with 132 votes, a sizeable majority. He defeated auto salesman E. L. (Bill) Bailey, who garnered 58 votes. Roy Wingert and Joe Holt, running mates of Simpson's, gained council positions with ease. There was only one would-be voter that was refused a ballot on the grounds he had not resided in the town the required 10-day period, it was learned from Mrs. Carrie Thomas, town clerk.

The only reward for Mills mayor and councilmen is free water from the town water system. No salaries are paid. Defeated for council posts were Al Landers who got 51 votes, and Wallace Hurst with 52 votes.

May 18, 1939 The auction sale at the Mills barns on Monday was well attended. Mr. & Mrs. R. C. Dockham received a letter from Reverend and Mrs. O. C. Keller, former pastor of the Mills Nazarene Church, who are now holding a pastorate at Oshkosh, Wisconsin and are doing nicely.

June 8, 1939 Mr. & Mrs. A. S. Vail entertained at a dinner Sunday for Mr. & Mrs. Perry Hunter, who left for Riverton to locate. Among other guests were Miss Helen Hendry and Howard Hunter. Friends in Mills and Casper were sorry to lose Mr. & Mrs. Hunter from their midst as they have been residents a number of years. Fred Allen reports a successful opening of his restaurant and confectionery on Saturday.

July 16, 1939 Among the group who motored to Independence Rock on Friday were Mr. & Mrs. H. E. Baugh and daughter Barbara, Mr. Baugh, Sr., Miss Mildred Bullock, Mrs. Kate Petersen, and Robert Woolsey. A trip to Boxelder Canyon was enjoyed last Sunday by Mr. & Mrs. Fred Hunt and family, and Harry Ward. Mr. & Mrs. Mike Wingert and children were guests at a farewell picnic dinner and hankerchief shower at the Izaak Walton Picnic Grounds Wednes-

day evening. Mr. & Mrs. Wingert, who have been residents of Mills for a number of years, expect to leave the first of the week for Oregon, where they will find a location. Among those included in the picnic were Mr. & Mrs. R. H. McNeely, Mr. & Mrs. Howard Miller, Mr. & Mrs. Roy Wingert, Mr. & Mrs. R. H. Stienle, Mr. & Mrs. Lee Smith, Mr. & Mrs. A. S. Vail, Mrs. R. C. Christiansen, Mrs. M. Coyle, Miss Lucile and Irene Smith, Miss Marjorie Vail, Miss Irma and Ilean Wingert, Kenton McNeely, John Vail, Earl Wingert, and Carl Christiansen.

July 30, 1939 Relatives received word that Mr. & Mrs. Mike Wingert arrived safely at their destination in Junction City, Oregon.

A fishing party left Friday evening for Rock Creek to spend the weekend. Included in the party were Mr. & Mrs. Ray Lamon and children, Mr. & Mrs. A. B. Vail and family, Mrs. Frances Peterson and son Albert, and E. W. Morrison.

August 6, 1939 Mr. & Mrs. Deward Drollinger and baby are caring for the Frank Drollinger home in Casper while the latter is on a vacation. Mr. & Mrs. Dan Coughlin and grandson Leroy Perkins returned Thursday from a week's vacation at Boulder and Gold Hill, Colorado. While in Boulder, Mr. & Mrs. Coughlin attended the drilling contest. Their son Mickey (Elmer) Coughlin and a nephew George, who were partners, won the contest, which is held each year.

A hamburger fry was enjoyed last Tuesday evening on the river near the Powder Plant by a number of families of Mills. Among them were Mr. & Mrs. Ray Lamon and children, Mr. & Mrs. A. S. Vail, Rev. and Mrs. Arnesen, Mr. & Mrs. Doyle Lamon and children, Mrs. Frances Peterson, Mrs. Homer Baugh and Barbara, Marjorie Vail, Elvira Yant, Lyle Mathisen, Albert Saum, E. W. Morrison, and Doyle Phillips.

August 10, 1939 1939 General Assessments to Mills were: valuation \$31,858 - levy mills 8.0 - amount of tax \$254.86.

September 26, 1939 Friends and neighbors were surprised to hear of the news of the marriage of Iris Margaret Griffith of Idaho and Orrin Dockham, which took place last Thursday. Orrin, the eldest son of Mr. & Mrs. Roscoe Dockham, Sr., spent his school days in Mills and Casper, a graduate of Natrona County High School. He later went to Jackson Hole country where he spent the last few years. The community of Mills extends their best wishes to the newlyweds.

The nursery school for little tots between the ages of three to six at the Mills School has an enrollment of 20 at present. Although the nursery school has not had the proper equipment to really get started good, the supervisors, Miss Elizabeth Evango and Miss Anita Welch, are enjoying their work and expect this next week everything will be in shape.

October 8, 1939 City council of Mills met on Wednesday evening at the city hall for the regular meeting. The resignation of Fred Allen was accepted and C. C. Coughlin was appointed to fill out the unexpired term.

October 15, 1939 Mr. & Mrs. Jack Matheson and children are moving into the Bob Mills house. The small son of Mr. & Mrs. Shipley is confined to his home with scarlet fever.

November 19, 1939 Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Harris and children have moved into the Floyd Wilcox house while their house is under construction.

November 28, 1939 Darrel Sanders, 21 of Mills, was aware of the danger of carbon monoxide gas poisoning Sunday while working on a car with the motor running in a closed garage. But Monday, after spending 17 hours in an oxygen tent at Natrona County Memorial Hospital, he was more keenly aware of how quickly the colorless, odorless gas in the exhaust fumes of a car can take effect. Young Sanders had been working on a neighbor's car Sunday installing windshield defrosters and let the motor run several minutes to test the devices. The garage doors were closed as it was a cold morning. Satisfied that the job was completed, the youth walked to the doors of the garage after turning off the motor. He collapsed upon opening one of the doors. The youth's parents, Mr. & Mrs. William Sanders of Mills, were gone for the day, but a companion, Dale Huls also 21, found him a few minutes later. He was unconscious several minutes. Still somewhat weakened Monday morning, he continued convalescing at home. Mrs. Sanders said her son probably owed his life to the fact that the other young man was nearby at the time and discovered him lying by the garage door. Young Sanders and Huls spent the night together while Mr. & Mrs. William Sanders went to Thermopolis over the weekend.

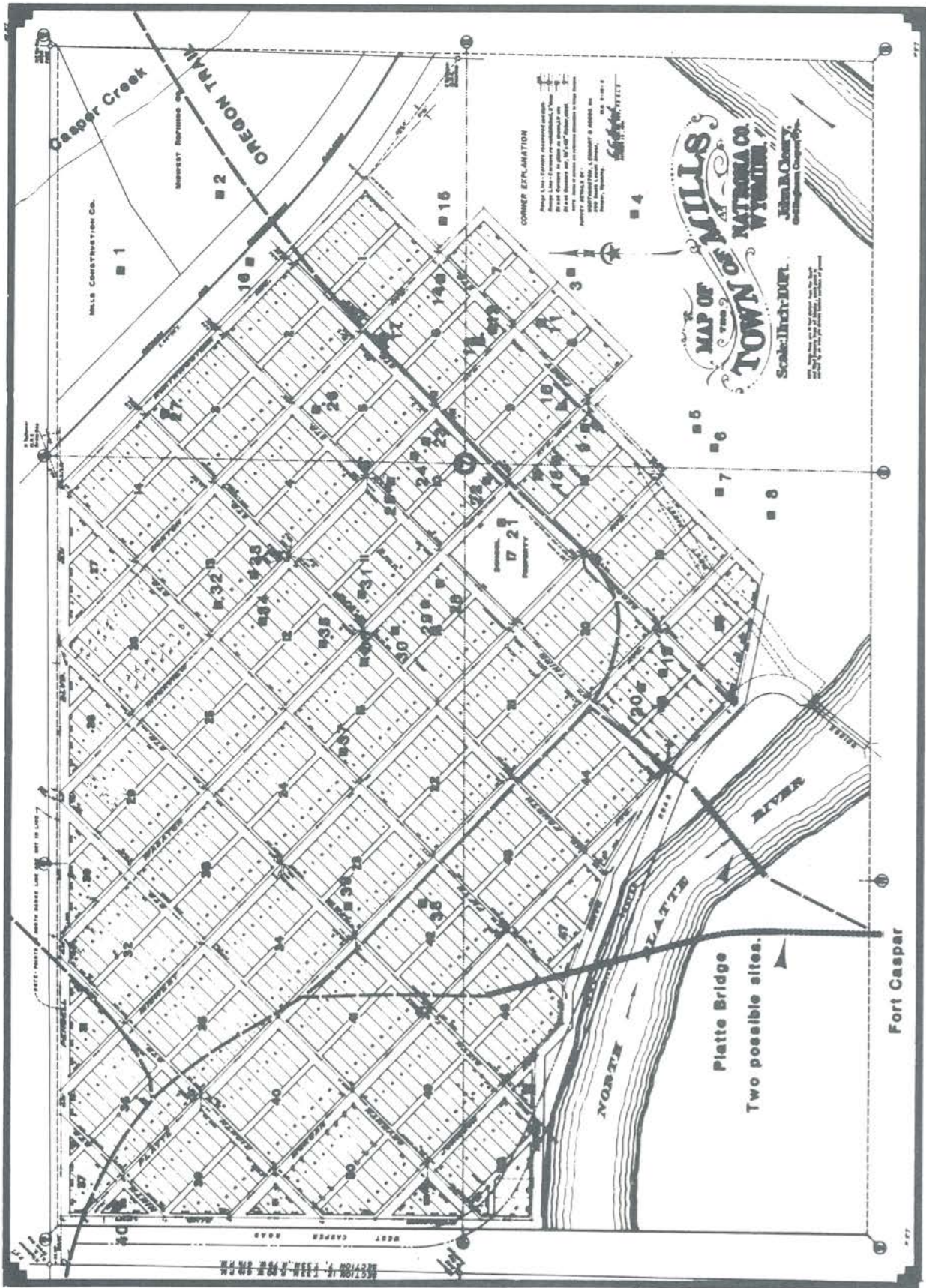
December 5, 1939 During the past week a number of women of Mills have been aiding in the Red Cross drive with Mrs. Large as chairman. The adult education sewing class met last Thursday with Mrs. Burris, supervisor, and made some very pretty aprons for Christmas gifts. Mr. & Mrs. Earl Lamon moved from the Horton apartments to the Robert Kriener apartments.

OPPOSITE

Original map of Mills, with later updates, showing several of the early public places and stores, as well as several of the town clerk's homes. Many locations are based on recollection of various persons. As few addresses were used in Mills until recently, exact locations are difficult to pin down.

The Oregon Trail came through Mills, on several different routes from the east and from the south, progressing westward. Part of the Trail was the Platte Bridge, which ran from Fort Caspar to Mills. Different historians indicate different locations for the bridge.

1. Sprague-Nisely Construction Company, also the Standard (Amoco) stables.
2. The Wyoming National Guard 58th Brigade Cavalry.
3. The gallion screen, used to sort the gravel taken from the flood plain.
4. The "35", a flooded gravel pit 35 feet deep used as a swimming hole.
5. The Mills Hotel.
6. The tannery.
7. Blacksmith
8. Mills Construction Company barns.
9. Claughton's store, also McClure store and others.
10. Avery Pool Hall.
11. Saloon
12. Mills Construction Company Office.
13. Post Office.
14. Lois Maurer, clerk.
15. Town Hall.
16. Mail pouch on the C&NW line.
17. George Boyle.
18. Martha Kethley, clerk.
19. The Plunge
20. Claughton's roller skating.
21. Mills School.
22. Mills Church (Free Methodist, Nazarene, Baptist).
23. McGillivray store.
24. Ray's Liquor.
25. Rude House, once Mills Construction Company, the school, post office, and *Mills Journal*.
26. William Mills, clerk.
27. Norene Kilmer, clerk.
28. Red Front store.
29. Brakebill store.
30. Post Office (Bassett).
31. Rosslow store.
32. Post Office (Nolan).
33. Frog pond.
34. Nellis Merchantile.
35. Marianne Spencer, clerk.
36. Fire hall.
37. Presbyterian Church.
38. Carrie Thomas, clerk.
39. Kriener apartments.
40. Water tower.





A glimpse of the fashions of the twenties and thirties in Mills, courtesy Etta Sims. Top left: Dorothy Christiansen and Pat Sword, 1929; top right, "Dorothy", 1932 (note oil tanks along Pendell Boulevard); bottom right, "Etta and baby Emily"; bottom left, Dora Pendleton and Shirley, Violet Pendleton and Jackie, 1922.

THE FORTIES: RAPID GROWTH AFTER THE WAR

The Depression ended with America's entry into World War II. The whole country had one purpose, and many sacrifices were made on the home front to help the cause overseas. The local area was busy, the refineries were needed to produce petroleum products for the war effort and the Casper airbase was the home of thousands of people, stationed there to train bomber pilots.

The population of Mills almost doubled, to 866, over the decade as Mills was a place of opportunity. There were still many lots available for taxes and Mills became a good place to find a house and raise the kids. Many who worked at the Standard Refinery lived in Mills.

After the War the Bureau of Reclamation opened its district office just west of Mills across Wyoming Boulevard. The Bureau offices were headquarters for its operation of the several dams on the North Platte: Pathfinder, Alcova, Gray Reef, (not built at that time) and the Kendrick Project irrigation district. About thirty homes were built along Pendell and Connie Streets to house Bureau personnel.

One of the most memorable occurrences of the forties was the winter of '49, when there was such a tremendous amount of snowfall that everyone got snowed in for several weeks. The only activity was that of residents trying to survive the isolation. There have been winters with more snow, but those who lived through the winter of '49 say that it was the worst.



Clearing the snow on Platte Street near the water tower in the winter of '49. Courtesy Larry Edwards.

GRANTORS
 The United States of America,
 By the President,
 Wm. H. Taft.
 Seal: United States General Land
 Office affixed

Kind of Instrument Patent
 Instrument No. 50888
 Date of Instrument Nov. 7, 1912

Date of Record Oct. 16, 1917

Book 5 of Patents page 431

Consideration - - - -

Witness - - - -

Acknowledged - - - -

Before - - - -

A - - - -

In - - - -

Commission Expires - - - -

Seal - - - -

TO
 Charles M. Hawks

GRANTEES

Wife apprised of her right and effect
 of signing and acknowledging same - -

Pursuant to the Act of May 20th, 1862, "TO SECURE HOMESTEADS TO ACTUAL SETTLERS ON THE PUBLIC DOMAIN" and the Acts supplemental thereto, the claim of Charles M. Hawks has been established and duly consummated in conformity to law, for the

N $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$: NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$: SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 7, Township 33 North, Range 79 West of the 6th P.M. in Wyoming, containing 159.47 acres.

The tract of land above described is granted unto the said claimant subject to any vested and accrued water rights for mining, agricultural, manufacturing or other purposes, and rights to ditches and reservoirs used in connection with such water rights as may be recognized by the local customs, laws and decisions of courts. And there is reserved from the lands hereby granted a right of way thereon for ditches or canals constructed by the authority of the United States.

After the Depression lots were cheap in Mills. Natrona County had taken many of the lots for taxes, and was willing to part with them for minimal compensation. The actual title to the lots was often more costly than the lots, as a title abstract had to be completed and a judgement made by the court that the title was free and clear. This page from a title abstract to property in Mills is the Homestead Patent of Section 7 from the United States to Charles Hawks, and is page 8 of 150 pages of documentation of the title.

Mills, Wyoming
May 7, 1945

Dear Friend,

Shortage of time prompts me to choose this means of giving you certain information concerning municipal affairs, while at the same time soliciting your continued support.

The new equipment for our water system, unanimously agreed upon by the council early in my administration, installed under the direction of J. W. Chadwick of the National Supply Company, of Casper, is operating very satisfactorily and is fully paid for. The old pump has been retained as an auxiliary, and a recently established water system deterioration fund will provide amply for any unforeseen emergency expense in the future.

Certain benefits accruing from the more economical operation of the new equipment are now under consideration by the council; some having been definitely agreed upon, and others to be distributed to consumers of water from the system, as sound business policy permits.

Expenditures for street maintenance have included the purchase of a grader, likewise fully paid for. Street improvements, long needed but necessarily delayed in favor of our more urgent needs, are now planned and provided for in our 1945 appropriation recently passed. Several streets are to be renewed, and all are to undergo general repair.

A small sum also was set aside for fire protection improvement. We hope, as rapidly as possible to add to this equipment sufficiently to become eligible for admittance to fire protection class eight, which in addition to giving us more adequate protection, will reduce insurance rates on all property within the town.

However, if we are to accomplish this improvement in the near future, we will need the help of the Manning and Brown concern, and of the Hunt Tool Company also. No one will deny that progress of this town has been accelerated since the establishment here of these industries. It is my intention to work consistently for their continued goodwill and co-operation. I, at present, have Mr. Fred Manning's personal promise of substantial aid in improving and maintaining First street which is the one so extensively used by trucks of his company. Some part of my purpose in recommending the election tomorrow, of Mr. Mefford (shop superintendent for Manning and Brown) and Mr. Avey (yard master for the Hunt Tool Co.) as councilmen, is to secure their additional influence with these concerns in regard to continued assistance I hope to obtain for the town from them.

The work of revising and re-enacting the town ordinances, begun under direction of a reputable Casper attorney shortly after I took office, is still in progress, but is not yet complete.

Administration of the community house I have left in the hands of the people of the town, asking always for their choice of a candidate to be appointed to the committee in charge, and subsequently leaving all decisions to the committee so chosen. The hundred dollars voted this year to be added to the building fund is intended only to furnish some small assistance toward further improvement.

In closing, let me extend to you the most cordial of invitations to attend any, or all, of the meetings of your town council. These meetings are always public, and your officials are appreciative of your interest in their administration of your municipal affairs.

Very cordially yours,



May 7, 1945 letter from Mayor Fred Steinle to the citizens of Mills concerning the upcoming mayoral election. Steinle was reelected quite easily over William A. Sanders. The letter is indicative of the town's struggle to provide services with a constant lack of money.

THE VANHORN AREA

Like the Wotco area, the Vanhorn property history parallels that of Mills. Twenty seven acres lying east of the C&NW railroad track, south of the West Yellowstone Highway, and west of the North Platte River comprised the original site. The Casper Creek flows through the center of the site from northwest to southeast.

This land was owned early on by the Midwest Refining Company and the Mills Construction Company. The Sprague and Nisely Construction Company was located here in the twenties, as was the 58th Brigade (Cavalry) of the Wyoming National Guard, both of which depended on the horse for their existence. A man named Scotty Gellatly got involved in ownership of parts of the land, possibly all of it at one point in time.

Walter Vanhorn purchased the property from Standard Oil (formerly Midwest Refining) in 1936, after Standard abandoned its stables. There were still several buildings and steam tunnels from the refinery across the river which brought heat to the property. The steam tunnels were abandoned by Standard and the free heat ended. Between the creek and railroad track were the barns, which came complete with forty wagons, and several other buildings located along what today is Vanhorn Avenue. There was a blacksmith shop across the road, which housed three hundred tons of hay that unfortunately burned down on the Fourth of July in the early forties.

The Vanhorns made a ranch, or more of a farm, out of the place. They raised three hundred brood sows in the barns and kept twenty two milking cows too. Milk brought twenty two cents a gallon. Across the road was a corral full of eighteen hundred feeder hogs that were fed with mash from the Casper Brewery. Apparently only on a rare occasion, when one of the pigs got into some excess liquid from the mash did any get too drunk. Floods on the Casper Creek played havoc with the business of the farm, even washing away some of the livestock on occasion.

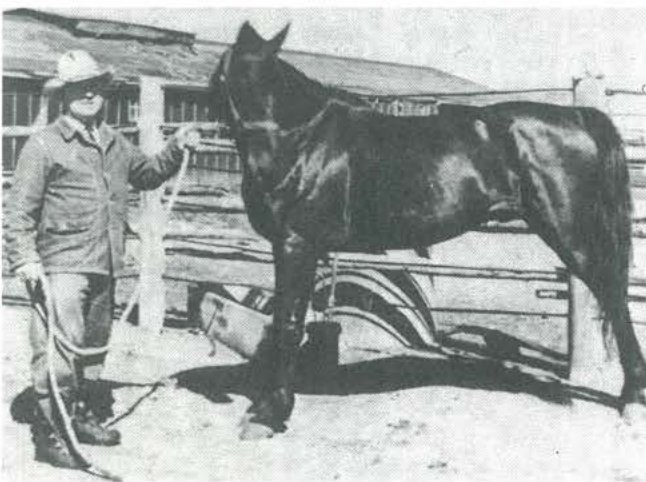
The Vanhorns built the sale barn in 1945 and built the Wagon Wheel as an arena for the annual State Hereford Show, which was held there for many years. The Wagon Wheel burned in 1954, but was rebuilt in 1955. Fred bought the Wagon Wheel from Walter in 1974 and added on in 1982.

The land has been sold off in bits and pieces, now Pepper Tank owns the land east of Casper Creek. Fred says there are arrowheads and indications of

Indian dugouts on the site, which is still at the mercy of the floods of Casper Creek, and high water from dams downstream on the North Platte.¹³



Midwest Refining (later Standard) stables at the Vanhorn site. Courtesy Etta Sims.



Walter Vanhorn works with one of his horses at the former Amoco stable site. Courtesy Fred Vanhorn.

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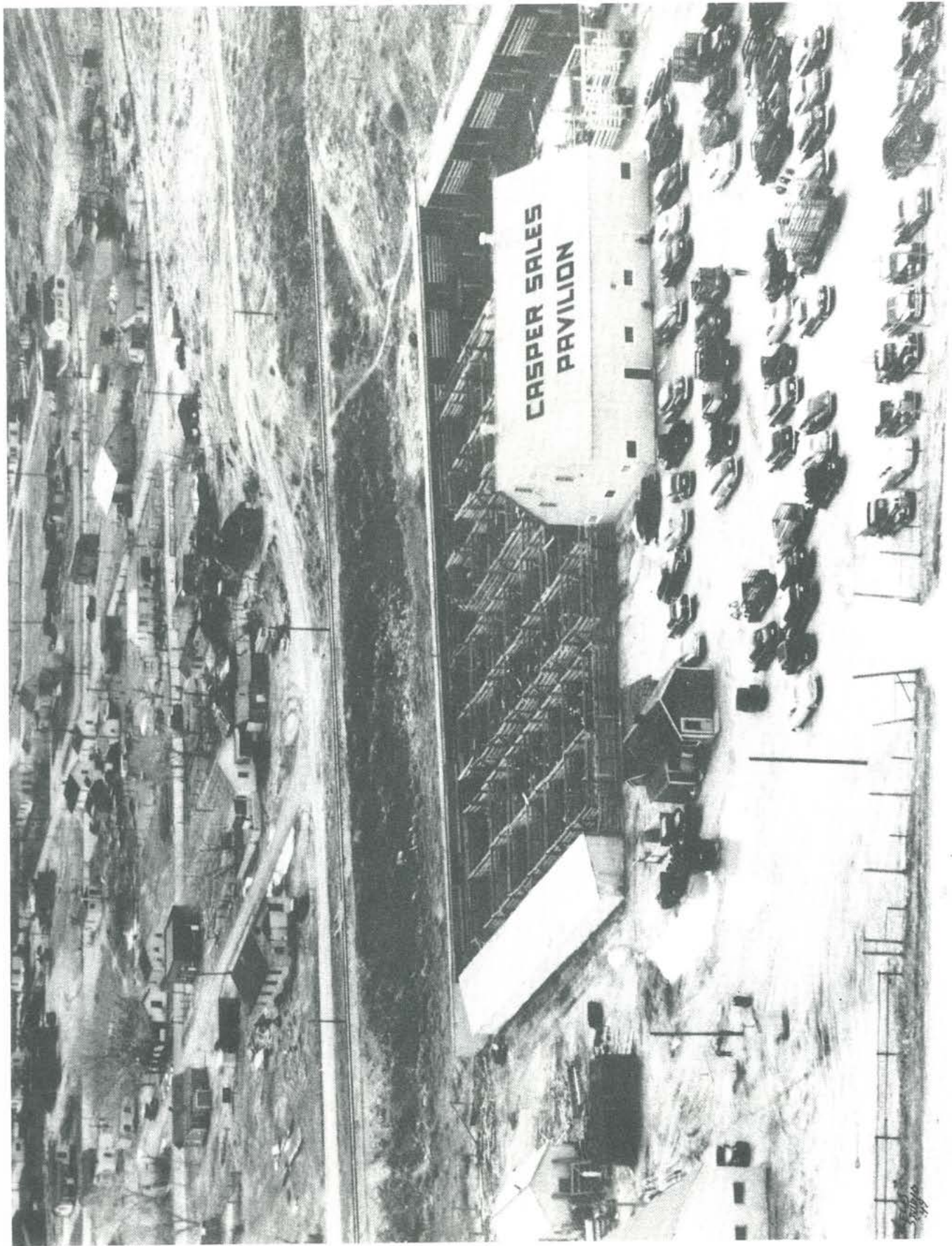
This aerial photograph was taken for Fred Vanhorn by Bell Studio in 1949, and is representative of what the town was like at that time. The Wagon Wheel Roller Rink building is in the lower left hand corner with Vanhorn Avenue in front and the C&NW main line to the rear, as the photograph looks southwest from over the Casper Creek and the west Yellowstone Highway. The photograph shows that although the population of Mills grew from 350 to 866 people during the forties, in 1949 there was still lots of room to spread out. Lots were for sale for taxes for a few dollars even this late in the town's history and many had bought up several lots or even blocks for building and speculation. The first house across the tracks, facing the tracks, is that of Norene Kilmer, Town Clerk, who had the house brought in from out in the country rather than building a house on the land. This house faces northeast on Northwestern Avenue and the side of the house is on Fourth Street.

At this point there was little or no development out of the flood plain and there were no roadways of any significance to the west of the town proper. It is easy to see the condition of the roadways and the drainage problems that existed at the time. There was still no public sewer in Mills, and there would not be for another eleven years.

The area has developed almost totally now, with many businesses located along Vanhorn. The Northwestern Park lies between the railroad tracks and the first street to the south, also named Northwestern.



September 14, 1949 aerial photo of the Bureau of Reclamation Center, looking southeast. The sale barn in the following picture is located just off the upper left of the photograph. Pendell Boulevard runs just to the right of the four oil storage tanks and through the Bureau site. The water tank is visible in the center of the photograph just across the street from the Bureau. The refinery, Casper, and Casper Mountain are visible in the background. The Central Wyoming Fairgrounds are located just across the river in the upper right, south of Fort Caspar. Courtesy U.S. Bureau Of Reclamation.



THE NEWS

January 7, 1940 H. C. Nelson, who has been residing in the Homer Baugh house on Third and Wasatch, moved to Casper last week.

The Billingsly house has been rented to Mr. & Mrs. Nelson Wayne and family.

Miss Anne Mills left Wednesday evening for Denver where she has accepted a position with the Bartz and Klein co.

January 14, 1940 R. C. Dockham received word the past week of the death of his nephew, Martin Cole, at Cambridge, Mass. Mr. Cole, an assistant scoutmaster, went out on some ice with the scoutmaster to see if it was safe for the scouts to skate on. Both men fell through the ice and were drowned. Mr. Cole was a brother of George Cole, who visited at the Dockham home a few years ago. Due to ill health, Mrs. Eva Sanders finds it necessary to discontinue her beauty shop work indefinitely. Mrs. Bob Mathews received several bruises when she slipped on the steps of the parsonage last Monday.

A large number of skaters have been enjoying skating on the river. Mrs. Cleve Simpson, wife of the mayor, has been quite ill with the flu and throat trouble during the week, but is reported to be able to be up and is improving nicely.

February 4, 1940 Betty Marie Ray is suffering no ill effects from a dog bite which she suffered Wednesday evening. Mr. & Mrs. Earl Lamons have moved into the Bob Mills house on Benton from the Kriener apartments. Most all the young folks of Mills attended the Military Ball at the high school Friday evening. Mrs. William Sanders received word that her son Derrold had incurred an infection in his finger while at the CCC Camp at Cody, and was transferred to Fort Warren Hospital.

February 14, 1940 Mrs. A. C. Winkes, who made a short visit in Los Angeles, was accompanied last week by her mother, Mrs. Jordan, who has been in California for the past year. Mrs. Jordan, who formerly resided in Mills and Casper, prefers Wyoming's snow and wind to California rain.

March 12, 1940 In gathering eggs at the Hinerman Poultry Farm, Mr. Hinerman discovered an egg 10 inches long and 8 inches in circumference. In breaking

it, there was one complete egg inside of another egg.

Mr. & Mrs. Frank Thompson of Lance Creek were called to Mills by the illness of Mr. Thompson's father, J. A. Thompson, who burst a blood vessel in the throat Tuesday. Mr. Thompson was removed to the hospital and is showing improvement in his condition. The Billingsly property was recently purchased by Miss Elma Thompson of Edgerton, Wyoming, who with her father and mother, Mr. & Mrs. J. A. Thompson and nephew Gene Harrington, have moved into and will make their home in Mills. Mr. & Mrs. Vern Dodds have moved to Casper and their home is now occupied by Mr. & Mrs. William Baker. Mr. & Mrs. Joe Forgey purchased the Bill Bailey house and have moved in.

March 19, 1940 A very interested group of Brownies meets on Thursday evening after school and is now working on barometers. Mrs. Robert Dodds has charge of the Brownie Troop in Mills. Mrs. Tina Jordan purchased the Vern Dodds trailer house and is now residing there.

April 7, 1940 Mrs. Alva Thompson has announced the opening of her beauty shop at her home. It will be known as Alva's Beauty Shoppe.

George Boyle is one of the enumerators employed in taking the census.

June 2, 1940 Mills is being made more attractive by improvement projects recently completed at property owned by Raymond Layman. A check for \$5.00 was mailed as a mark of special recognition in connection with the *Tribune Herald* campaign of encouragement for city improvement and beautification. The Layman home is situated at Fifth and Midwest Streets in Mills.

June 6, 1940 Plans are being made to organize a NYA baseball team for girls and boys in Mills.

July 14, 1940 Mr. & Mrs. Deward Drollinger have sold their property and will leave Sunday for Parco, where Mr. Drollinger has employment.

July 28, 1940 The paint contract for the city hall has been completed and the building has a very neat and clean appearance.

Oiling of the roads also has been under way during the past week.

Fire of an unknown origin destroyed an automobile belonging to Lloyd Ward at midnight Wednesday.

August 13, 1940 Little Bille Schimpf accidentally got a hold of the lysol bottle, mistaking it for kool-aid, but fortunately did not drink any of the contents. Mrs. John Nolan returned to her home in Newcastle after visiting a few days at the home of her nephew T. J. Nolan and family. Mrs. Nolan counted many changes in and near Casper. In the spring of 1888, the late Mr. John Nolan became section foreman on section #106 on the Northwestern Railway near Glenrock where they remained till 1892. Mr. Elvira Yant has accepted a part-time position with the Hurley Bottling Company.

September 8, 1940 The Mills town council, which met in regular monthly session Wednesday evening, has urged parents to see that their children do not play in the streets. The town will not be responsible for accidents which occur, as there is an ordinance prohibiting children from playing in the streets. Councilman Dockham asked about the license ordinance in regard to peddlers coming into town. This question was tabled for later discussions. At the suggestion of councilman Dockham, Mr. Stamper was to contract the Power Company in regard to checking the Mills system more frequently.

September 17, 1940 Mr. & Mrs. Al Nelson of Worcester, Mass., who have been visiting at the William Sanders home the last few weeks, have moved into the D. V. Harris home on Riverview Avenue. Mr. & Mrs. Nelson left Massachusetts for their honeymoon trip to the West. Arriving in Wyoming, they decided to make their home in Mills for an indefinite time. Mr. Nelson has accepted the position as pianist at the tavern.

Mr. Hinerman has moved two houses to Mills and has placed them on his lots on Benton Avenue. He expects to remodel the houses for occupancy. A large number of Mills residents attended the opening of the new tavern Friday evening.

November 11, 1940 The mayor of Mills has received the State Examiner's report which said the affairs of the town seem to be administered very efficiently and economically. The town officials were commended for their efforts to place Mills on a cash basis. Under an agreement entered into with the bondholders, the town has paid off \$1,860 cash and interest to September 30, 1940, and \$300 more in October on the promised settlement amount of \$8,000 to be paid at \$40 per month with interest at 4% on the unpaid balance. The principal amount is to be reduced to \$7,000 if paid within the period of six years. In addition to the

above, the town has paid off all old outstanding warrants, which cleans up all old warrants with the exception of one which is unaccounted for.

The mayor and council expressed appreciation to the children of Mills for their cooperation and nice behavior on Halloween.

Mr. & Mrs. H. C. Alford and family have moved into the McAllister house.

Lewis Kulage and Mr. Sherlock of Casper bagged their elk in the Jackson Hole hunting area and returned home Thursday from a two week hunting and fishing trip.

December 4, 1940 A group gathered Tuesday evening and shivareed Mr. & Mrs. Larry Louveries. After the treats, the group enjoyed skating on the river, and later in the evening dancing at the Club LaVida.

December 13, 1940 The town council met Wednesday evening. After the general routine business, there was some discussion in regard to Mills citizens who speed and drive recklessly. The marshal was instructed to adopt stricter enforcement. Prosecution of violators will be pressed. The town has posted a sign "To City Dump" at First and Railroad Avenue. The people are requested to use this new location.

While at work Friday at the old court house, Howard Miller suffered a blow on the hand from a falling brick. But no serious effects developed. Mr. Miller was able to return to work again on Monday.

December 29, 1940 Robert Kriener of Mills in one of the authors whose poems are included in "Poets of America, 1940, Democracy Speaks", a 700 page volume just published. More than 12,000 poets living in every part of the United States and Canada competed for a place in this important volume, only a small percentage of these were found to write poetry of sufficient merit to be accorded a place in the book. The volume contains the work of little known authors as well as that of writers who have been published in many magazines and books. A similar volume is now being compiled and poets who are interested in having their work considered for the new book should write to the publishers for information: Avon House, 1107 Broadway, New York, NY.

April 22, 1941 Mr. George E. Teester was moved this week from Memorial Hospital to the new convalescent home at 101 Benton Avenue. Mr. & Mrs. Bill Barker have moved into the Dockham trailer house on the river.

May 15, 1941 Town elections in Natrona County Tuesday resulted in the re-election of the three mayors, Joseph Perpick of Evansville, Dr. H. M. Shidler of Edgerton by decisive votes, while G. C. Simpson of Mills won re-election by a one vote margin. Mills town clerk, Carrie Thomas, announced Wednesday that following consultation with legal authorities, a ballot whose validity had been in doubt was allowed. Named on the ballot was Mayor Simpson, thereby giving him the one vote needed to break a tie which had existed between him and candidate Fred Steinle. The extra ballot gave Simpson 83 votes to 82 for Steinle. Steinle stated Wednesday that he is contemplating contesting the election and added that he would know definitely when he had consulted with county attorney Vincent Mulvaney. Council members named at Mills are Roy Wingert and Joe Holt, both re-elected.

May 18, 1941 The young folks of Mills enjoyed a weiner roast on the river Tuesday evening. The event was sponsored by the Mills Community Club and members of the council. Refreshments of weiners and buns and rolls were served. Cases of pop were furnished by Mrs. Carrie Thomas, Mr. Steinle, and Mr. Simpson.

May 25, 1941 Mrs. Carrie Thomas, town clerk of Mills for the past 12 years, disclosed Saturday that at a special meeting of the town council last week, G. C. Simpson was sworn in as mayor of Mills, Mrs. Thomas stated that council took unanimous action in approving her election poll books which awarded the recent mayoral race to Simpson by one vote. Fred Steinle, councilman, who was runnerup candidate for mayor after defeat automatically regained his seat on the town council. Mrs. Thomas said, and it was at the meeting of the council when the books were okayed, "He did not oppose the approval of the books." It had been rumored that Steinle would contest the election, but he could not be reached Saturday to determine what action, if any, he intends to take regarding it. The final vote of 83 to 82 resulted after one ballot about which there was a question as to validity had been accepted as in order on the service of legal authority, Mrs. Thomas said. She presented a diagram of the ballot to the authority immediately after the election, then announced the results. As town clerk, Mrs. Thomas swore Mayor Simpson in, and in turn was sworn in as town clerk by a member of the council, Roy Wingert. Other council members are Joe Holt, Roscoe Dockham, and Steinle.

June 5, 1941 Among the seniors from Mills who graduated on Thursday evening from the Natrona County High School are Lula Vanhorn, Edith Smith, Billy Yant, Donald Ray, and Bob Jammerman.

June 20, 1941 George Boyle of Mills was placed on the scholastic honor roll for the spring quarter at Billings Polytechnic Institute. A quality point average of 2.25 or B+ is necessary for inclusion on the honor roll.

The committee of three men appointed by the city council of Mills and the president of the community club, Mrs. Nolan, consisting of Mr. A. S. Vail, Mr. Fred Steinle, and Mr. Roy Wingert have been looking over a number of buildings during the past weekend, which they are anxious to secure for a community clubhouse in Mills.

July 13, 1941 The Mills Volunteer Fire Department was called out Tuesday afternoon when a grass fire was getting beyond control in the alley between Wasatch and Midwest Avenues.

July 20, 1941 The aluminum drive which is being conducted by the government between July 25 and 29, will be in charge of the VFW Auxiliary. Anyone not contacted during the house-to-house canvass on July 25 and 26, are asked to leave their contributions at the Lee Smith garage in Mills. Mills is expecting their new pastor, Reverend & Mrs. William Lambert of Cheyenne, to take charge of the Sunday service.

July 27, 1941 Due to a change in plans, the vacancy at the Mills Nazarene Church was not accepted by the Reverend William Lambert of Cheyenne as announced last week. There will be Sunday school on Sunday as usual at 9:45, but at this time no arrangements for preaching service have been made.

August 10, 1941 While working in the yard on Thursday, Mrs. Ralph Harris was bitten by a spider. She received medical aid immediately and no serious effects were anticipated.

Mr. & Mrs. George Sword and family have moved into the Fred Bennett house which they have purchased.

The council of Mills met at the city hall Wednesday evening. H. E. Arbes made application for a liquor license at Pearl's Tavern. Other routine business was transacted.

August 15, 1941 The remodeling of the present building of the Western Machine Company has been completed and the steel structure work of a new building to be erected over the present building is going along nicely. At present there is a crew of approximately 15 men at work. Machinery from Laramie is arriving and it is estimated it will be about 30 days before completion.

Mr. & Mrs. W. J. Donnelly and family have moved into the property they recently purchased from Mr. & Mrs. Dayton Jackman. Mr. Donnelly is connected with the O. L. Walker Lumber company.

Earl Jammerman, who received a back injury last Sunday while attending a rodeo at Edgerton, is resting as well as can be expected. He is in a cast.

September 3, 1941 A short council meeting was called to grant a liquor license to A. G. Arbes.

October 5, 1941 Robert Vail, who has been enjoying a 13 day leave at the home of his parents Mr. & Mrs. A. S. Vail, left Tuesday to return to Bremerton, Washington where he will return to his ship the USS Lexington.

Mr. & Mrs. Orville Parker of Laramie have moved into the Redwine house on the hill.

October 12, 1941 Don Simpson is now employed as a pipeline rider at the Morton Ranch for the Northern Utilities Company. The many friends of G. C. Simpson will be glad to hear that he is improving from cuts and bruises, also a fractured rib suffered in a car accident last Saturday.

November 2, 1941 At the recent Halloween party held at school in the club room on Friday, prizes for the best costumes were awarded to Dorothy Phillips for the prettiest old fashioned costume. Lucille Compton also wore a beautiful old fashioned costume. The prize for the most original costume was awarded to Mary Lea Nolan. Joan Day represented George Washington, Earl Wingert was the big town sheriff. Fred Vanhorn was the cowboy walking in his sleep, and Frank Janeaux was the big town gambler. Westby St. John was awarded the prize for the most original men's costume.

November 9, 1941 Mr. & Mrs. Harlan Reed have moved into their recently purchased home on Fourth and Benton Avenues.

Dennis Janeaux and Arch Vail went to Midwest to look for a suitable building to be used as a community clubhouse in Mills. After residing in Mills for a number of years, George Boyle has rented his home, and with his son and mother moved to Casper. N. E. Hughs returned from a deer hunting trip with a record deer which has a 34" spread and a 3" base.

All the members were present at the regular council meeting which was held on Wednesday evening. Mr. Feese, manager of the Western Machine Company, was a guest at the meeting. Plans are being made to widen the street from the alley behind Claughton's store to First and Platte Avenues.

November 16, 1941 Friends and neighbors in Mills were sorry to hear of the death of Horace Evans on Thursday. Mr. Evans and family were former residents of Mills, and Mr. Evans was proprietor of a grocery store here for a number of years.

The town books of Mills have been audited by the State Auditors.

Mr. & Mrs. L. J. Rielly and family of Laramie have moved into the G. E. Boyle home.

November 30, 1941 The Western Machine Company entertained 43 employees at a chicken dinner at the Riverside Club on Thursday evening. Employees of Western Machine Company would like to contact anyone having property for rent or sale in Mills.

December 11, 1941 The regular meeting of the city council of Mills was held last Wednesday evening with all members present. The usual routine business was taken care of and the council donated \$100 to the fund for the community clubhouse. Due to weather conditions and previous contracts, the moving of the recently purchased building for a community clubhouse in Mills had been delayed. It was suggested by Mayor Simpson that the residents of Mills save all their old newspaper and magazines and by calling Mrs. Thomas or Ted Stamper they will be picked up and turned in for national defense.

January 25, 1942 Mr. & Mrs. Joe Demsey and family of Lance Creek have moved into the Claughton house. Mr. Demsey is employed by the Western Machine Company.

February 16, 1942 Mrs. W. E. St. John has obtained a list of the boys in Mills who are in the armed forces and the dates of their birthdays. Anyone wishing to send the guys a card on their birthdays may secure such a list from Mrs. St. John.

February 22, 1942 Mr. & Mrs. R. C. Dockham have moved into the Fred Shackelford property which they purchased sometime ago.

March 8, 1942 Mr. & Mrs. Walter Vanhorn received word from their son Fred, who enlisted in the navy recently, that he had passed the examination and will go to Chicago, Illinois for six months study for aviation mechanics mate.

March 15, 1942 Mr. Winkes received word from his son Leon, who is stationed at Hamilton Field, California, that he will be leaving soon for officer candidate school.

May 1, 1942 Residents of Mills are looking forward with interested anticipation to the completion of a community building now being constructed there. An appeal was issued Friday that all men in the community who are able to do so turn out Saturday for work on the building. The women of Mills will serve a lunch at noon. The men are asked to bring carpentry tools. If the weather does not permit work on the outside, there will be much interior work on the building.

May 10, 1942 The town of Mills will elect three councilmen Tuesday. Only three candidates have filed for the office on the Homeowners ticket. Dennis A. Janeaux and Walter VanHorn are candidates for two year terms on the Progressive ticket. William A. Sanders is a candidate to fill an unexpired term of one year. Mills will not elect a mayor Tuesday, G. C. Simpson, the incumbent, still having a year to serve. Roy Wingert is a holdover on the council. Mrs. Carrie Thomas, Mills Clerk, announced that the polls will be open from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

May 13, 1942 A total of 72 votes were cast Tuesday at Mills as residents of the town voted two councilmen for two year terms and one for a one year term, it was announced Wednesday evening by Mrs. Carrie Thomas, Mills clerk. Walter Vanhorn received 64 votes and Dennis Janeaux received 54 votes as both were elected to two year terms, and William Sanders polled 68 votes for the one year term. R. F. Dockham, Fred Steinle, Tom Swaey, and Toots Wilcox each received one vote write-in for two year terms. No election for mayor was held as the present mayor, G. C. Simpson has one more year to serve.

May 7, 1944 The Town of Mills will hold a town election Tuesday May 9th at which time two councilmen will be elected for a term of two years each. Candidates for the Progressive Party are Walter Vanhorn and D. A. Janeaux, incumbents; Homeowner's Party O. W. Patterson and W. J. Ramsey; Independent ticket George Sword. Polls for town election will be located at the town hall.

May 10, 1944 O. W. Patterson and W. J. Ramsey on the Homeowner's ticket were elected councilmen for

two year terms, defeating Walter Vanhorn and D. A. Janeaux, incumbents of the Progressive Party, and George Sword of the Independent Party. The election was held Tuesday and 89 ballots were cast. The votes were cast as follows: Vanhorn 46, Janeaux 21, Patterson 56, Ramsey 46, and Sword 21.

November 10, 1944 The purchase of the Western Machine Company, a subsidiary of the Manning & Brown Company, Inc, by the Hunt Tool Company of Houston, Texas was announced here today. The Western Machine Company established just a few years ago has rapidly expanded and developed until it is now rated as the best equipped heavy machinery unit of its kind in the Rocky Mountain Area and its large site welding facilities are also rated as one of the best in the area. The establishment of Western Machine Company here was of great benefit to the oil industry in the Rocky Mountain fields. With Casper's central oil producers, operators and drillers find it very convenient to secure their service at Casper. Fifteen to twenty-five welders have been employed constantly. The Hunt Tool Company will assume management of the plant January 1, 1945. It is known throughout the south that they operate similar plants at Harvey and Jennings, Louisiana, and Bay City and Corpus Christi, Texas. In announcing the purchase of the Western Machine Company, W. J. Nutto, general sales manager of the Hunt Tool Company, stated that it is planned to establish additional shops in the Rocky Mountain Area to provide complete and dependable machine shop welding and supply service to the entire area. There is no change in personnel contemplated at the present time. P. M. Hunt, Vice President of the Hunt Tool Company, is expected to arrive about the first of the year and will direct the activities here, and with the expansion program being planned, the local plant may be expanded somewhat. "The company desired to expand its activities and we felt that this was a good field for expansion," Mr. Nutto stated. Arriving with Mr. Hunt about the first of the year will be Mrs. Hunt. They have one son in the service. Manning & Brown Company plans to continue its drilling operations. It is one of the largest companies in the area.

November 27, 1944 Word has been received by Mr. & Mrs. W. E. St. John of Mills that George W. Hushman S 1/C was wounded in action sometime last month. He was serving in the Pacific. He enlisted in the Navy December 1943, and left for overseas duty in March 1944.

May 9, 1945 The Town of Mills re-elected its mayor, Fred Steinle, and one incumbent councilman, William Mefford, at the municipal election Tuesday naming Charles Avey to the council seat vacated by William A. Sanders, opposing candidate for the office of mayor. Defeated candidate for the office of councilman were Emmet C. Carlen and Norman E. Hughs. The 126 votes were cast as follows: Mayor Steinle 79, Sanders 45; councilmen - Mefford 78, Avey 64, Hughes 60, and Carlen 39.

November 12, 1945 The Mills council at its regular meeting last Friday evening concluded arrangements for a drive against traffic law violators which is to be carried on within the town. Mayor Steinle stated that every effort is to be made to suppress infringements, particularly the practice of speeding, constituting as it does, a definite hazard to life and safety, but he warned that it is not possible to assure protection of small children who habitually play in the streets. He stated his wish to discourage such habits and reminded parents that children at play within the public thoroughfares are often subject to dangers beyond the power of the most cautious motorist to control.

The fact, recently brought to official attention, that the victory bond drive is meeting with something less than full cooperation by the town people was discussed at some length and all members of the council agreed to make efforts to stimulate the buying of these bonds through the local post office.

In connection with efforts being made by the council to improve the fire prevention equipment of the town, hoping by this means to further diminish fire losses and to obtain an improved rating with the underwriters, a special committee was appointed to examine present equipment and to decide what additions to it are most desirable. The council hopes to procure needed apparatus through federal surpluses as soon as they are available. Street commissioner H. J. Stamper reported that the survey of the town's boundary lines on the north and a portion of the west sides has been completed by the county surveyor, and that the re-established lines have been clearly and permanently marked with deep set steel stakes, which should eliminate future doubts as to the location of the said lines. In this correction, it was noted that the recently established Casper Sales Pavilion originally believed to be situated immediately outside the town limits is, instead, several yards within the boundary lines, the location of which is now certainly established. Plans were made for the laying of water line from Northwestern Avenue to pass under the tracks and right-of-way of the North Western Railway Company to serve a part of the town not now adequately supplied. The new water line being installed along First Street, between Platte and Midwest Avenues for the purpose of providing constant circulation of water flow in the lines at the southerly end of the two avenues, was reported interrupted for the present, awaiting the arrival of or-

dered materials. The meeting was adjourned until time indefinite, expecting to reconvene later in the month for the purpose of transacting further business in connection with certain property titles.

March 8, 1946 A special ordinance prohibiting disturbances of the public peace, setting forth specifically what acts shall be interpreted as constituting such disturbance, was enacted by the Mills council in its regular meeting Wednesday. The new law also provides a penalty to be imposed upon any person resisting arrest by an officer of the law or making any assault verbal or otherwise against any such officer. A decision was made for the purchase of a road oiler for use in the surfacing and repair of the town's streets. Clarence Wiltsey who was recently named by a vote of the town's citizenry for a position on the committee in charge of the Mills Community House, was given his official appointment and Levi Shaffer, senior member of the committee, received his commission as chairman for a term of one year. It was decided that a house numbering pattern worked out by councilman O. W. Patterson would be suitable and most satisfactory to residents generally and a map of the town was secured upon which numbers allotted to each location are to be noted. No law enforcing the following of the approved system of numbering is contemplated at this time, but the map with numbers indicated is to be made available for ready reference to any person wishing to number his building according to the specifications. It is hoped by the council that residents will readily appreciate the convenience and advantage of a standard numbering system and that voluntary compliance will be the general rule.

October 11, 1946 Following the first of January, all dogs harbored within the Town of Mills will have to be licensed according to an ordinance passed by the town council at its regular meeting Wednesday. Officials stated that no intensive drive is contemplated in connection with the new law, nor is it viewed as a source of any considerable revenue. License fees, set at one dollar for unspayed females, are not designed to work any hardship on any person owning an inoffensive pet, but will make possible the identification of such animals while providing a legal means for ridding the town of abandoned and unclaimed dogs which occasionally become both a problem and a nuisance town officials said. Further provisions of the ordinance prohibit harboring, without suitable restraint, any animal known to be vicious, and the molestation by persons other than those in charge of any animal which is restrained or confined. Several old ordinances providing various license fees for dogs but lacking certain desirable provisions were repealed. The license for operation of the Mills Tavern on Platte Avenue was renewed and a license granted to Howard Angel to operate a grocery business at First Street and Wasatch Avenue.

May 6, 1947 V. L. (Dick) Shipley, candidate for mayor of Mills, spoke briefly to a large crowd at the rally and dance held in the community hall in Mills. The dance was sponsored by the Citizens' Party of the community and featured the introduction of the candidate for mayor and the two candidates for councilman, Floyd Wilcox and W. H. Dewitt. Roy Root, chairman, introduced the candidates for the offices, all of whom made brief talks. Following the rally, refreshments were served by a group of Mills housewives, and dancing completed the program for the evening. Music was furnished by Mr. & Mrs. Reed, Fred Vanhorn, and B. Bohlin.

May 7, 1947 Incumbent officials, Mayor Fred Steinle and councilmen Howard Angel and Charles Avey, members of the Progressive Party at Mills, filed as candidates for re-election to their respective offices Wednesday. Mr. Steinle, who leads the ticket, has been a resident of Mills for more than 25 years and for the past 15 years has been quite active in the government of the community. He is a member of the committee in charge of street maintenance and improvement which this year will see considerable activity. Mr. Avey, yard foreman in the transportation department for Fred Manning, Inc. and a member of the town council since 1943, has served as a member of the water department committee during most of the recent improvement program and has made many contributions to its early completion. Mr. Steinle stated that all the municipal improvements during his administration have been accomplished without, at any time, incurring any indebtedness. Members of the opposition, who filed last week for election in the Citizens' Party ticket, are V. E. Shipley for mayor, and Floyd Wilcox and W. H. Dewitt for councilmen. The election is to be held next Tuesday.

May 14, 1947 Fred Steinle was elected to his third term as mayor of Mills and other Progressive Party candidates were returned to office in the election held Tuesday. Mr. Steinle led the balloting, collecting 95 votes to 68 for Dick Shipley, candidate for the Citizens' Party. Charles Avey running for re-election of the Progressive ticket received 93 and Howard Angel, another Progressive, was 81 votes to return them to their posts in the city council. Floyd Wilcox and W. H. Dewitt were the candidates of the Citizens' Party for council posts. Mr. Steinle in a pre-election address to the voters of Mills said that the town, under his administration, had accumulated a surplus of \$2,218. Civic improvements, he said, had incurred cleaning, and restoring materials, the addition of one large concrete cased well, additions to water mains, a new pumping house, new pumping equipment and engine, purchase of a grader, a snow plow, a street oiler for the department, the heavy duty surfacing of one street

and lighter oiling of other areas, creation of a fund for landscaping of a small municipal park and town hall grounds, and for improvements of the community hall. The town had already adopted an ordinance under which parents and guardians are held responsible for unlawful acts of irresponsible children, Mr. Steinle told the voters, and has adopted an ordinance requiring small businesses to pay a license fee.

September 18, 1947 Fred Steinle, mayor of the Town of Mills for the past 4½ years and recently serving also as police justice and building inspector, has resigned. Reason for the action was Mr. Steinle's planned removal from Mills to Casper. While still holding the mayor's position, Mr. Steinle resigned as police justice and building inspector and appointed Alva E. Humberson to fill the vacancy in those offices.

Mr. Humberson, veteran member of the council and president of that body, automatically succeeds to the office of mayor for the unexpired portion of the current official term. Elwanda L. Burke was appointed town clerk and treasurer, succeeding Mrs. R. L. Sutphin, who had held that position during Mr. Steinle's administration and who resigned some time ago, continuing to serve until a new appointee was found. An ordinance previously decided upon by council, raising the fee for liquor license for establishments at which bar service is available within the town was enacted and a long pending ordinance establishing and governing the duties and powers of all town officials, also received unanimous approval. Both ordinances were presented by Mrs. Steinle, who under the direction of attorney D. W. Oglibee of Casper, has done the legal work for the town during her husband's incumbency. Mrs. Sutphin received the thanks and good wishes of all members of the council as voiced by Mr. Steinle, after which Mr. Humberson expressed the gratitude of the town and particularly of the council for services rendered by both Mr. & Mrs. Steinle. J. J. (Ted) Stamper, recently re-appointed to the office of water and street commissioner, of which he had previously held for a number of years, explained that owing to the change in officers having taken place just at the turn of the month, there would be considerable difficulty this month in getting the water meters read, and was given permission by the council to omit the reading and to present consumers next month with bills for both month's water. Mrs. Burke, who will hereafter be the collector of water rentals, received approval by the council for her plan of receiving such payments only during the regular office hours (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) from the first to the tenth of each month, it being pointed out that the meager salary of the office does not warrant any person's being expected to devote full time to it.

THE FIFTIES: EXCITING TIMES AGAIN

The decade of the fifties again saw growth in Mills, this time from a population of 866 in 1950 to 1477 in 1960. This was brought about by a healthy local economy and the natural growth of the area west of Casper. The fifties were a time of progress for the town. The fire department was rechartered and a fire hall was built at Fourth and Wasatch, the Bureau of Reclamation was going strong and the town got its first "public" sewer. It would be 1960 before the town had a fully operational town-wide public sewer and the best part of the decade of the fifties was invested in getting this sewer set up.

The bridge was built across the North Platte from Mills to the Fort Casper area by the Wyoming Highway Department in the early fifties, which changed the town forever. Until this time, the only way to get to Mills was across the refinery bridge and the Casper Creek on West Yellowstone, then down Vanhorn Avenue across the C&NW and into Mills. With the opening of the bridge and the construction of Wyoming Boulevard to connect the Fairgrounds area with West Yellowstone came major commercial and residential development on the western end of the town.

Mountain View and other areas around Mills also grew rapidly during this time. The Kiskis Subdivision was platted in the late forties and developed into a commercial area along West Yellowstone, just north of the Bureau. This area was later annexed to Mills.

By the fifties there was no longer a Mills column in the Casper paper, and news about the fifties is scarce. Bill Clapp, mayor from 1947 to 1953, provides us with a comprehensive view of life and government in Mills in the fifties:



William Clapp at home, 1986.

WILLIAM CLAPP

My name is William W. Clapp, I was born February 14, 1918 in Buffalo, Wyoming. My family moved to a homestead near old Fort Reno, on the Powder River, near Sussex, shortly after I was born, where two brothers and a sister were born. In 1924 the family moved to Salt Creek, an incorporated town near Midwest. The North & South Railroad had their headquarters, roundhouse, and depot there. It was just a spur line that tied into the Burlington and Northwestern Lines west of Casper and southwest of Midwest, at Ilco. They hauled oil, livestock, and passengers. I knew the section hands, the engineers, the firemen, everybody. The railroad hauled oil to Casper before there were pipelines installed to move the oil from the Salt Creek field to Casper. The railroad I think was established in 1923 and abandoned in the early thirties. The rails were actually removed. Once the pipelines were in use there was no oil business for the railroad, and because of that and the Depression it closed down.

The North & South had been planned to run from Canada to Mexico, but it never really got underway. C. M. Canfield was the superintendent of the North & South. He had been secretary to Buffalo Bill and had traveled with him extensively in Europe and the United States with his Wild West Show.

I was raised in Salt Creek and two brothers and three sisters were born there. We all went to school in Salt Creek. The school was the exact duplicate, two story red brick building, that was used for the Mills, Mountain View, and Evansville Schools. We went to junior high and high school in Midwest and I graduated in 1937 from high school in Midwest. This was during the Depression of course, and I worked various jobs and with a rig builder contractor named Jim Kittleson for a short time after I got out of school. I mention his name because I believe he was at one time mayor of the Town of Salt Creek, besides being a prominent business man in other ventures.

Then I worked for American Pipe and Supply. That's where I met Floyd Wilcox, who would be Mayor of Mills during the fifties. Our family later moved to Richardson Acres, which is north of Casper on the Old Salt Creek Highway. That's when I voted in my first presidential election and made a lot of contacts in Mills, including Herb Harris, who later served with me on the council.

On December 25, 1940, I married the former Fern Arnold of Cambridge, Nebraska. I was still em-

ployed by American Pipe and lived in Casper. At that time I purchased a couple of lots in Mills for \$15 each and later had the titles cleared for a total of \$80, making the total cost of the lots \$110. Fern and I were driving around one Sunday afternoon, and spotted a small house and garage located on a homestead northeast of Wardwell airport, now known as the Town of Bar Nunn. The buildings had been vandalized to some extent. We contacted the owner and he sold the buildings to us for \$100. We had them moved to our lots in Mills and set on foundations for \$40.

The house was only twelve feet by twenty four feet, the garage somewhat smaller. I worked on them in my spare time, and they were rather cute when fixed up and freshly painted. In the meantime, in 1941 we rented a small place from the Millers, on Benton Avenue. In 1947 we purchased the house at 432 Wasatch, from the McGinleys, and did extensive remodeling. We had water and electricity, but no sewer. After remodeling, the house was completely modern, including a septic tank. This house was approximately 24 by 32 feet with a full basement. We later added ten feet to it for a total size of 24 by 42, and a 24 by 24 foot garage. We lived there until 1955, when we sold it to the Chitwoods and moved to Casper. During this time we also rented out the house at 430 Wasatch and did finally sell it, too.

I went to work for Standard Oil at the Refinery in April 1942 and retired from there in 1978. On January 18th, 1943 our first son, William Lee Clapp was born. Larry Ray Clapp was born October 4, 1946 and our daughter, Sheryl Ann Clapp was born October 18th, 1948. Our youngest son, Gordon Neil Clapp was born December 18th, 1954.

In August of 1943, I enlisted in the Navy Sea Bees as a second Class Petty Officer. I acquired that rating because I had experience with pipeline construction. I spent twenty eight months in the service, twenty three months in the South Pacific. I was honorably discharged in 1945 and returned to work at the Standard Refinery in Casper. In February or March of 1946, I was approached by Fred Steinle, Mayor of Mills to run for council. Alva Humberson was also asked to run. We were both veterans and after due consideration, we threw our hats into the ring. Partly because we were veterans and partly due to lack of opposition, we were elected.

Steinle resigned as mayor and quit his job at the refinery after I had been on the council about a year. He bought a ranch on Bates Creek and

wanted to devote all of his time at the ranch. Humberson, president of the council, served as mayor for a while, but he resigned as mayor and as I was the president of the council, I became mayor and finished out Steinle's term.

When I took over as mayor, the biggest problem confronting the town was revenue. The cash balance was then only \$1,972. During that period, we bought a street oiler for \$1,000 and a dump truck. We converted another truck into a septic tank pumper. Pumping cesspools and septic tanks got to be quite a problem. In 1949 we had a bank balance of \$3,783, after we had purchased two pieces of equipment and had done some street paving. We also sold off some of the small tracts of land that the town owned.

There were political parties in Mills at that time. The town was mostly Democratic, but the local "nonpartisan" political parties were also active. The candidates for mayor would usually select a couple of candidates for council to run with them, who shared the same philosophy and ideas about running the town. The Homeowners, Independents, Citizen's, Square Deal were some of the parties. The candidates got together and decided what would be a good name for their party. Most people voted for the mayor and two council candidates on the same ticket. These races generated a lot of interest, very hot and heavy, and sometimes personal, quite often personal. There were often distinct differences between the parties in how they wanted to run the town, so there was a choice.

Lack of revenue still remained the biggest problem I handled while I was mayor, but with careful planning we managed to address most of the town's needs. We had one major problem, which was the corroded condition of the town water tank. We awarded a contract to the Dixie Water Tank Company to clean out the inside of the tank and spot weld the places where it was about to corrode through. They weren't doing a very good job, and I talked the matter over with the council and we dispensed with the company's services and paid them for the time they had spent on the job. At that time the town marshal was Everett Clark. He was a contract welder, and we talked to him about fixing the tank. We rented the equipment and he went in and put the tank back in first class condition. I think it lasted until the tank was moved to Bar Nunn, so it was a good job.

The town dump was on Western Oil Tool land, and while it was convenient for the citizens of the community, it had outlived its usefulness. At

Wotco's request the site was abandoned and a new dump site was located near Mountain View. Later the dump was moved to a location near Casper Creek and still later the town took advantage of the new Casper landfill. When I first came to Mills there were quite a few vacant lots, most of these were owned by the county who had taken them over for delinquent taxes. All of these lots were eventually bought by individuals and investors. You could pick up a lot for around fifteen dollars before the War. After the War, however, lots sold for as much as \$1500. Many of the lots were bought by trailer park people and after the War there were a few trailer parks appearing in town. We had ordinances to control them, thankfully.

Earl Guthrie and his son put in a trailer court at First and Wasatch adjacent to the Art Cloughton store. There wasn't any sewer then, so the drains from all the trailers had to be tied into one large septic tank. I had reservations as to the ability of this system to handle that much raw sewage, but it seemed to work okay. Orville McIntosh and Lou Kulage also had trailer parks, but their sewer systems were hooked onto the Bureau of Reclamation sewer line.

The Bureau of Reclamation had located their office and housing along Pendell in the fifties. The town provided public water to them and they did later annex to the town. The Bureau had constructed a sewer line from their land down Platte Street to an Imhoff tank near Wotco by the bridge. They had allowed people who lived near the line to hook onto it and the Bureau later worried about the capacity of the Imhoff tank. The Bureau contacted the council about taking over their sewage system and we agreed to their proposal. It took an Act Of Congress in 1950 to get this accomplished, and we took over the line. There were senators and congressmen involved in this, including Joseph C. O'Mahony, Lester Hunt, W. H. Harrison, and others.

The Imhoff tank served only a small fraction of the town and had to be cleaned quite frequently, but it was a step closer toward promoting a sewer system for the remaining part of town though, and that's when I started pushing for the project. We had a bond election in 1952 to finance the sewer. The bond issue passed overwhelmingly and we had a company that was going to buy the bonds, I think the company was Boettcher and Company of Denver.

As luck would have it, there was an election and I was defeated by Herman Shaeffer for mayor. He

was against the proposition of the sewer system. Apparently because of his dislike for the project, it was dropped, and the bonds were lost. The sewer system was finally constructed approximately ten years later, but we had put a lot of time and hard work into it, too, which had gone down the drain, figuratively speaking.

The fire department was nothing more than a hose cart when I came to Mills. We were lucky, however, in that we didn't have too many fires. When I became mayor, we had just a little shed at Fourth and Wasatch with a hose cart in it. When the bell rang, the first volunteer fireman to get there would hook the hose cart onto his car and head out. There was a lot of competition to be the one to get the hose cart. Fire insurance was very expensive then. When I first went on the council, they had set aside a few dollars for fire protection. They wanted to get more equipment and also wanted to get admitted to a Fire Protection Class 8 status. Fred Steinle was very concerned about fire protection, and he had asked Manning and Brown (now Wotco) for help with this. He also had the commitment from Manning and Brown to help maintain First Street, which was a main thoroughfare for the company's heavy equipment. When I became mayor, we finally got the fire department organized and chartered and Wotco fixed up a place for a fire truck in hopes that the town would get a truck. Soon after, the City of Casper retired one of their old fire trucks, a 1922 LaFrance, that they were going to put out at the County Fairgrounds as a museum piece. We leased it from the city for the consideration of one dollar. We knew we could put it to a lot better use than just a museum piece. It wasn't too long after we organized the fire department that there was a case of arson in Casper. The arsonist set several fires in the city. The Mills department helped out on one building of the several that had been torched. The arsonist was caught, as he was seen at all of the locations, and actually helped the firemen fight the fires. This was the first big incident for the department.

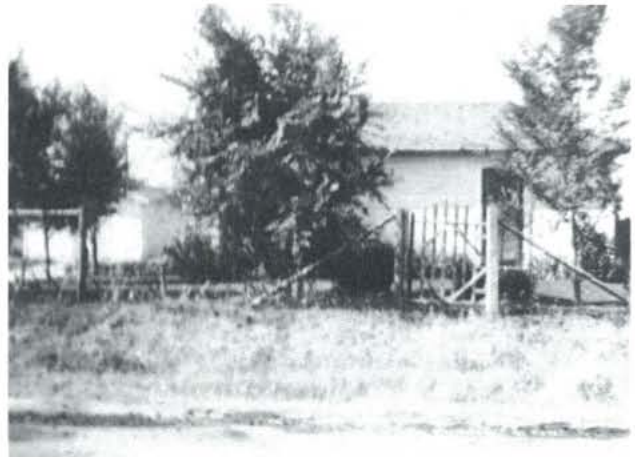
We kept the LaFrance at a building on Manning and Brown property for awhile, but the council was very much in favor of having a place on town property to keep it. In the spring of 1953 we took bids on construction of a fire station to be built at Fourth and Wasatch. It was a 40 by 122 foot building with a community meeting room and a room for a council chamber. Holzinger and Schropfer were the architects and Jim Jones was the contractor.

One of the councilman wanted the fire hall to face

Fourth rather than face Wasatch. He started a discussion of this at the meeting where the council awarded the bid. One of the contractors said that we should get on with the bid opening and figure out which way to face the building later. It was built as planned, with the back of the building toward the alley and is much more accessible than if it had faced Fourth.

Before the fire hall was built, the council met at the old town hall at First and Benton. It was approximately a 16 by 24 foot building, made of concrete blocks that looked like quarried stone. It had a big meeting room on the first floor, which was actually up a half story, that would hold a dozen or so people. Downstairs in the basement was the jail cell, in one corner of the room. You had to come outside and go down and around the stairs to get to the basement. There weren't any offices in the building, just the two big rooms and the jail, and once the new community hall was built, the council started meeting in the new council chambers.

All in all the council worked very well together in my administration, and we got quite a lot accomplished through the cooperation of the council and the citizens of Mills. To sum it all up, just being a mayor of a small town is not all that important, it's the sense of civic pride one feels when accomplishing something for the betterment of a community. My biggest reward was seeing an idea or project carried through and completed.¹⁴



The William Clapp home at 430 Wasatch. Courtesy Bill Clapp.

TO THE VOTERS OF MILLS:

Each year the Town of Mills holds an election. This year on May 12th, 1951 you will cast your ballot for a Mayor and Two Councilmen, each of whom will serve two years.

This is an important election, because the men you choose will be faced with many problems, of a growing community, and their decisions, will be, a deciding factor as to whether this town surges ahead, or is allowed to lie dormant.

The main issue, at this time, is the Sanitary Sewer System. I am definitely for it, but not to the extent that I would "sell the town down the river." I believe in bargaining, and to put this thing across, so that the cost to the user will not be prohibitive, or at the most, no higher than other utilities.

When this administration assumed office in May of 1951, the cash balance was \$1,472.00. Since that time the water users have increased from 262 to 286; We have purchased a New Pickup, cost price, \$1,526.04; A Police Car, \$1,055.00; Tires for Grader and Truck, \$322.00; And, even though we have doubled the street lighting capacity, met the rising costs of materials and labor for maintenance and repair, we have managed to keep a sizable cash balance on hand. The present figure exceeds \$17,000.00. The books are open for your inspection.

There has been an appropriation made for street repairs, etc., but it was felt that it would be a waste of money to go into this too extensively at the present, since a large amount of this work would be torn up should the sewer construction begin. This administration also has a building program on the agenda and underway. When completed, the community will have a municipal building of which it may be proud, because, besides being a thing of beauty it will serve a much needed and useful purpose.

I have been a resident of Mills since 1940, veteran of World War II, am a family man, home owner, and if you will size up the record you will find that I am definitely interested in the welfare, progress, and future of the Town. Incidentally, I have served three terms as Mayor, and prior to that, one year on the Council. On assuming office as Mayor in 1947, the Town had three pieces of equipment, an old 1920 model Grader, a broken-down oiler, and a dilapidated 1930 Model "A" Ford Pickup, and a cash balance of little more than \$1,000.00. Since that time we have purchased in the way of new equipment, a new motor grader, scarifier and tractor loader, dump truck with snow plow attachments, pump, fire equipment, pickup and police car, acquired a new dump grounds, and have made extensive repairs to the water system. In this connection, I would like to point out to you, that even though our water system is in first-class condition now, it is nearing it's capacity, and in the near future, more wells and pumps will have to be added to meet the growing demand for water.

You will find my name on the ballot, Tuesday. Whether I am re-elected to the office of Mayor will be your decision. I am willing to serve.

You will also find on the Home Owner's ticket, the name of GEORGE HAMELSTROM. He is a family man, veteran of World War II, business man, property owner, resident seven years, and has served on the Council one year. He too, is interested in the welfare, progress, and future of the Town. Ordinarily, there are two candidates for councilmen on each ticket, but due to circumstances beyond his control, one candidate withdrew his name, and since the deadline was so close it was impossible for another man to file; However, as there are spaces provided on the ballot for a write-in candidate, and to complete the Home Owner's ticket, I would suggest that you write in the name of JOHN C. HUBBARD. He has been a resident of Mills fifteen years, is a home owner, and is Superintendent for Etlin Peterson Construction Co. He is willing to serve and is qualified. He too, is interested in the betterment of the Town.

How you vote is not the important thing, the fact that you vote is important. If you live in Mills, and are eligible to vote, the question of good town administration or poor town administration is yours to decide.

Yours very truly,



W. W. (Bill) Clapp

William Clapp campaign letter for the office of mayor in 1951. Clapp was reelected and served until 1953. His letter deals with the continuing problem of lack of funds and outlines progress that the town had made over the past years. Courtesy William Clapp.

Calendar No. 1135

82d CONGRESS
2d Session

S. 2658

[Report No. 1203]

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 14 (legislative day, JANUARY 10), 1952

Mr. O'MAHONEY (for himself and Mr. HUNT) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs

FEBRUARY 20 (legislative day, JANUARY 10), 1952

Reported by Mr. O'MAHONEY, without amendment

A BILL

To amend the Act of September 25, 1950, so as to provide that the liability of the town of Mills, Wyoming, to furnish sewerage service under such Act shall not extend to future construction by the United States.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*
3 That the Act entitled "An Act to authorize the Secretary
4 of the Interior to transfer to the town of Mills, Wyoming,
5 a sewerage system located in such town", approved Sep-
6 tember 25, 1950, is amended by inserting immediately before
7 the period at the end thereof a colon and the following:
8 "Provided, That the liability of the town to furnish sewerage
9 service to the United States hereunder shall be limited to the
10 continued use by the United States of that specific capacity

2

1 in the sewerage system which is in use on the date of enact-
2 ment of this proviso, and the liability of the town shall not
3 extend beyond the useful life of the existing sewage-disposal
4 facilities. The town of Mills and the Secretary of the
5 Interior shall mutually agree to standards of maintenance
6 for the sewerage facilities transferred to the town in keeping
7 with recognized standards generally employed for mainte-
8 nance of similar facilities."

Calendar No. 1135

82d CONGRESS
2d Session

S. 2658

[Report No. 1203]

A BILL

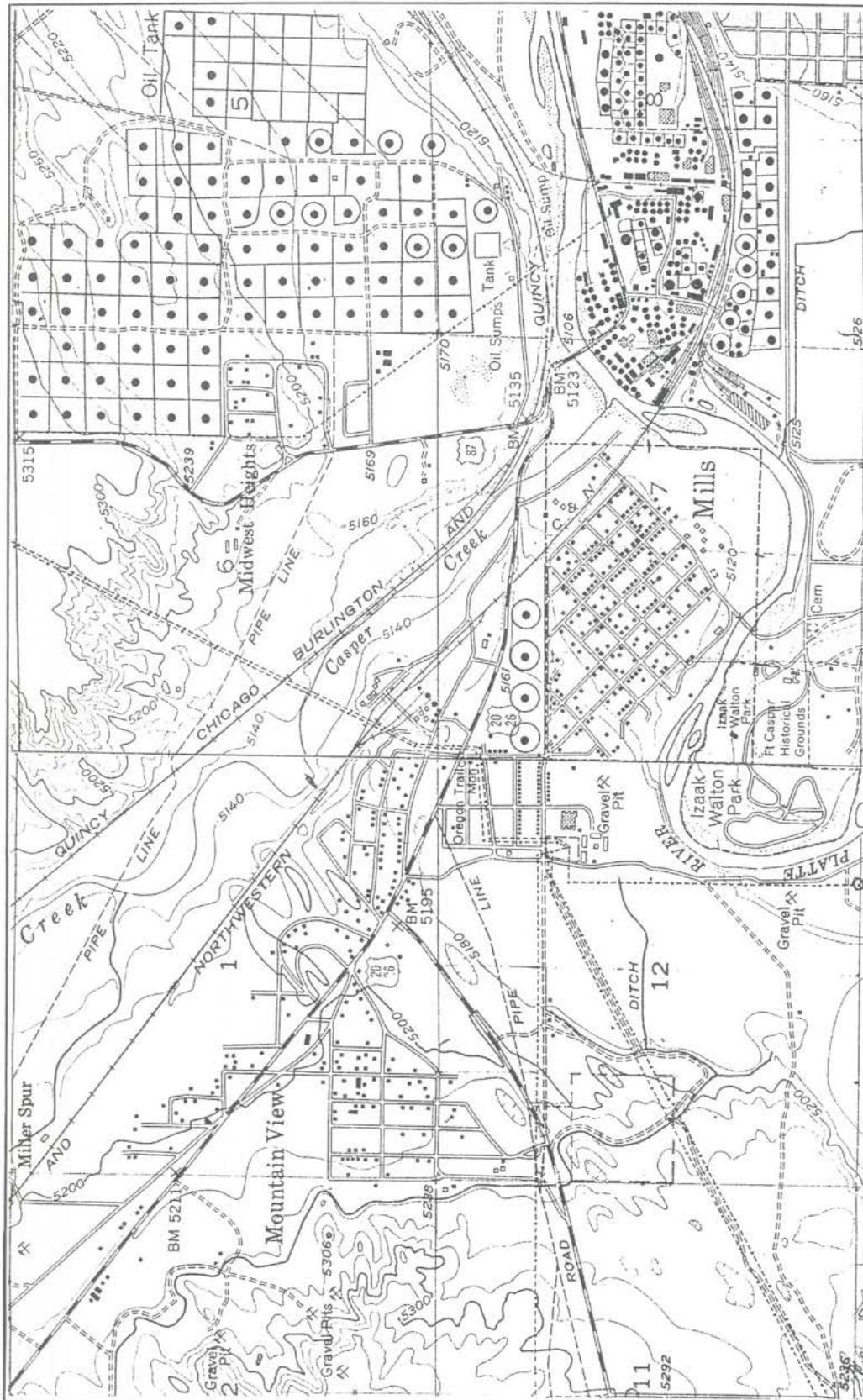
To amend the Act of September 25, 1950, so as to provide that the liability of the town of Mills, Wyoming, to furnish sewerage service under such Act shall not extend to future construction by the United States.

By Mr. O'MAHONEY and Mr. HUNT

FEBRUARY 14 (legislative day, JANUARY 10), 1952
Read twice and referred to the Committee on Interior
and Insular Affairs

FEBRUARY 20 (legislative day, JANUARY 10), 1952
Reported without amendment

Portions of an Act Of Congress passed to amend the original Act which allowed Mills to take over and operate the Bureau of Reclamation sewer. This small sewer line and tank were the subject of an amazing amount of paperwork and correspondence from many very important people in Mills and Washington D.C. Courtesy Bill Clapp.



U.S.G.S. "Quad" sheet for Mills from 1951. The majority of the streets in town had been constructed, but houses were fairly sparse. This map shows a bridge across the Platte River at First Street, connecting to the Fairgrounds area. Note the Oregon Trail monument located just across the street (Wyoming Boulevard) from the westerly oil tank. This map can be compared with the similar map in The Seventies, to follow changes in the town.

THE SIXTIES: CONTINUED GROWTH

Commercial growth was important to Mills in the sixties. The Kiskis Subdivision, an existing commercial area annexed, and the Millview Shopping Center was constructed in the early sixties. Millview, located at Wyoming and Pendell, remains today as the downtown of Mills. Hutsell's Pay and Save has served area residents for many years from this corner. The post office was moved to the Millview area, opening for business in their brand new building on Wyoming Boulevard in 1963. The Bureau of Reclamation annexed in 1961, although it had been a part of Mills since the late forties. The Bunny Bread Bakery was moved to Mills in the early sixties, a huge building located on Delmar, with an also huge bunny for a sign, which overlooked West Yellowstone. The smell of fresh baked bread dominated this part of town during the sixties.

The decade of the sixties in Mills belongs to George Sword, who served as Mills Mayor from 1957 to 1972. Mr. Sword ran for council in the fifties because he believed the town needed public sewer. He served on the council for a couple of terms without much success in this goal. Finally, being elected mayor in 1957 allowed him to pursue the public sewer issue. He worked diligently to get sewer for Mills, which meant trips to meet with Governor Hickey and others who could help. The town had taken several extra years to pay off the water bond issue and had a cloudy record concerning finances. However, things were worked out and the mayor was able to get \$170,000 in bonds for construction of the public sewer. The sewer was constructed in the late fifties and went on line in August of 1960, one of the most notable accomplishments the town had ever struggled to achieve. Once the sewer was in the town began a program of paving the streets in earnest, as they had previously used whatever oil treatment they could to keep a passable surface, but didn't want to pave the streets and then dig them up for sewer.

Sword put a lot of personal effort into Mills because the town was still, as it always has been, short on money. He spent many hours installing streetlights, waterlines and whatever else was required. This seemed to fit him well, being a widely proclaimed Scotsman who fought in the trenches in World War I in a kilt before he came to Mills. As mayor he received \$8 a month and one tank of gasoline. He is proud that when he left office as mayor the town

had no debts and sums up his efforts as mayor by saying that he feels lucky to be an American. George Sword's history of the town, presented at the post office dedication in 1963, reveals the pride he had in the town and the people who lived there:

*Mayor George Sword
History of Mills Post Office Dedication
May 26, 1963*

"At this time I have been asked to give you a little of the history of our town.

I thought you might be interested to know how our town got its name. The Mills brothers, Tom, Jim, and Billy owned and operated the Mills Construction Company at the location now known as Mills. In order to incorporate as a town a name had to be voted on. The name Mills won this election. Mr. Billy Mills layed out this town and his wife still lives here as does his daughter Ann, and their son Alec has a cleaning business here.

Our town was the third town in Natrona County to be incorporated. We were incorporated on March 1, 1921. The population of the town at the time was 468. Mills was a booming town in the 1920s following its incorporation. The land behind what is now the Mills Tavern was an amusement park with a swimming pool and dance hall. The site of the present Western Oil Tool was occupied by a hotel, a theater was in the 100 block on Wasatch next to A.J. McCormick's home. In the late 1920s the population of the town grew to 1400. After the crash Mills suffered, as did other towns in this area. The population was 379 in 1940. In 1950 the population was 866. The 1960 census showed the population to be 1470. According to the findings of the 1960 census, Mills was the fastest growing town in Wyoming. It is estimated that the population of the town is now 1800. In the early days of our town's existence, as was the usual custom of other towns, gambling was one of the featured activities of the Hotel. In 1925 there were four marshals to maintain law and order in the town of Mills. This would indicate that our citizens today are more law abiding than they were forty years ago. The first town hall was built in 1921 at the corner of First and Benton. In the basement was installed a jail cell donated by the town of Casper. The town hall was used for police court, elections, and council meetings until September 1954. On January 7, 1955 the first council meeting was held in the new Municipal Building at Fourth and Wasatch. In 1924 Mills had its own newspaper which was called the *Mills Journal*. In that same year a fran-

chise was granted to the Casper Motor Bus Line to operate a bus line in Mills. The fare to the Casper City limits was \$.05, \$.10 was charged if you wished to go further. Bus service was at thirty minute intervals from 6:30 a.m. until 12 midnight. The administration of the town over the years has been sound. A seventy thousand dollar water system was installed in the town in 1922. Under the administration of Cleve Simpson, the bonds for the water system were paid off and burned on May 16, 1943. The sewer system that was recently installed was financed by the sale of One Hundred Seventy Five Thousand Dollars in bonds in 1957. At present, Thirteen Thousand Dollars of the bonds have been paid leaving a balance of One Hundred Sixty Two Thousand Dollars. Businesses in the Town of Mills have progressed to the point that there are now 57 licensed businesses operating in the Town of Mills.

In 1933, a hose cart was housed at Fourth and Wasatch. Anyone reporting a fire would run to the fire house, ring the bell, and get the cart out, and pull it as fast as they could to the fire. It was not an uncommon event to lose a wheel and have to stop to put it back on and roll up the hose and start again. Ted Stamper who was Jack of all trades in those days had quite a bit to do with these fire runs. Today our Fire Department is an organized team of men backed by a Woman's Auxiliary, that any town could well be proud of. Our present chief is Al Opitz. They not only take care of our own little town but answer many calls in outlying districts. A fully equipped rescue unit is another asset of which we are very proud.

In concluding my remarks I can't help but look over this fine crowd here today and see among you many of our own sons and daughters that have served abroad and at home in various capacities and are now married and have brought their wife or husband, whichever the case may be, back to their home town to live and are now raising our grandchildren, the future citizens of 'OUR TOWN'."¹⁵



George Sword, Mayor 1957-1972. Lori Weber.

NOTICE

Residents of Mills

The New Sewer System Is
Now Ready to Use.

LINE IN STREET MUST BE
INSPECTED

MILLS TOWN COUNCIL

*Aug. 24
1960*

THE SEVENTIES: BOOM AGAIN

The Mills population was 1477 in 1960. By 1970 the population was 1742 and by 1980 the population reached 2139. The decade of the seventies was again a period of growth for the town, particularly the second half of the decade, when Mills annexed several areas on the west end of town, including Water Tower Acres, fifty mobile home lots, and Kapranis Addition, ninety mobile home lots. Ernie Kapranis, long time area resident and developer, named the streets in his Kapranis Addition after town officials. A major industrial area, along Falcon and Connie Streets, was annexed in the seventies, and quickly developed into a quality industrial park.

Perhaps the most growth pressure in the seventies came from Mountain View, an unincorporated subdivision located to the north and west of Mills. The residents in one part of Mountain View adjacent to Mills on the Poison Spider Road annexed to Mills, causing turmoil in the area because of the individual desires for annexation versus incorporation of Mountain View as a town. The Six Block Area, as it is called, was annexed in 1976 and the annexation withstood a challenge to the Wyoming Supreme Court on the legalities of the annexation petition.

George Sword, Lawrence Wilcox, and Robert Moore were mayors during the seventies. Water improvements were completed under Sword, while the One Percent Sales Tax was adopted county-wide under Wilcox, providing revenues for the construc-

tion of the new town hall at Fourth and Morgan. Wyoming Boulevard was constructed during the mid seventies, connecting the Fairgrounds area with West Yellowstone on a five lane roadway and bringing thousands of vehicles per day of through traffic to Mills. In the late seventies the pressures of growth increased and the town was required to join a metropolitan sewer organization with the other communities and the county. Mills also formed a joint water board with the Wardwell Water and Sewer District to construct a new water treatment plant, and initiated a program of reconstructing the town's streets at no cost to the residents, using sales tax and grant moneys.

INTERVIEW WITH MAYOR LAWRENCE WILCOX

The *Casper Star Tribune* did a short write up on the town on March 28, 1978, which included portions of an interview with Mills Mayor Lawrence Wilcox:

"As Mills enters another boom period, that which is accomplishing energy development in Natrona County, Mayor Lawrence Wilcox points out some of the more welcomed accomplishments are much the same as the 1920's. The town put in new, much needed toilets in the park, the mayor pointed out with a sigh of relief. It's just a small part of an ongoing program to meet the needs of a rapidly growing area.

'We've taken in about 60 acres in the last two years,' the long time mayor pointed out, 'and at least 100 families in the Water Tower Addition.' The town will use its optional one cent sales tax revenues to construct a new \$150,000 gravity flow sewer system, he said, which will serve the needs of 50 per cent of the town or better. Last year, the town put out about \$55,000 of a budget totaling nearly \$700,000 for water lines and related services.

Next year, Wilcox said, "we hope to put in nine miles of new water lines". And are also planning, he said, a new \$170,000 town hall to be situated at the corner of Fourth and Wyoming Boulevard with offices, meeting rooms, police headquarters and a kitchen.

Mills is the home of many of the retired employees of the Amoco refinery, the mayor said, so it's essentially a stable community. But since the days of the Mills Construction Company, industrial development and residential areas have developed side by

side. 'What we really need is zoning,' Wilcox said. 'We've talked about it but we haven't come up with anything yet.'

THE MILLS FIFTY YEAR CELEBRATION

Mills celebrated fifty years of incorporation during the summer of 1971, as the town was incorporated in May, 1921. A committee was formed to have a celebration in honor of this event. The committee worked hard and long and the celebration was a complete success. The town sold wooden nickels to commemorate the event, some of which are still in circulation. On July 5th the community hall was painted to get ready for the celebration. On Friday night, July 9th, the Miss Mills pageant was held at the school gym, with winners in several categories.

The big day, Saturday, July 10, started with the parade at 1:00 p.m, with over one hundred entries stretching more than a mile. The Post Office float won the adult division, and a big trophy was awarded. There were games at the school ground in the afternoon, a contest to pick a town seal, awards to pioneers of Mills, and a barbecue.

The final event was a street dance on Fourth Street by the fire hall that lasted well into the night. It was a time that will be long remembered in Mills, certainly until 1996 and 2021, Mills' 75th and 100th anniversaries.



The Mills 50 Year Celebration Parade. Courtesy Norene Kilmer.

POST OFFICE ENTRY BEST

Mrs. Mabel Nolan, a pioneer Mills resident, and Mrs. Faye Sankey, Mills Postmistress, accepted a trophy Saturday afternoon for the Post Office's entry, which was adjudged Best Overall Float in

the community's 50th anniversary celebration.

Other winners in the parade were the Bayou Club 48, 49, and 50, for Distinguished Entry; the Webber Children, Ginger and Lori, for the Best Children's Float; the Beaver Children, Best Costumed Boy (Margaret Beaver, Frankie Beaver, and John Beaver); Best Costumed Girl, Julie Japp; the Mills-Mountain View Leo Club won a trophy; and Ma and Pa Kettle and the Kids also won a trophy.

Included in the Kettle entourage were Connie Jo Kelly, Tommy Noble, Jimmie Sword, Stephanie Sword, Karen Daly, John Daly, Lois Newport, Bryan Jager, Mike Daly, Owen Jager, Colleen Walker, Karen Walker, and Jeanie Walker.

There were more than 100 contestants in the parade, which included toddlers riding tricycles. Also, there were antique cars, floats, horses, mules, and other animals.

Following the parade, children's games were held at the Mills School yard. Saturday night, a barbecue was held for residents of Mills and the trade area, climaxed by selecting the official Mills Town Seal and paying tribute to pioneer settlers of the community.

Cindy Roberson, 15, was named "Miss Mills" Saturday afternoon as part of the community's 50th anniversary celebration. Tammy Richeal Kirken-slager, 13, was named Jr. Miss Mills.

First runner-up for Miss Mills was Mary L. Avey, 16; and second runner-up was Eileen Vee Kennedy, 15½.

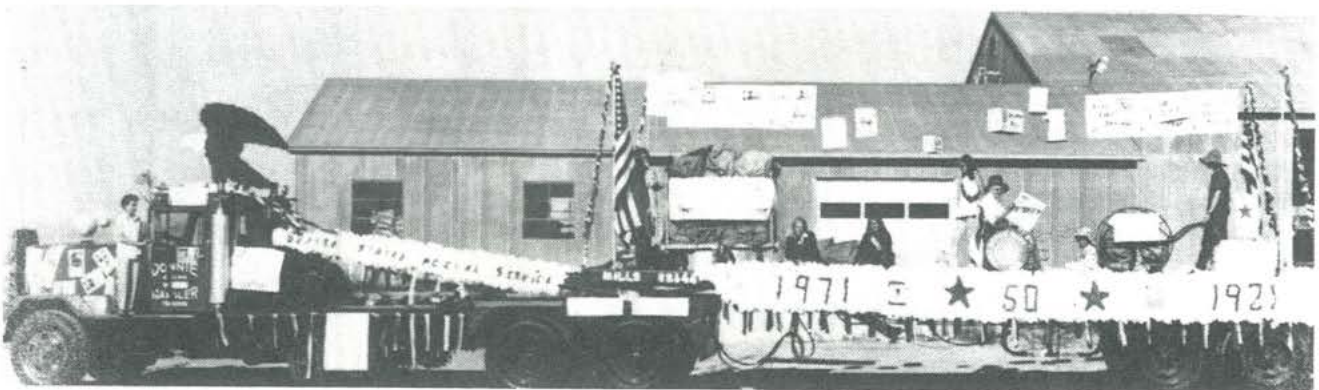
First runner-up for Jr. Miss Mills was Suzanne Elaine Farmer, 14; and Vicky Lee Roberson was second runner-up.

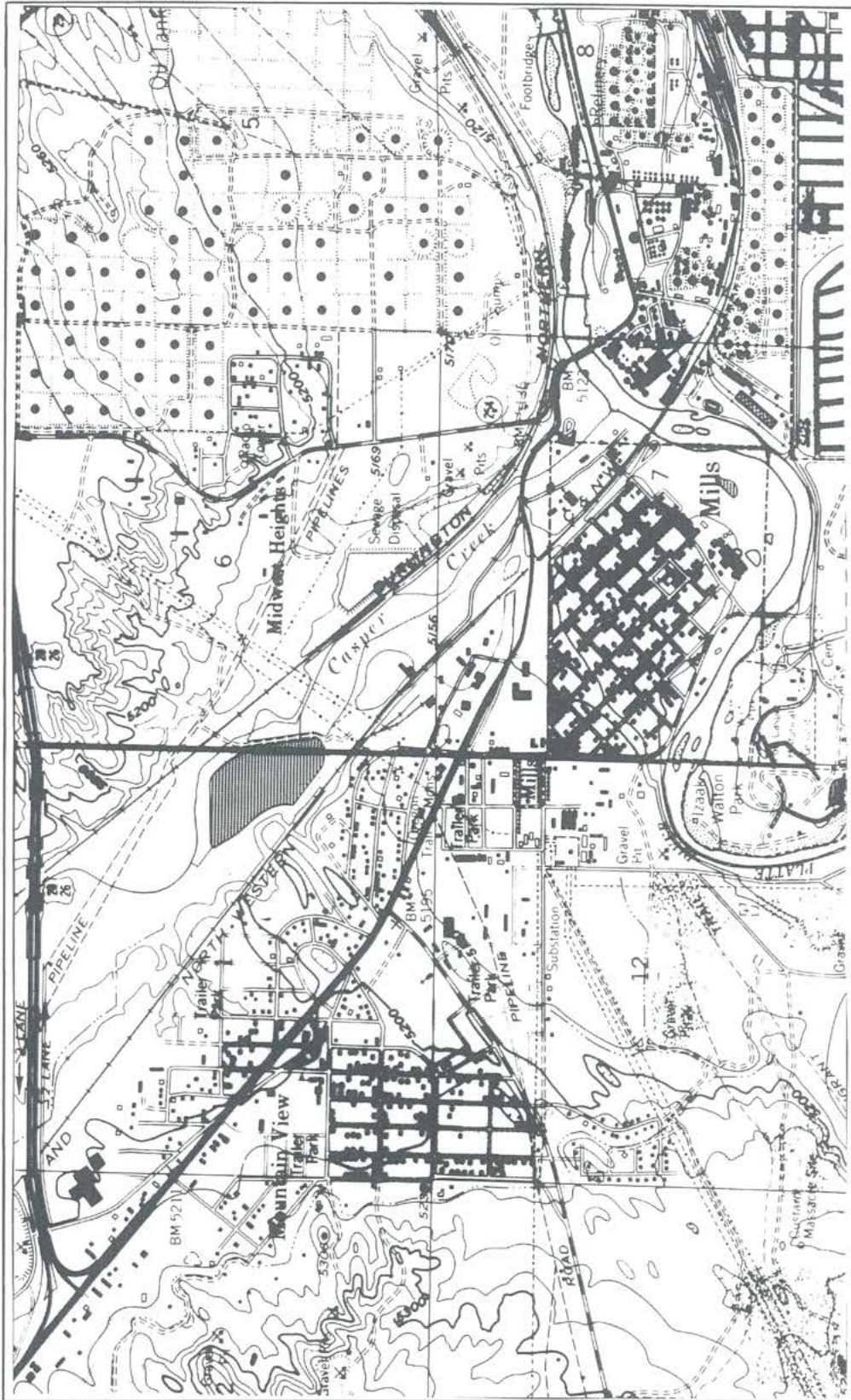
Contestants in the events were asked questions in the following categories: pollution, generation gap, parental control, sex education, and drug abuse.



Mabel Nolan, previous Postmaster, presents the trophy for the first place float in the 50 Year Celebration Parade to Faye Sankey, then Postmaster, July 1971. Courtesy Faye Sankey.

The Post Office's winning entry in the Mills 50 Year Celebration Parade. Courtesy Faye Sankey.





The "1971" U.S.G.S. Quad sheet, previous to the construction of Wyoming Boulevard as a five lane roadway. There was at this time still little development on the west end of Mills. Growth of the town can be seen by comparing this to the 1951 Quad sheet in The Fifties. Much of the growth in Mills can be seen as infilling, the building of homes on lots which had been previously vacant, as opposed to development of new lots.

THE EIGHTIES: THE BOOM ENDS

The Wyoming and local economies continued to grow rapidly through 1980 and 1981. The local economy had boomed for about five years and now started to slow down. In the late seventies and early eighties there were not enough places for people to live, in 1986 there are many vacancies.

Bob Moore was mayor when the eighties dawned. The town had just moved its offices into the new town hall at Fourth and Morgan and things were going well. The town council made the commitment to use its one cent sales tax money to reconstruct the streets in town, and a \$5,500,000 comprehensive street project was begun. Using the One Percent Sales tax revenues and matching them with Farm Loan Board grant money from the state, the town began the process of installing curb and gutter and repaving every street in Mills. The project includes storm sewer to drain the old area of town, where drainage problems had been severe for many years. The project continues in 1986 with a \$450,000 storm sewer installation in Chamberlin and Pendell to drain the major areas in town west of Wyoming Boulevard. If revenues hold up, the entire town may be completed within three or four years and the town residents will not have paid a penny of special assessments into the project.

The council also made the commitment in the early eighties to join with the Wardwell Water and Sewer District to form a joint powers board to provide water to both entities. A new water treatment plant was constructed just east of First Street Park, along the North Platte, and the town now gets most of its water through this plant. The plant was designed to help provide water to the growing populations of Mills and Wardwell, and with the current loss of population in Wardwell and no growth in Mills, the Board has fallen on hard times.

In the early eighties, the council joined with the county and other communities in the county to form a metro sewer board, which will process all the public sewage through the Casper sewage treatment plant. This was mandated by the State and Federal governments. Mills, the other communities, and water and sewer districts will hook onto this system and eliminate their own lagoons and treatment plants.

The town began, under Mayor Eldon Spade and completed under Alan Sword, a boundary agreement with the City of Casper, which spells out the areas into which each community will grow. This agreement was necessitated when both communities requested an-

nexation of the same piece of county roadway, Mills to provide services to the west, and Casper to extend a link to those areas where it now serves water and may annex in the future. Mills did not want to be surrounded by Casper and Casper did not want to be cut off from growing to the west by Mills. The "gentlemen's agreement", signed in January of 1984, allows for both communities to grow into areas where they have commitments. Two years later, in 1986, the county adopted a growth boundary and land use map for the entire urbanized area, for the communities of Mills, Casper, Evansville, and Bar Nunn.

The town council adopted a zoning ordinance on June 5, 1981 and for the first time in its 60 year history the town had zoning. This was the result of a one year study of the land use patterns in Mills and the drafting of an ordinance. The ordinance seems to have worked well enough and has the support of the council and the general public. The impact of the ordinance has not greatly altered the land use patterns in town, as they were fairly well established with separate residential and commercial districts prior to zoning.

The town initiated a housing rehabilitation program under Eldon Spade. Thirty six single family homes were rehabilitated, at no cost to the owners, with Community Development Block Grant money. The program ended with many homeowners still on the waiting list, but with no more money to rehabilitate their homes.

The town, under Alan Sword, but over his objections on a matter of principle, joined in the Metro Area Animal Control Joint Powers Board, and now the dog catcher in Mills works for the board and not for Mills. Mills no longer has its own facility for animals as all are taken to the Metro Area facility. The animal control ordinance was updated in Mills, as in all of the local communities, amid a hotly contested debate between dog and cat owners, non-pet owners, and almost everyone else who had an opinion, which was everyone else. The discussion prompted Joe Hand, Town Attorney, to state that dog ordinances were the toughest ordinances a town could deal with, and as an example he cited the following story:

"A man charged with having a rabid dog entered a plea of innocent at his trial in Mills Municipal Court, stating that the grounds for this plea were that his dog was a Christian Scientist and would not take rabies shots." Mr. Hand didn't explain whether the man was acquitted because of the dog's religion

or not.

Two major additions were annexed by Mills in the early eighties. The Agate Addition, a small lot, single family housing development located along Third Avenue south of Poison Spider was annexed in 1981. This addition has been hard hit by the stagnant economy and only about a dozen homes are located there. The Freden Addition, a mobile home subdivision, was annexed just to the east of Agate Addition and is also developing slowly.

The Topaz Addition was annexed in the late seventies, and the Ponderosa Townhouses constructed there. The landowners, builders, and financiers of this project had many disagreements, and the project never got off the ground. Another new style of housing was attempted in the Amber Valley Addition, the east half of Block 7 in the original Topaz Addition. Duplex townhouses were constructed here with private roadways and common areas around each duplex. The bust of the mid eighties hit just as this development was being built and only about one third of the units were built and only part of them are occupied.

The council, under Bob Moore, initiated construction of Northwestern Park, a heavily used park located between Northwestern Street and The C&NW main line. This Park, although only sixty five feet wide, has basketball and tennis courts, a playground, picnic area, sled hill, horsehoe pits, and other recreation facilities. Northwestern Park was the first place where many of these facilities had been provided in the town, and the town residents have made good use of the park. This park was built with Mills money and a small grant from the State.

In 1982, the town, under Eldon Spade, initiated construction of First Street Park. The original town park was located at this site, the site of the first town hall, and was used as a baseball field, although it was almost too small for baseball. The council hotly debated what should go in the park in the way of facilities and the question boiled down to having a baseball field or not. A couple councilmen had bad feelings about a field and proposed this area be playground and picnic tables. The local ball teams got up a petition to submit to the council, with one hundred signatures supporting a ball diamond. The council negotiated among themselves on the three design proposals for the park and had a fourth prepared. At the council meeting, the various plans were discussed and a vote of those present in the audience favored the fourth plan, which the council

adopted and the park was built, with a ballfield. First Street Park was the culmination of contributions of time, effort, and land by various interests and was truly a community effort. The park, which includes a fire training area for the Mills Volunteer Fire Department, was built with town funds and a grant from the Wyoming Recreation Commission.

THE FUTURE

What does the future hold for the town of Mills? It is a pretty sure bet that the current decline in the economy will continue for a while, then may improve and boom again, and then for certain will bust again. While this is happening, the town council will continue to struggle with financing the best services it can provide for the residents. Money has been the town's biggest problem over the years, and nothing indicates that this will change. The past decade has been one of relative prosperity for the town and the region, but things are getting tougher now.

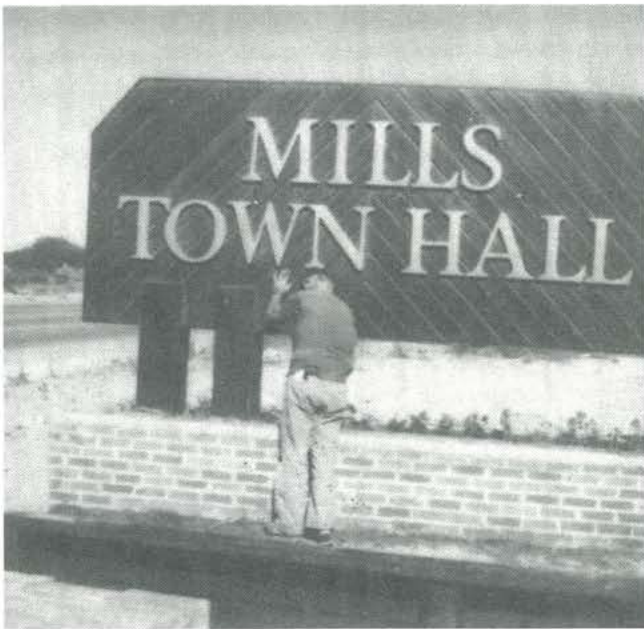
The traditional leadership style should continue for a while, with the old part of town leading the way through participation and service on the council. What happens when this generation of leadership is complete may be a different story. The town is still divided into old and new, physically and socially, and the more mobile west end may take years to get involved as heavily in the town as the original area, because they haven't been around as long.

Growth (or decline) will continue the same as growth for the entire central Wyoming area. The factors that created Mills are now not important to the town's existence, and the economy of the entire area is now one, with no specialized sector more important to any one community.

The future may bring the biggest changes in Mills in providing municipal services cooperatively with the other communities and Natrona County. Water, sewer, roadways, even the dog catcher are now being provided in one way or another to the people of Mills by utility companies that are area-wide and not Mills operations. These programs, often mandated by the federal government, aim to reduce duplication of effort and save money through the economies of scale. Each time another service of Mills is taken over by a board, the town loses a little of its spirit, and the town will gradually, but never totally, lose its small town atmosphere.



The new Mills town hall at Fourth and Morgan along Wyoming Boulevard, 1978. Courtesy *Casper Journal*.



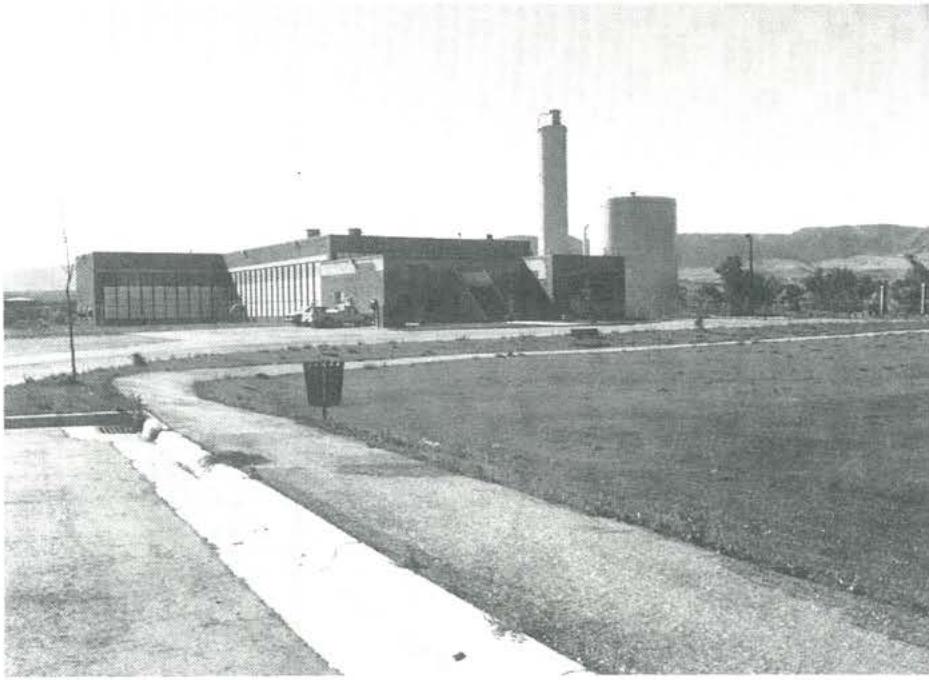
June 1980, Councilman Wes Johnson plants flowers at the new town Hall. Courtesy Eldon Spade.



March 24, 1978, (left to right) Abraham Penner, Buster Wilcox, Harold Mason, Kenneth Barrett, and Ernest Kapranis (rear) install the flagpole at the new town hall. Courtesy Eldon Spade.

Right: The Mills Storm Drainage and Street Reconstruction Project; Third Street before reconstruction. Below: Third Street after reconstruction.





The Mills-Wardwell water treatment plant.



Amber Valley, Mills' newest townhouse development, located on Fulton and Beryl, 1983. Courtesy Eldon Spade.



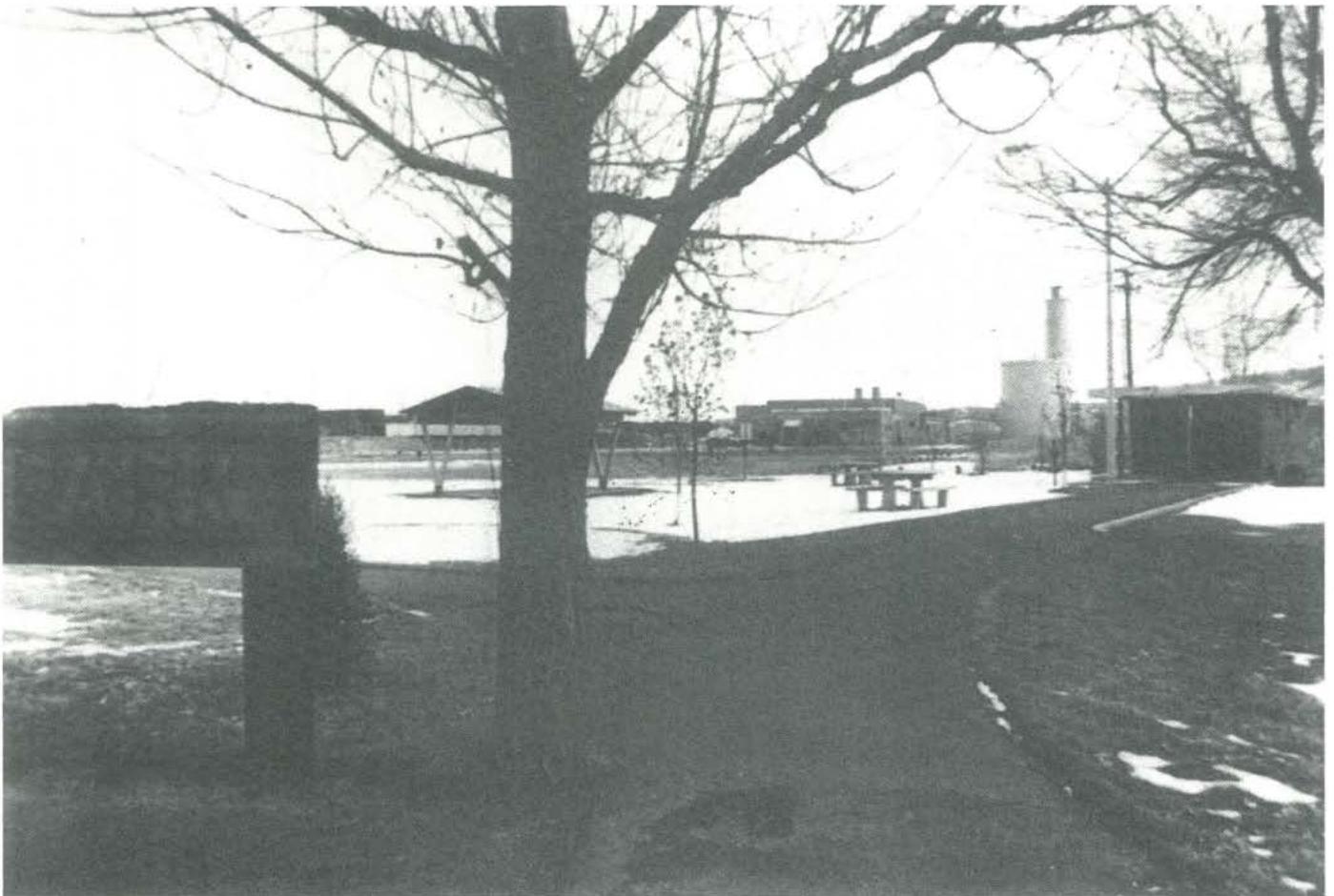
Swearing in the new council, June 1, 1981. Left to right: Wes Johnson, Skip Todd, Mayor Eldon Spade, outgoing Mayor Bob Moore, Alan Sword. Sitting: Council President Ken Barrett. Courtesy *Casper Journal*.



Outgoing Mayor Bob Moore congratulates incoming Mayor Eldon Spade, June 1, 1981. Courtesy *Casper Journal*.



Northwestern Park, with the C&NW main line in the background. Courtesy *Casper Journal*.



First Street Park, looking east from First and Benton. Courtesy *Casper Journal*.

PART TWO CULTURE



Billy, Edith, and William Wolfe with their homegrown fifty pound squash. Courtesy *Casper Journal*.



TOWN of MILLS

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

TOWN GOVERNMENT

The story of the government of the Town of Mills is one of a long struggle to survive financially and still provide the basic services of water, sewer, streets, police, and fire protection to the residents. From the very beginning through today, there has been precious little in the way of finances to operate the town. Former mayors and councilmen all agree that the basic services the town provides require every bit of the town's financial capacity and that there hasn't really been any room for extras in the budget.

First on the agenda for the original mayor and council was the passage of a bond for \$70,000 to install a public water system. This was not an easy process and met with vocal opposition from the mayor's sister among others. The water system was completed and the system has been expanded as the town grew. Sewage was another problem for the town, and it was a more difficult proposition. It wasn't until the fifties that there was a movement to get sewer in Mills. Everyone had a cistern or a septic tank (fewer septic tanks because of the high ground water) which seemed to work adequately, with the cisterns being pumped periodically by local companies and sometimes even the town.

In the early fifties, the town inherited the Bureau of Reclamation sewer line and discharge tank, which didn't really serve much of the town. The mayor and council got together and drummed up enough support for the passage of a bond issue for public sewer. The issue was approved by the voters, but the new mayor and council apparently didn't follow through and the issue was abandoned. It wasn't until the late fifties, that the town was able to pass another bond and construct public sewer. When the sewer was installed, everyone was required to hook on and abandon their cesspools.

The town had been paving the streets as best they could through the first forty years of existence. The original dirt/gravel streets of the town lasted a long time, and were a major problem for everyone. Some apparently referred to Mills as "Bogtown" because when the streets got wet some were almost impassable. The town did have a paving program which was to use whatever money available to pave the most used streets where possible. One of the paving techniques the town used was to oil the dirt streets with a mixture of heavy oils, which built up and

made a pretty good surface. The town didn't begin the most serious paving of the streets until after 1960, when the sewer was installed, because until that time the streets would have had to have been dug up for installation of the sewer.

Fire and police protection have been provided by the town since the beginning, mostly on a minimal budget. The police had a one man department and no office for many years. The fire department is a volunteer group which had to struggle through many years of having no fire truck, but only a hose cart to pull to a fire behind a volunteer fireman's car or truck.

It wasn't until the boom of the seventies, increased mineral severance revenues, and the One Percent Sales Tax, that the town was able to construct a new town hall, water treatment plant, parks, and reconstruct the streets. Fifty years of just getting by is a long time to struggle to get ahead and be in a position of making improvements and not just staying even. The struggle will continue to challenge future councils and mayors to provide adequate basic services to the residents.

Politics in Mills have been mostly internal, with a couple of exceptions. Mills is located between Casper and Mountain View, and having several jurisdictions so closely grouped creates a lot of friction at times. The Mountain View Subdivision is an area about the same size as Mills, with about the same number of people, and was originally developed about the same time as Mills. Mountain View has never incorporated, and the residents have little regulation from the county as well as limited financial capabilities to improve their basic services. In the late seventies the residents of Mountain View attempted to incorporate as the Town of Maverick. Being a town would allow the Mountain View people to gain some control over their own destiny by providing their own basic services and being able to have more of a choice in local matters.

The Board of County Commissioners did not favor this incorporation and the Town of Mills preferred that Mountain View annex to Mills and share the services that the town provided. The issue was hotly debated and in the end the Town Of Maverick did not come to be.

In the early eighties, Mills annexed the Poison Spider Road. This was not appreciated by the City of Casper, which felt that it needed an area through which to annex to the west to serve the Vista West and Airport areas. The Casper council voted to annex the Robertson Road north to the Zero Road, which would have in effect surrounded Mills. This annexation did not take place and the city and town worked for the next three years to come to a boundary agreement, which would hopefully allow for peaceful coexistence.

TOWN CLERKS

With the town being small, with mostly a part time mayor and for most of its history, no town offices, it has been the town clerks who have been the mainstays of the town government. The clerks often maintained an office of the town in their home and were on call twenty four hours a day for town business. The clerks have had to make many decisions for the town when the mayor was not available, be the dispatcher for the fire department, do all of the billings for water and sewer, and keep the town operating on a daily basis. It was not until 1979, when the new town hall was built, that there was a town office where the official records could be kept.

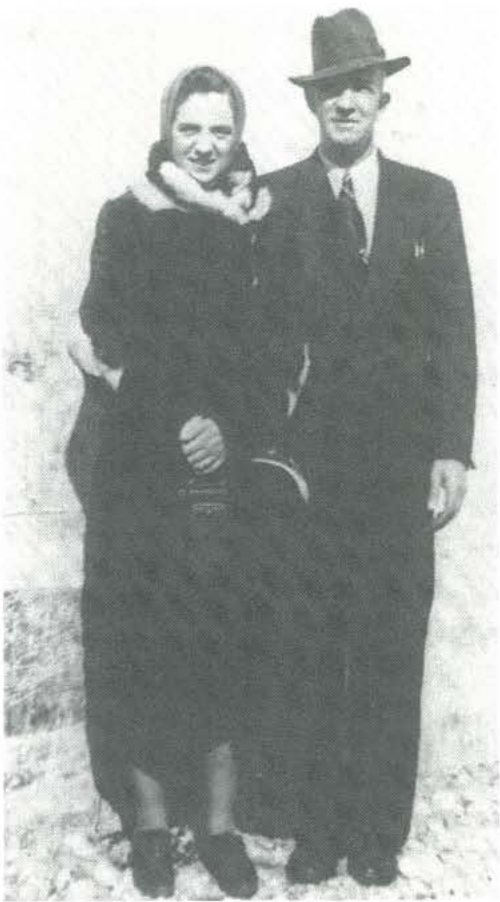
The Mills town clerks, most of them women:

William Mills	May 1921 to August 1922
Winifred Garside	August 1922 to August 1923
George L. Nelson	August 1923 to October 1923
Elmer A. Edwards	October 1923 to July 1927
William Mills	July 1927 to May 1929
Carrie Thomas	May 1929 to June 1943
Agnes Sutphin	June 1943 to September 1947
Elwanda Burke	September 1947 to April 1948
Martha Kethley	April 1948 to July 1950
Lois Maurer	July 1950 to December 1950
Marianne Spencer	December 1950 to May 1956
Norene Kilmer	May 1956 to present

MAYORS OF MILLS

The following, all men, have served as Mayor of Mills:

George Boyle	May 1921 to May 1923
W. S. Allen	May 1923 to May 1924
James E. Stewart	May 1924 to May 1925
A. T. Allen	May 1925 to May 1926
Dee McDaniel	May 1926 to May 1927
Horace Evans	May 1927 to May 1928
Charles Kranning	June 1928 to May 1929
Roy W. Wingert	May 1929 to May 1930
Clay Hill	May 1930 to May 1931
Roy McNeeley	May 1931 to May 1932
Hugh Brower	May 1932 to May 1934
G. C. Simpson	May 1934 to May 1943
Fred Steinle	May 1943 to September 1947
William W. Clapp	October 1947 to May 1953
H. C. Shaefer	May 1953 to May 1955
Floyd Wilcox	May 1955 to May 1957
George Sword	May 1957 to September 1972
L. A. Wilcox	September 1972 to May 1977
Robert L. Moore	May 1977 to May 1981
Eldon Spade	May 1981 to May 1983
Alan Sword	May 1983 to Present



George Boyle the first Mayor of Mills, who served from 1921 to 1923 (woman not identified). Courtesy Mildred Steinle.



Ted Stamper, longtime Mills employee, at the pumphouse. Courtesy Jim Stamper.



Carrie Thomas, longtime Town Clerk at her home at 507 Platte, with a couple of Yant boys. Courtesy Bill Yant.

TOWN OF MILLS
Office of
TOWN CLERK and TREASURER

Mills, Wyo.....192..

June 19th, 1929.

The following was presented to the Town Council of the Town of Mills, as Budget for 1929.

City Marshall and Water Commissioner -----	\$900.00
Street Maintenance-----	200.00
Audit and Miscellaneous-----	200.00
City Clerk and Treasurer-----	60.00
Gas and Lights-----	60.00
Total-----	\$1420.00

Moved by R. E. Dockman, Seconded by John Hodgins
that the Budget be approved as read, All voting Aye,
Motion Carried.

Mayor R. E. Winget

Clerk Larrie Thomas

The 1929/30 fiscal year budget of Mills. Quite simple and straightforward.

February 8, 1922

A Special meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Mills was held at the Council Chamber at Mills, Wyoming, at 7:30 P. M.

Present:	Mayor	George E. Boyle.
Councilmen:		G. W. Lindsay.
		M. H. Kennedy.
		Fred Shackelford.
Clerk:		Wm. Mills.
Marshall:		Luke Wilkerson.

It was moved , seconded and carried that the minutes of last meeting be approved as read.

It was moved and seconded that the Town of Mills, construct a cement block building, 16 x 34, with full basement of concrete. the building to be one story and that the construction was to commence at once. Luke M. Wilkerson and M. H. Kennedy was appointed as a committee to supervise the construction.

Aye and Nay vote being taken resulted as follows:

G. W. Lindsay	Aye.
Fred Shackelford	Aye.
M. H. Kennedy	Aye.

whereupon the Mayor declared the motion duly carried.

No further business appeseing before the council , a motion was made to adjourn, which was duly carried, to meet in regular session on February 16, 1922.



Mayor.



Clerk.

Minutes of the meeting at which the council voted to construct the original town hall.

OFFICIAL ELECTION BALLOT

For the Town of Mills, Natrona County,
Wyoming, Tuesday, May 10, 1949

INSTRUCTIONS—"Mark a cross (X) in the square immediately to the right of the name of the candidate printed thereon for whom you want to vote, or write the name of any other person for whom you want to vote in the proper place."

PROGRESSIVE	INDEPENDENT
FOR MAYOR TWO YEAR TERM (Vote for One)	FOR MAYOR TWO YEAR TERM (Vote for One)
WILLIAM W. CLAPP..... <input type="checkbox"/>	DENNIS A. JANEUX..... <input type="checkbox"/>
..... <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
FOR COUNCILMAN TWO YEAR TERM (Vote for Two)	FOR COUNCILMAN TWO YEAR TERM (Vote for Two)
HERBERT HARRIS..... <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
W. W. HUNT..... <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
..... <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
..... <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Ballot for the 1949 Mills election. Note the political parties.

STATEMENT

CASPER, WYOMING, May 6, 1947 194

Town of Mills

Mills, Wyoming

IN ACCOUNT WITH

D. W. OGILBEE
ATTORNEY-AT-LAW

614 WYOMING NATIONAL BANK BUILDING

To Consultations and Assistance in Drafting of Ordinances and Resolutions September 1944 thru May 1947, inclusive; Inclusions:

Consultation concerning proposed amendment of Ordinance 44-4
 Consultation in regard to Ordinance 44k concerning license to sell alcoholic and
 milk liquors,
 Conference in regard to Ordinance 61 concerning corporate boundaries,
 Consultation in regard to Ordinance 52A,
 Consultation in regard to Ordinance 58 concerning a definition of nuisances, etc.,
 Consultation in regard to Ordinance 60, establishment of traffic regulations,
 Consultation in regard to Ordinance 63 concerning regulating the disposition of
 water from Municipal Water System and charges therefor and the Collection for
 same,
 Consultation in regard to Ordinance 64 concerning definition of the offenses, disturbances
 of the peace, and repeal of Ordinances 2, 4, 10 and 16,
 Consultation in regard to Ordinance 67 concerning levying of license tax,
 Consultation regarding Ordinance 68, an Ordinance providing for the licensing of dogs,
 harbored in the Town of Mills,

TOTAL.....\$28.00

The service in question consisted of consultation and assistance in drafting and editing of
 respective Ordinances. Very little initial drafting was involved, and no mechanical work.
 Service did not include mechanical work involving more than fifty pages of typing and I was
 called upon for but little of the initial drafting.

Bill for services submitted to the town by Town Attorney Ogil-
bee. Note the number of ordinances concerning problems that
are still being addressed today.



O. V. Patterson, Fred Steinle, and Ted Stamper at the Mills pumphouse.



The new 1963 Mills Council and town staff. Left to right W. W. Hunt, Art Winkes, George Sword, Norene Reed, George Kelley, Eldon Spade; standing, John Fulton.

THE MILLS SCHOOL

The school is an important core of a small community and Mills is no exception. The Mills School has been in operation since before the town was incorporated. Thousands of children have been educated at the Mills School, many whose fondest memories of Mills are of the school itself. School, families, and the PTA are basic to the sense of community, and the Mills School has been an important institution in the life of Mills and an experience shared by almost all who grew up there.

The Mills School is a grade school, with students in recent years moving on to the Casper junior highs after grade six. It may be safe to say that the town would have had a much better defined sense of community and community spirit if the Mills School had been a separate high school. The whole community rallying around the high school football team and the high school alumni returning for homecoming are big events in the life of a small town. Mills has not had these experiences, and it is interesting to contemplate what effect having a high school would have had on Mills.

"The first school to be established in Mills was in September, 1920, with Miss Gladys Tharpe and Miss Nora Essenpries as teachers. There were about seventy pupils in attendance. During the fall of 1921, a modern six room brick school building was erected, and during the 1921-22 year there was an average attendance of 130 pupils, with the following named teachers: R. E. Robertson, principal; Miss Florence Fowler, grammar department; Miss Gladys Tharpe, intermediate; Miss Lillian Larsen, second grade; Miss Nora Essenpries, first grade."

From records of the Natrona County School District we know that in 1920 there were 35 students in the Mills School, 120 in 1921, and 160 in 1922 with five teachers. The six room brick school building was built with \$35,000 approved by a county-wide bond election, with similar amounts used to build schools of the same type at Mountain View as well as others around the county.

Some of the very first Mills students went to school in the basement of the Rude house at Third and Riverview. Another early site for the school was the theater, located across Second Street from the current school. Later, classes were moved into the basement of the church, across Wasatch from the current school. In 1921-22, the six room brick building was constructed. The school got a sewer line, which ran to the river, in 1927, over thirty three

years before the town had public sewer. A new building was built in the forties or fifties. New classrooms were added in the seventies and the original six room school torn down in 1975. In 1952, the town worked out an agreement with the school district to close that portion of Third Street between Midwest and Platte so that the school could make one large playground on the north side of the building. Very recently new classrooms have been added on the Platte Street side and there are two classrooms of each grade.¹⁶

A history of the school would fill this book itself, and it would be impossible to mention all those important to the school. That function is fulfilled by the school yearbooks. In an oral history and manuscript, George Adams, who attended the Mills School in the very early days of its existence, recalls fond memories of the Mills School and the town:

GEORGE ADAMS

Sixty five years have gone by since the era of history documented herein actually happened. These are recalled to the best of my knowledge and may not be totally accurate.

I am George Adams, the third oldest in my family. What I have to say about the town of Mills has to do with the decade of the 1920s, say 1921 through 1930. My association with Mills relates to the school system. We did not live in Mills, my Dad and Mother homesteaded on the Six Mile Creek, and it adjoined what is now the Natrona County International Airport.

The first Mills school that our family attended was located in the block south of the present school building. This was the old theater building, which was never completed. It was used as the school, though it was rough tar paper outside and lumber inside. The benches were built to accommodate eight or ten kids with a swing leaf on hinges that had to be lifted up to get in and out, which resulted in a lot of slivers. The teachers were Lillian Larsen and Gladys Tharpe. They kept law and order as well as teaching. It was an elementary school, grades one through eight, and I was in the third grade in 1921.

During this first year they shut the theater down, couldn't heat it. So they moved into the basement of the church. In the meantime, the city fathers got busy and were working on building schools in Casper and Mills. The schools they built were the two story red brick style with six classrooms. The Mills

school was cornerstoned in 1921 and ready for use a year or so later and I was one of the first students to go to school in the building.

The first principal was Ray E. Robertson. He was around the state for many years, later moved to Cody and maybe got into politics. He was a good fellow, the kids really liked him. He was the champion of the boys. As a matter of fact, with his efforts, the first Boy Scout Troop, Troop 10, was founded in Mills.

The second Mills school principal was S. Glenn Parker, also a champion of the kids and real fine fellow. There were no trees around the school. Mr. Parker married a lady who taught at Park School in Casper, bought a Model T coupe, and moved into the school. One time the wind had blown over the Model T, and he got a bunch of us boys to help him tip it back right side up. It didn't seem to be much worse for wear. Mr. Parker taught the seventh and eighth grades at Mills as well as being principal. He later left the school system and became an attorney. After years of practicing law he became the Chief Justice of the Wyoming Supreme Court.

Then Mr. Skinner took over as principal in about 1926. We should mention here that the Mills School was overcrowded because the town was overcrowded. People were coming from all over to work at the refinery and there was just no place to rent or buy. I recall about four hundred kids in the school and the first and second grades went to split sessions. There were two classrooms downstairs and four upstairs with a partition between two of the rooms for programs. In the meantime, the school district built a school at Mountain View, about a mile west of the Mills School. I lived in School District Number 4 (Bessemer Bend) and since there was no school in that district closer, we went to Mills. We would get a ride in with one of our parents or would walk to school. Often Ellsworth (Stub) Tubbs, son of Judge Tubbs, drove us in to school. (Stub was the son of Sheriff Tubbs, who was bound and gagged at the time of the Charles Woodard vigilante hanging in 1902.) He was a teamster and rancher, as was Al Svare who also drove us kids to school a lot. A lot of the time we hitched a ride with whoever we could. In the winter when the snow was deep and it was really cold we just didn't go to school.

In about 1926, the Mountain View School was built at its present location at Third and Buick. It was the same plan as the Mills school, red brick with six classrooms. By the time it was built, however, there weren't enough kids to fill it. So, we country

kids had to go to school there. It broke my heart, but I had to go to Mountain View School for the last half year in grade school (grade seven).

The Superintendent of Schools at that time, A. A. Slade, proposed that the better students be advanced one half grade. I was advanced a half grade, as was my future wife, Elizabeth Propp. I went to the old Casper High School to eighth grade. This was north of where the main building is now at the high school.

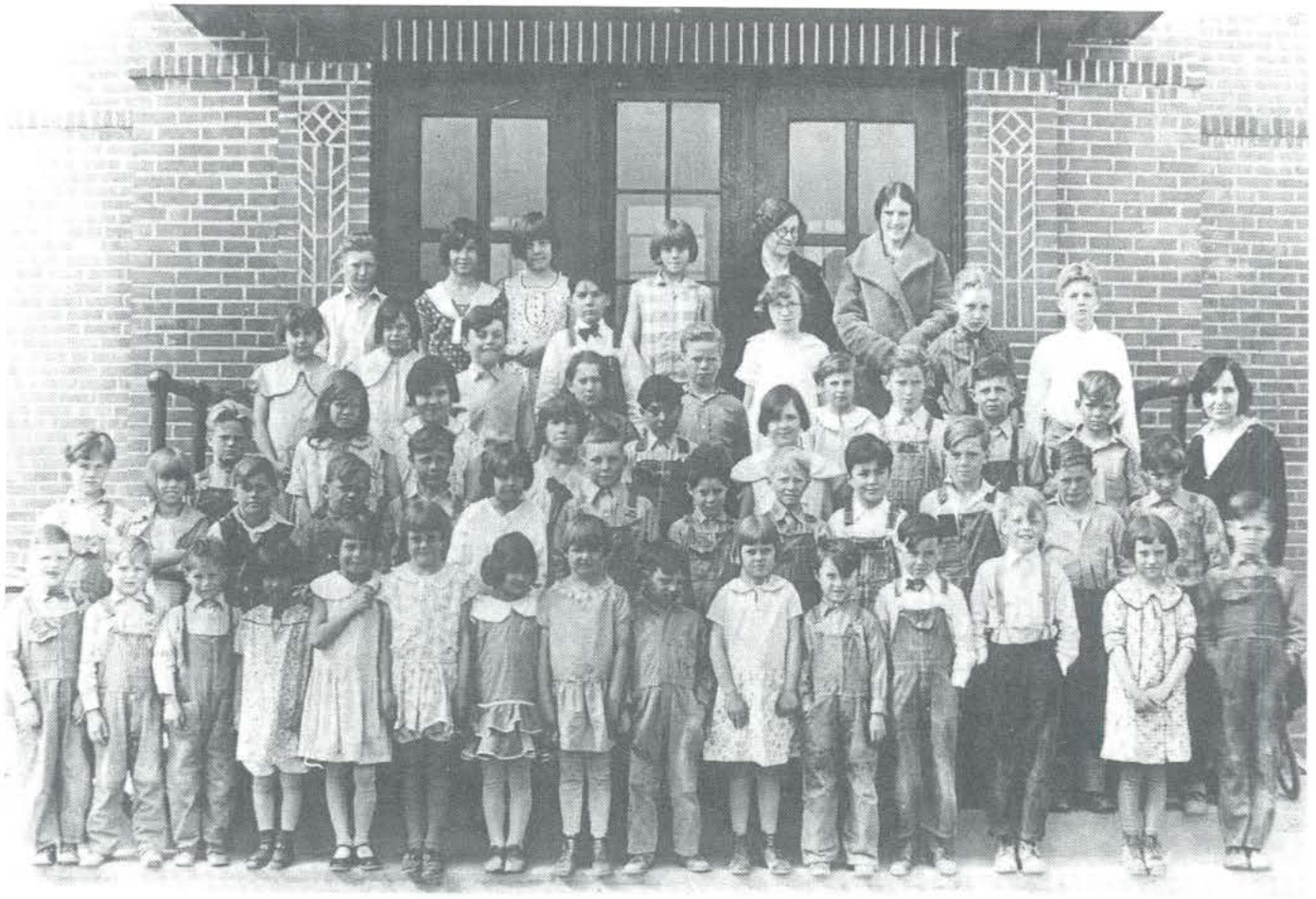
Some of the teachers at the Mills school were Woth, who taught first and second grades; Dunlap, seventh; Duis, fourth; Kaeding, fifth; Peterson, fourth and fifth; and Glen Parker, seventh and eighth.

A homesteader and veterinarian named Doc Chapman sold some land to the school district in the Baker-Grundy Addition in Mountain View and the district built the Mountain View School, where it is still located at Third and Buick. At first, the kids from Mountain View went to school in Mills as well as kids from the country. Later, we attended school at Mountain View.

When the Mills school was built there were no sewers and the school had a big cesspool right on the lot with the school. It lasted about two weeks before it had to be cleaned out. So, the next thing they built was a series of outhouses and the unsavory task of cleaning those fell to the boys, who had to clean them quite often. The outhouses made good targets for Halloween pranksters and we had to stand them back up after they had been knocked down on many occasions. Soon after the outhouses came a sewage system.

The school system had supervisors who visited twice a week. One was Jesse Mae Agnew. Kathryn Mahoney Barton also came to Mills as did Miss Phelps, who instructed music. We also had a penmanship teacher (Miss Hutchinson) who came twice a week and an athletic instructor (one of these was Dean Morgan) who taught calisthenics. The boys spent their time around the school grounds playing basketball and football.

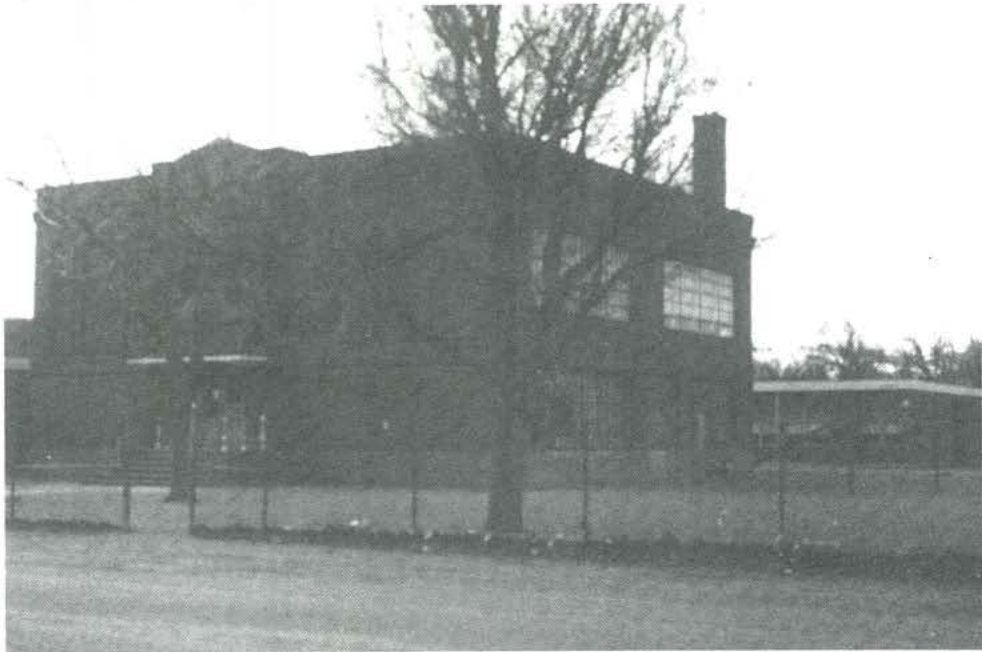
Life in Mills at that time was a busy time. The construction of the refinery was going on. There were horse barns down the street from the school where Wotco is now and many men drove horse drawn wagons to haul dirt and gravel from Mills to the refinery. In 1923 I think, the bridge across Casper Creek, which was where the bridge is today, collapsed. Then a new pontoon bridge was built downstream, closer to the river, in line with



Picture of Mills School classes, late '20s. Top row left to right: - Riley, Irene Smith, Forrister, -, - LaRue. Row 2: Winnis Dockham, -, Jim Vail, Howard Williams, Hattie Byers, -, - Kelsey. row 3: - Kikey, Margaret Kelson, Marjorie Vail, -, Warren McCrim, -, Geneva Drollings, Charles Smith, Jennifer Boyles, -. Row 4: -, Jane Yant, -, -, Edith Smith, Frank McNeely, Eugene Wallans, Alex Mills, Babe Hill, -, - Saunders, - Badholt. Row 5: Bob Vail, Leon Winkes, Bill Yant, Mary Jane Russell, Margaret Byers, Margaret Saunders, -, -, Edson Russell, Emily Christiansen, Bart Hill, -, Leroy Palmer, - Mann, - Wright. Photograph and good attempt at names from sixty years ago courtesy Bill Yant.



Balloons with message cards being released by Mills school children in honor of National Library Week. Courtesy *Casper Journal*.



Mills School, built in 1921, which stood north of the current school facing Wasatch. Courtesy Syble Peterman.



Mills School, 1986.

Mills students honor retiring principal

CASPER — They couldn't talk about the principal while he was at school so they waited until he left for the day.

The Mills School secretary would watch for Robert Ellison to leave. Then the children would slip down to the gymnasium to practice a play about the principal to honor him at his retirement.

In the play entitled "Ellison and Other Famous People Born in February," Ellison tells Abraham Lincoln that he, too, worked hard as a boy.

He says, "The summer I was in the second grade I remember picking enough berries to buy a new suit for \$7.95. That doesn't sound like lots of money now but when you only got paid nine cents a carrier, it is."

At another point, Chopin tells Ellison, "I enjoy hearing you

play my waltzes but why are you having so much trouble with No. 7 after all these years? I believe you will have to take a little of your fishing time and practice because you always encourage your math and spelling kids to think and practice."

Teacher Mrs. Mary Williams, who wrote the play, has Ellison telling Thomas Edison that he remembers his grandfather saying, "Robert, you'll never die because you're so ornery that I'm sure God doesn't want you and I doubt that the devil will take you." Then Ellison adds, "Sometimes I still think of that."

Queen Anne points out to Ellison that he is lucky because he has two children and seven grandchildren. She says she was always saddened by the

fact that her children died before they were ten years old.

Ellison says, "Yes, Berta and I have a daughter named Shirley and a son named Leroy. Do you know that Leroy and I both got degrees from Harvard on the same day?"

One of the final characters to come on stage before the end of the afternoon program presented to students and parents was Charles Lindbergh.

Ellison and Lindbergh talked about the day Lindbergh was in Denver, Colo. Ellison recalls he was working as a trailer hound for the streetcar company and had to work 14 hours without rest.

At the close of the program the children presented Ellison with a miniature bus filled with money.



Mr. Bob Ellison, Principal of Mills School for twenty five years. Courtesy Mrs. Syble Peterman.

The following news items about the school and the activities associated with it depict life in Mills in the early days:

March 13, 1927 The long looked for work on the sewer pipe leading from the school building to the Platte River is now underway with speed and accuracy by Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds, Mr. Snedden and his crew of workers.

December 2, 1928 On Friday night Dec. 21, the Mills school will hold its Christmas entertainment, to which the parents and young brothers and sisters of the pupils are invited. No invitation will be extended to the 7th grade and high school students who attend school in Casper, as they will attend celebrations in the schools which they attend. Santa Claus will be present with gifts for the little ones.

February 23, 1922 Mills School enrollment showed an increase of 100%. Enrollment is now 126. One year ago it was 65. Five teachers are teaching in our six room school. A basketball team was formed and the boys hope to make a good showing this winter.

April 13, 1922 A track meet is going to be planned soon. School classification was worked out carefully as it was determined as to what class a boy would be in as follows: Taking the height of the boy in inches plus one half of his weight in pounds plus four times his age in years and divide by three.

August 31, 1922 School opens September 5. Two years ago a one room school building was sufficient to care for the needs of the pupils. Enrollment was thirty five. This year six teachers have been engaged to care for the rapid increase in attendance. All six classrooms will be occupied this fall and all grades will be taught from the first to eighth inclusive. Thirty-five new desks have been ordered for the upper grades.

April 25, 1926 Next Friday, April 30, will be Parents Day at the Mills school. A program will be given in the afternoon. It will be followed by a track meet for the local boys. Several of the supervisors and the school nurse will be present to assist in the program. All parents are especially invited and a large crowd is expected to be present.

January 15, 1925 Willard School Basketball made its first appearance of the year yesterday in the grade school league and handily cleaned up on the Mills school 24 to 7. The Dowler boys and Whitmore were the stars for the winners while Ward and Laird upheld the heavy end for Mills. The lineup for Willard: L. Dowler, W. Dowler, Davis, Rissler, and Cowman. For Mills: Ward, Laird, Milkis, Strobeke, Blower, Walden and Dudley.

January 20, 1925 Mills Grade School annexed the basketball championship of the city for that class Tuesday afternoon by defeating McKinley by a score of 9-2. Boyer, center, by scoring seven points, put the game on ice for his team. The remaining two points were made by Brower, a forward. Bowers, pivot man for McKinley, scored the only points made by his squad. Glen Parker coached the Mills Cagers. The grade school tournament has been in progress for more than a week. The line ups for the Tuesday game: Mills: Geiger, RF; Brower, LF; Boyer, C. Newherter, RF; Thompson, LF; substitutes, Stamper for LG. McKinley: Durbin, RF; McCartherine, LF; Bowers, C; Briggs, RG; Pickett, LG. Score was Mills 9, McKinley 2.

January 20, 1926 The Mills Grade School basketball squad defeated the Midgets of the Jr. High School by a score of 14-5 Thursday night. The Mills players already were the city champions in their class. The Midgets are composed of a team selected from fellows weighing under 90 pounds.

February 14, 1926 The piano at Mills School has recently been tuned and overhauled. It is now in very good condition. Ten pupils are taking music lessons from Miss Phelps. Only third and fourth grade children up in their work can take this course. Students who have had piano lessons before are not privileged to enter. Mills school was the first to have the advantage of public school piano lessons.

March 21, 1926 George Christopher, assistant athletic instructor in the school, is arranging a soccer ball game for the Mills team.

October 26, 1926 The enrollment of the Mills School has increased now to 110.

October 31, 1926 The spelling contest between the seventh grade boys and girls ended in a weiner roast given to the girls who won. The teachers of the entire classes went to "Camp Come and Get It," where they enjoyed the entertainment.

October 4, 1927 Ninety-five members of the Mills Branch of the city Parent-Teacher Association met last night at the Mills School to enjoy a splendid program which included several informative and instructive papers. A. J. Hazlett, President of the general organization in Casper, was a guest at the meeting and spoke briefly on the work to be accomplished through the Association of Parents-Teachers. "Punctuality in Home and School Training" was the subject of an especially interesting paper delivered by Mrs. Mary Maxwell. Mrs. Tim Dolan took for her subject, "School Training and The Child," a paper that evoked a lively round table discussion in which many of the members took part. Mr. A. A. Skinner, principal of the school, spoke of "Examination and Report Cards," bringing out the importance of the cards sent home regularly for inspection and information. Mrs. Clyde Smith sang a delightful solo and Mrs. Lillian L. Van Burgh sang a PTA song, composed by her for the local organization.

October 23, 1927 P.T.A. has a membership of 116. Every teacher in the Mills school has called at the home of the parents of every child she has in her room since school started September 6. The kindergarten room has 17 pupils enrolled. Professor Skinner has completely recovered from his bruises and scratches he received when his car took a nose dive off a ten foot grade. The car looks as if nothing had happened out of the ordinary.

December 14, 1927 Nutrition and its effects on the teeth and bones of the body was explained by Miss Frances MacKinnion, Red Cross nutrition expert, to the members of the Mills Parent-Teachers Association held Tuesday night. A. A. Skinner, Boy Scout Executive, outlined the benefits derived by school pupils from the thrift savings account. He commended parents for the interest and support, in encouraging children to practice thrift. Miss MacKinnion will give a series of lectures relating to the importance of diet and nutrition, the first to be given January 2 at Mills School. Children of the first grade presented a Mother

Goose Christmas story under the direction of Miss Mary Harris. Lucille Smith gave a talk on Girl Scout laws and a demonstration was made by Florence Riley of second class scout work. Christmas carols were sung and a solo by Charles Smith and Christmas plays by rooms 1, 2, and 3 of the school concluded the program.

May 15, 1928 Carl Williams was elected president of the Mills unit of the P.T.A. at the final meeting of the school year. Other officers were Miss Mae Maxwell, Vice President, Mrs. Schultz, Secretary-Treasurer. An executive board consisting of George Boyle, Mr. Perkins, and Perry Hunter was elected. A picnic will be held May 29 on the Tavern lawn which will mark the close of the school program. All are invited.

September 16, 1928 A. A. Skinner, former principal of Mills, Wyoming school and previous to that superintendent at Glendo, Wyoming, will be in charge of the agriculture department of the Churchhill County High School at Fallon, Nevada.

September 28, 1928 William Mills was elected president of the Mills P.T.A. at a meeting last night. Mrs. McNamara, Vice President; and Mrs. McNeely, Secretary-Treasurer, were other officers elected. Future meetings of the association will be at 7:30 at the Mills School on the first Thursday of every month. Superintendent R. S. Hicks addressed the association.

April 21, 1929 The children in room one at Mills School visited the post office in Casper Tuesday. Through the courtesy of Mills parents Mrs. Joe Holt, Mrs. Clay Hill, and Arch Presley, the children of the first and second grades had the opportunity of visiting the aviation field on the Salt Creek highway Monday afternoon.

January 13, 1929 A number of folks in Mills kindly donated the use of three cars to take the school children to see the play "Robin Hood" at the high school.

February 8, 1929 The Reverend Charles S. Bream, pastor of the Grace English Lutheran Church was the principal speaker at the regular meeting of the P.T.A. of Mills last evening. Rev. Bream took as his subject, "Suns in the Month of February." Other members on the program included a minstrel show by pupils of the school, vocal selections by Mrs. J. E. Rouse, and duets by Mrs. Smith and Mr. Hunter.

February 9, 1930 The Mills School opened Tuesday with an enrollment of 52 pupils. The new instructors at the school this year are Miss Clark, who has third and fourth grades, Miss Nichols, the fifth and sixth, and Mrs. McNamara as principal and in charge of first and second.

September 21, 1930 The fifth grade of Mills school enjoyed a hike and weenie roast Wednesday, supervised by Miss Nichols, their teacher.

The Mills Football team defeated the Mountain View team by a score of 18-12 in a hard and exciting game Thursday evening at the Mills School ground.

September 13, 1931 Mills School opened Tuesday morning with an enrollment of 64 pupils. This number being larger than the past two years. There are still a few children that expect to be enrolled in a few days. The parents of Mills as well as the children are pleased to have Mrs. McNamara, Miss Clark, and Miss Haney appointed again to the Mills School. We are sorry to hear of Miss Clark's illness during the summer and wish her a speedy recovery to good health. Mrs. Beneau is substituting while Miss Clark is recuperating at her home in Casper.

The teachers wish to voice their appreciation of the newly painted and varnished rooms and the fine condition the school was in at the opening of the year, this being due to Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Blakley.

Mrs. John Watkins who has been ill the past week, was able to be about again Friday. Mrs. C. Simpson has been taking the little kindergarten children to and from school during Mrs. Watkins illness. There is an enrollment of 9 children attending kindergarten at Washington School.

On Monday afternoon in an arithmetic contest at Mills, the winning side, the Yankees were treated to candy by the Rinkydinks. These two groups were pupils in Miss Clark's room.

November 15, 1931 Thursday afternoon Mt. View and Mills schools played an exciting game of football, the score being 6-0 with Mt. View being victorious.

A large number of patrons and friends enjoyed the dancing party given Monday evening at the school under the auspices of the Mills Parent-Teachers Association.

On Monday afternoon at 2:00 there will be a Health Program given by the children at the Mills School. The program will be open to all parents and friends who wish to attend.

May 22, 1932 The Mills P.T.A. will hold the May meeting at the school this evening at 7:30. The installation of officers will be held. Mr. Johnson will also present stereoscopic views of the Tetons.

September 14, 1932 The Mills school opened the fall and winter session with an enrollment of 67 pupils. Mills is also pleased to welcome Miss Irene Welsh, the new teacher, to their school and community.

January 15, 1933 George Boyle spoke on "Thrift" and Robert N. Odgen talked on "Character Training for Children" at the monthly meeting of the Mills P.T.A. at Mills School Monday night. The singing of songs by the audience led by A. M. Sheets was followed by a talk by Mrs. M. Galley, state president, who gave instructions to others. Songs were sung by the primary grades under the direction of Miss Mary McNamara and by the upper grades under the direction of Miss Irene Welsh.

June 1, 1934 The Children of the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades of the Mills School, enjoyed a picnic Friday afternoon at the old tavern site. Refreshments were served and games played until a later hour. Those who enjoyed the picnic were: Elvira Yant, Roma Large, Edith Smith, Margaret Beyers, Betty Williams, Emily Christiansen, Wanda Coughlin, Irma Wingert, Darlene Sterner, Billie Yant, Russell Dielman, Frank McNeely, Dickie Jackman, John Bennett, Bob Parker, Leroy Palmer, Frank Janeaux, Leon Wallace, Billy Dielman, Fred Bennett, Bob Smith, Alex Mills, Lee Thomason, Gene Wallace, and Miss Irene Welsh, Teacher.

THE MILLS VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

One of the first actions taken by the newly incorporated Town of Mills was to organize a volunteer fire department:

"A number of our public spirited people gathered recently and succeeded in organizing what will be called the Mills Volunteer Fire Department. The following officers were elected: Walter Stewart, chief; H. B. Brakebill, financial secretary; Julian Hanson, recording secretary; and G. W. Lindsley as treasurer." (Casper Daily Tribune, February 23, 1922.)

Fire was particularly devastating in the early days of Mills, when there were many tar paper shacks and wooden stables for the work horses used in construction. Without public water for fire flow a bucket brigade was a necessity, and it was tough to fight a fast spreading fire by hand. Although the first line of defense in Mills was the bucket brigade, the fire department seems to have done a good job, in that there are isolated reports of fires but nothing in the way of a major fire made the news.

The department was a loosely knit organization through its first thirty years of existence, with public water, fire hydrants, and use of motor vehicles being major improvements over bucket brigades. The town also acquired a bell in 1933 from the Midwest Heights Church which was hung at the makeshift fire hall at Fourth and Wasatch. When the bell was rung the firemen scrambled to the fire hall as quickly as possible and then to the fire. The department now had the use of automobiles and a hose cart, which was a small trailer with a fire hose rolled up on a spool and kept at the fire station. When the fire bell was rung, the volunteers jumped in their cars and rushed to the fire station, hooked the hose cart on the back of their car and made off to the fire. The hose was hooked onto the nearest fire hydrant, and the fire put out with water from the hydrant. There was a lot of competition among the firemen to see who got to the station first and got to pull the hose cart.

The hose carts served the department well, but the department needed a real fire engine to do the best job possible. Even though the fire department was doing a good job, home insurance rates were very high in Mills, and one of the major reasons was that the town didn't have a fire engine. In the late forties, the City of Casper decided to turn its 1922 LaFrance fire engine into a museum piece, and tried to give it to the Fair Board to be placed in the muse-

um at the Fairgrounds. The town got wind of this and offered to take the LaFrance and use it as their only engine. The city could see the value in this, and Mills got the LaFrance for the grand total of one dollar, and the museum would have to wait. The town council worked out a plan whereby Wotco, then Manning and Brown, housed the LaFrance at their shop on First Street and helped maintain First Street as a paved roadway for the fire engine to use in going to fires. This worked out well, but the town really wanted to have their own fire hall.

The town let bids on a new fire hall at Fourth and Wasatch in 1952 and the volunteers helped build a fine new facility, designed by Holzinger and Schropfer, built by J. Jones, and occupied in 1953. The hall included bays for the fire trucks, a meeting room for the Council, and a large meeting room for events. The hall has been added onto and improved over the years and has been a tremendous asset to the town.

The fire bell still hangs above the fire hall, having been replaced by the telephone, radio dispatching and pagers. The bell has not always been there, however, as Mildred Steinle, wife of Mayor Fred Steinle, made it known that she would just love to have the bell. The town didn't have a use for it then, but they couldn't sell it because of one ordinance or another. The council passed a motion to "let Mrs. Steinle steal the bell", and it was hers. After several years at the Steinle ranch, the bell was returned to the fire hall. There is also a hose cart at the fire hall, a memory of times past.

Some of the major fires the department has fought over the years have been the New Year's Eve 1969 fire at Wotco, where a major shop building was heavily damaged; a tense fire at the V-1 gas station, where the gas pumps and tanks could have ignited but didn't; and the September 1979 fire at the Lariat Mobile Home Park, caused by a faulty gas meter, which damaged five mobile homes. The department has also saved its share of cats from trees and dogs from the icy waters of the North Platte.

The department fights many fires a year and has in the past few years provided ambulance and emergency medical technician service to Mills and the surrounding area. Today ambulance calls outnumber fire calls, and the ambulance service is a very important one for the town.

The department and Ladies Auxiliary have been very active and one of the most important facets of town life for many many years. The firemen spend many hours a month in training and in volun-

History of Mills' Fire Department, collected and written by Clarence Wiltsey.

The first fire chief, I can find any record of was Hendrich C. Nelson.

The first meeting to organize the department was held August 31, 1923, by mayor W. Salem and fire chief, Nelson. Those present at this meeting were; Ed Barteitt; Vern McLane; Ray Good; J. Peterson; W.R. Hunt; J.C. Davis; and Pat Harrigan.

On September 10, 1923 the by-laws were drawn up. Some of these by-laws were: \$1.00 dues for members, and to have a .50¢ fine on members not attending fires. September 11, 1923 the firemen went out for donations for the department and \$143.75 was collected.

Meeting was called February 4, 1924 by Fire Chief Nelson. E.R. McLane was elected Sec. & Treasurer. Rules and by-laws of the department were read and approved April 7, 1924.

July 7, 1924 meeting was called by E.R. McLane and McMullin was elected fire chief. There were 30 members present at this meeting.

There was a meeting of the department August 1, 1924 with 13 members present. There were no minutes of this meeting. The last meeting of the old fire department was held December 3, 1924.

In November of 1949, was a lease between the Casper Fire Department and the Town of Mills for old '97 fire truck.

On November 14, 1950, the present Department held its first meeting with Mike Brown acting as President; Ted Stamper as Fire Chief; Floyd Wilcox as Assistant Fire Chief; and Chas. L. Davis as Secretary and Treasurer.

The following committee drew up a sample of By-Laws for the Department: J. T. Miller, chairman; J.M. Nolan; and F.J. Wicks. There were 28 members present at this meeting.

On December 4, 1950 meeting the By-Laws were read. There was a housing agreement between the Town of Mills and Western Oil Tool Co. presented at this meeting by Mayor Wm. Clapp. In the February 5th, meeting in 1950, the siren was ordered and was paid for by the Town of Mills, April 5, 1950, \$239.00.

On February 1, 1950 was the first Fire Inspection in the Town of Mills and the fire rates were nearly cut in half. The first Firemen's Dance was held at the Wagon Wheel Dance Hall, Feb. 16, 1951. Sold 400 tickets and the donations amounted to \$1241.10. The expenses for this dance were \$212.83.

On March 6, 1951, an ordinance was drawn up, No. 87; governing the Fire Department in Mills. On March 12, 1951, the Fire Department bought one 1 inch fog nozzle, price \$57.40; one 1½ inch fog nozzle, price \$66.40 and one 6 foot extension for 1½ inch hose, price \$34.30; bought 5 gallons of Solvoid Fire Wet, at a quoted price of \$4.60 per gallon; 22 Fire Plates at \$1.10 each; First Aid Kit \$14.50.

In the May 14, 1951, meeting was decided to have a pie social and dance at the Community Hall. \$63.00 was made at this pie social for the Fire Department. In the May 14th meeting H. Crossly and Ivan Harris were appointed on the building committee to work with the Town Council. The Department had their first picnic July 1, 1951. Mike Brown resigned as President at the July 9, 1951 meeting and J.T. Miller was elected as President.

The 1952 Firemen's Dance was on February 15. 1500 tickets were printed and around \$1000. was made on this dance. The second picnic of the Department was on July 20, 1952 at E.B. Bohlin's residence.

The first plans that were accepted was on July 23, 1952 for the new fire station at 4th and Wasatch. The plans were drawn up by Holzinger and Schropfer.

In the January 12, 1953 meeting, Spencer volunteered to draw up a charter for the Mills Fire Department. At this meeting it was decided to have the 1953 dance on April 10th at the Wagon Wheel Dance Hall. The dance totaled \$850.00 net.

The floor for the new fire hall was poured in June 1953. The picnic was at E.B. Bohlin's residence August 23, 1953.

On November 9, 1953, Crossly was elected President; Bohlin was elected Vice-Present; Wiltsey was elected Secretary & Treasurer.

At the December 14, 1953 meeting, Bohlin was appointed chairman of the dance committee for 1954.

At the February 8, 1954, the Department bought 3 army blankets to be carried on the Fire truck for emergency first aid.

teering their time on other community service projects and do generate a significant amount of their own funding through dances, shows, and other activities.

A summary of the fire department history follows, beginning with a 1954 history, reprinted as written in 1954 by Clarence Wiltsey, and ending with notes on recent events also researched by Gib Blondin and Bert Harris:

February 9, 1952 - A bid of \$19,240 was accepted for construction of the fire hall to include four stalls, two for fire trucks and two for the town maintenance department, and a meeting room.

April 12, 1953 - The new fire hall is occupied by the department.

December 14, 1953 - Ted Stamper appointed Chief.

July 18, 1954 - The town buys a new truck from the county. The Wagon Wheel was burned to the ground in 1954, one of Mills' major fires.

August 8, 1955 - The Auxiliary is formed.

October 21, 1955 - Floyd Wilcox succeeds Ted Stamper as Chief.

January 9, 1956 - Each member is assessed \$5 to make a down payment on an ambulance.

May 31, 1960 - Two Ford trucks bought from the Bureau and built up by the department into fire trucks.

September 16, 1960 - The first weiner roast was set up.

November 11, 1960 - Al Opitz becomes Chief.

November 10, 1961 - The department is incorporated.

July 16, 1962 - The department purchases a 1944 LaFrance from Wheatland.

August 17, 1962 - Fourth Street made a through street for use by the fire trucks.

June 11, 1963 - The original LaFrance is sold for \$450.

March 19, 1965 - The town establishes the first budget for the department, \$3,500.

December 17, 1965 - The department buys a 1952 Pontiac ambulance from Natrona County.

June 17, 1966 - Mayor George Sword and council present the department with a U.S. flag, to be flown at the fire hall on the tower, probably the first flag displayed by the town.

June 1966 - Mills hosts the State Volunteer Fire Convention, winning the championship.

May 16, 1967 - Ed Edwards elected Chief.

January 1, 1969 - The Wotco New Year's Day fire.

December 19, 1969 - The first two way radios and base purchased for the department.

July 17, 1970 - Newt Weber elected Chief.

September 19, 1970 - The new fire truck, a 1970 Howe, is delivered.

January 21, 1972 - Ten Mills firemen begin Emergency Medical Technician training.

August 15, 1975 - The four wheel drive International Travelall purchased.

June 18, 1976 - The department donates the room at the Fire Hall to the Wyoming State Fireman's Association for a museum.

May 20, 1977 - Alan Sword elected Chief.

June 1978 - The old council chambers are donated to Hilton Randall for a museum.

June 18, 1978 - The Jaws Of Life extrication tool purchased.

May 18, 1979 - Noel Sanderson elected Chief.

November 7, 1979 - The 1970 Oren pumper purchased.

May 1, 1981 - The International four wheel drive traded in on a Chevrolet Suburban four wheel drive.

April 7, 1981 - Elmer Evans elected Chief.

September 1981 - New modular ambulance delivered.

May 1983 - Bert Harris elected Chief.

July and August 1983 - The Department sent a member to the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

September 1983 - Elmer Evans elected Chief.

1985 - Falcon Pump donated a one ton truck which the Department built into a grass fire vehicle.

July 1986 - Ron Schindler elected Chief.

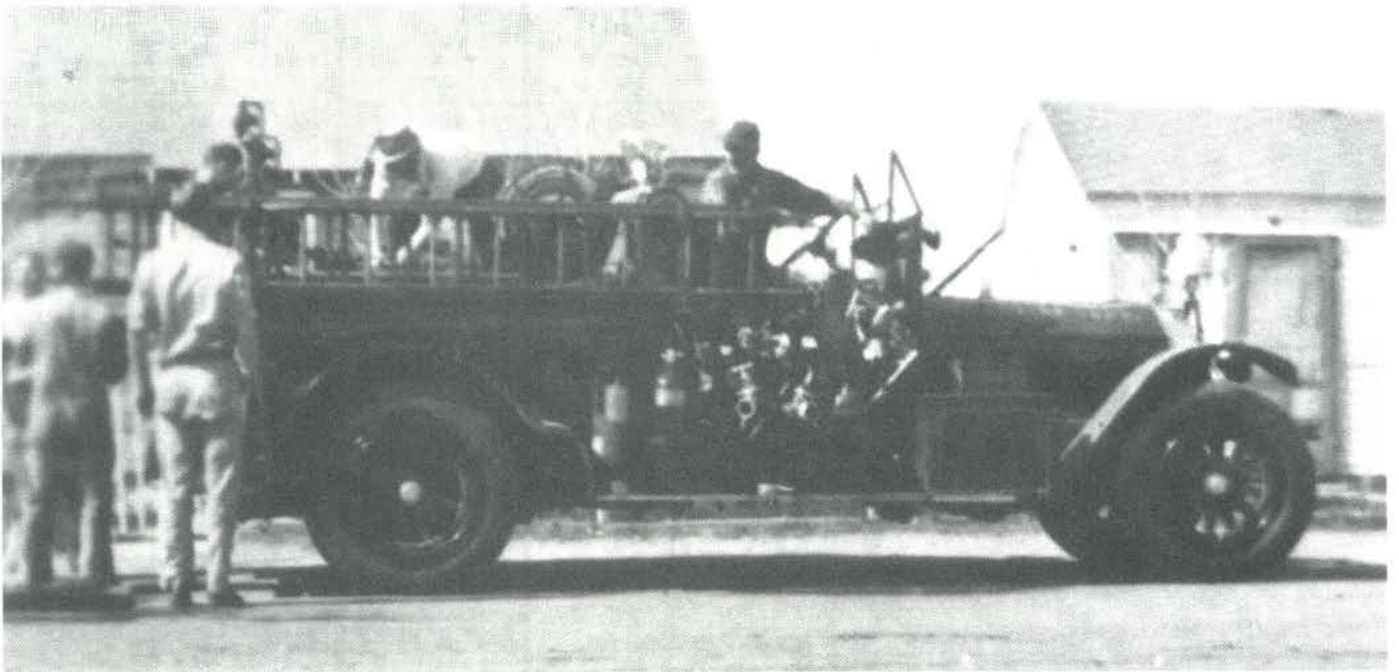
The Fire Department has continually upgraded itself through the years, keeping abreast of modern firefighting technology; new radios, new personal protection equipment, establishment of a Fire Prevention Bureau, and continual training.

Currently, the department includes one Wyoming Certified Fire Instructor, four Wyoming Certified Fire Apparatus Operators, six Wyoming Certified Firefighter III's, eight Wyoming Certified Firefighter II's, and five Wyoming Certified Firefighter I's.

The department has run an ambulance service for over twenty years, free of charge to those needing an ambulance. Presently the department includes one EMT II, six EMT I's, and three BEC's trained for service on the ambulance.¹⁸



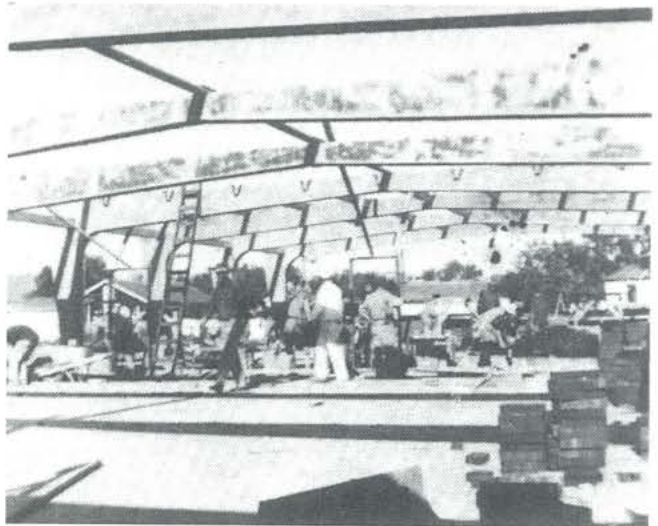
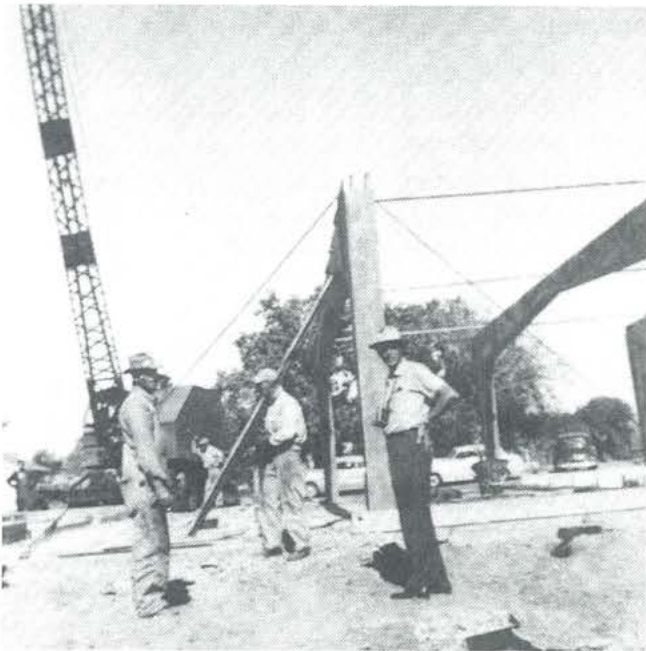
Work on the fire bell at the old hose cart building at Fourth and Wasatch, before construction of the fire hall. Courtesy Bert Harris.



The LaFrance, Courtesy Bill Clapp.



Chartering of the Mills Volunteer Fire Department. Left to right, Ted Stamper, Clyde Sissman, A. W. Spencer, and William Clapp. Courtesy Bill Clapp.



Above and right: Construction of the Mills fire hall, 1953. Courtesy Bill Clapp.



Fire Department practice at the fire hall. Courtesy Benjamin Wolfe.



The new fire training area at First Street Park, completed in 1986.

Mills Fire Team Wins Top Honors

Although they never took one first place in the competition the Mills Volunteer Fire Department walked away, although a little wet, with the first place trophy in the Annual Wyoming State Firemen's convention and tournament Saturday.

A consistent effort that kept them in second or third place in all of the events of the tournament gave the team representing the Mills Department the highest overall score of 178.17. Wheatland was second in the competition and Torrington was third.

The team from Mills was made up of Ed Edwards, Bob Edwards, Roy Amick, Noel Sanderson, Elmer Wiltsey, Elmer Evans, Larry Fulton, Pat Kennedy and Alan Sword. All of the team members did not participate in the events at one time, as the competition called for only five or six team members for each event.

One of the highlights of the tournament was the fine performance of the Mills Fire Department Flubbers, wives of the members. In the "Y" contest that calls for setting up hoses

in a short period of time the flubbers beat out seven of the regular all male teams from around the state.

In the five different competitive events the Mills team took three second places and two third places.

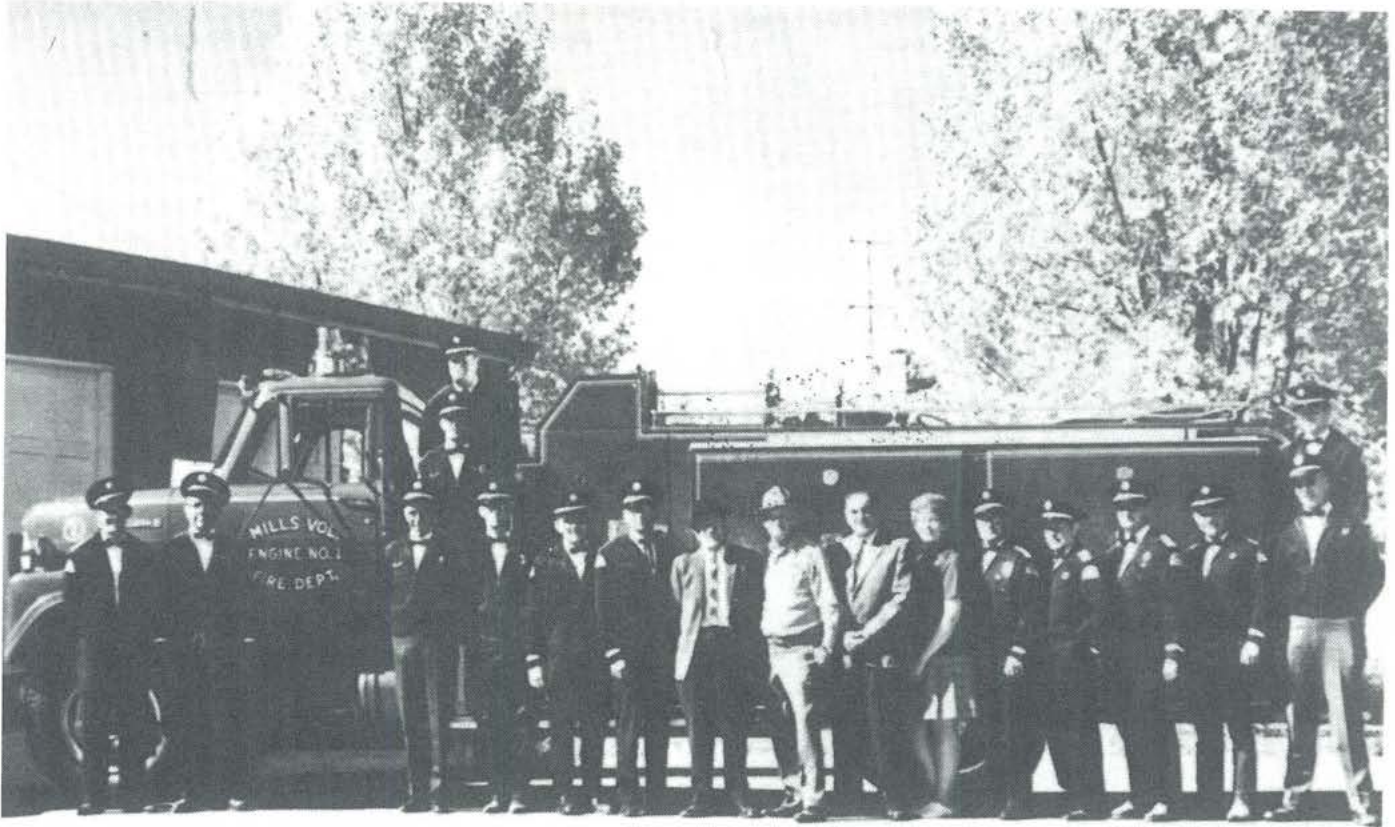
At the end of the convention a trophy banquet was held at which the fire departments were awarded trophies and the officers of the State Firemen's Assn. were announced.

The president for the coming year is Frank Humes of Newcastle; Harley Cook of Thermopolis, first vice president; Lawrence Mitchell of Torrington, second vice president; Bill Lacy of Riverton, third vice

president; and John McDonald of Lander, fourth vice president.

Stew Verdal of Newcastle was appointed secretary-treasurer and Bob Milick of Thermopolis was appointed historian.

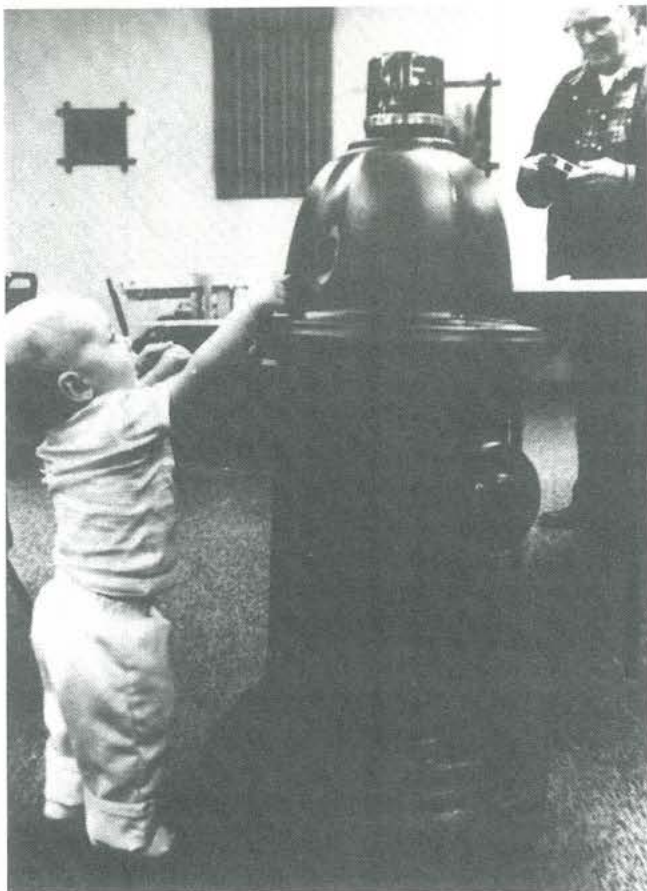
MILLS' FLUBBERS: Wives of members of the Mills Volunteer Fire Department gave a fire drill demonstration Friday during the state convention and tournament of Wyoming's Firemen's association. Chief Flubber Hilton Randall, and Mrs. Roy Amick, Mrs. Noel Sanderson, Mrs. Elmer Wiltsey, Mrs. Joe Nordwall, Mrs. Rex Moore, Mrs. Alan Sword and Mrs. Bob Edwards. Mrs. Bud McIntosh, Mrs. Gib Blondin and Mrs. Pat Kennedy. Mrs. G. R. Kelly was also a team member. The women ran the "Y-hose test."



The Mills Volunteer Fire Department, 1971. Left to right: Elmer Evans, Gib Blondin, Bud McIntosh, Alan Sword, Roy Amick, Ken Avey, George Sword, Bob Kelly, George McCue, Lennie Weakland, Elmer Wiltsey, Ray Clamp, Max Hoffman, Ross Chase, Jay Nelson, Ron Schindler (on truck at rear), Newt Weber (on step of truck, center), Noel Sanderson (top of truck, center). Courtesy Norene Kilmer



Donated truck — Mills Town officials receive title to a truck, which they will convert to a grass fire truck for the Fire Department. The former oil field truck was donated to the town by the UNC Falcon Pump and Supply Company of Mills. Receiving the truck are (l to r) Elmer Evans, Mills Fire Chief, and Mills Mayor Alan Sword, shown with Falcon Company officials Dick Strunk, controller, and Ed Opella, company president. Courtesy *Casper Journal*



A youngster chats with the Fire Department's talking hydrant, used for presenting fire safety programs in the schools, as George Sword looks on. Courtesy Casper Journal.

Post card reminder to Mills residents about water pressure needs during fires. This is not necessary today.

REMINDER!

TO ALL WATER USERS:

Whenever the Mills Fire Siren blows, PLEASE
TURN OFF ALL OUTSIDE WATER
FAUCETS

MILLS TOWN COUNCIL

THE MILLS POLICE DEPARTMENT

One of the most important government services that the Town has provided through the past sixty five years has been police protection. In the very early days of Mills, before the town incorporated, Natrona County provided police protection through the Sheriff's office. Once the town was incorporated in 1921, the Council appointed police officers, who were called marshals, to keep law and order. In the twenties the boom was on and times were wild. Gambling and liquor and rumored prostitution were commonplace, even though this was the time of Prohibition. Prohibition made things even more lively for law enforcement, and it seems that the marshals of that time were pretty wild themselves. Luke "Missou" Wilkerson, Town Marshal was arrested in the spring of 1923 for bootlegging. At his trial in October of 1923 he was acquitted, in large part because all of the material witnesses had left the country. (*Casper Tribune Herald*, October 12, 1923).¹⁹

George Adams, who attended the Mills school in the twenties, recalls that the marshals were friends of the kids, particularly a marshal (constable) named "Daddy" Frenchville, who handed out a lot of good advice to Mills' youngsters.

The early days of Mills saw only a few automobiles but with time they became more common and with the coming of the automobile came traffic accidents and problems, which kept the marshals busy.

After the twenties things quieted down in Mills and the stories of police activity are more routine. The town could not afford to have a large police department and the marshal was most often a one man force. The town owned and maintained a police car for the marshal, but that and one sidearm was about the total of police department equipment. Sometimes the marshal used his own car for police work. The marshal operated the entire department out of his car, and operated alone for the most part. In addition, this was a twenty four hour a day seven day a week job. Everything that came up, no matter what the size or nature of disturbance, was handled by the marshal.

The major story of the Mills police department is the story of Fred Vanhorn. Fred lived in Mills prior to World War II, came back to Mills after serving in the Navy, and hired on as deputy marshal to Everett Clark in 1950. Town minutes reflect that Mayor Bill Clapp appointed Vanhorn town marshal in 1955 when Clark retired from the position. Vanhorn accepted the position on a temporary basis at that time, "until somebody else could be found to

be marshal". That temporary position lasted until 1983.

Fred worked mostly alone in the police car for many of these years, with occasional assistance from the Fire Department, who would assign someone to ride with him. Often Bob Moore, who served as Street Commissioner would ride along.

Fred and the Mills police have a reputation for cracking down on speeders. One article in the Casper claimed that Mills deserved the title of a speed trap. Those persons admitting to having been arrested by Fred Vanhorn for speeding, however, have all stated that they were speeding. It is still easy to get going too fast on your way through Mills on the West Yellowstone Highway and Wyoming Boulevard, but with a conscious effort the speed limit can be observed. Fred is proud to state that in his thirty plus years with the department there was only one traffic related death in Mills.

The police department functioned through the years out of their patrol car. All records were kept in the car or at the one file cabinet in the council chambers at the Fire Hall, which was used for the courtroom for many years. Eventually the department expanded to a half dozen men who worked separate shifts, and in 1978 the new Town Hall was completed, providing the department with its first office space, including an office for the chief and a dispatch room.

In 1983, upon Alan Sword's election as Mayor, Fred Vanhorn resigned as chief after thirty three years of service. The Council appointed Art Terry as Chief. Fred Vanhorn was voted "Officer of the Year", 1983, by the Wyoming Peace Officers Association for his dedication to the profession and his years of community involvement.²⁰



Bob Moore and Fred Vanhorn with the police cruiser. Courtesy Fred Vanhorn.



Mills adopted the Neighborhood Watch Program in the early eighties. Two Mills police officers install the signs. Courtesy Casper Journal.

Mills Wars on Traffic Violators

Motorists in the town of Mills were cautioned this week by Mayor William W. Clapp, that the running of stop signals in the future will result in prompt arrest. Town Marshal James Ballard and Special Traffic Patrolman Everett Clark were instructed by the town council to show no further leniency toward persons violating this particular regulation which is clearly set forth in town ordinance number sixty.

At a recent meeting of the town, two officials reported recent narrow escapes from motor accidents, and both reported that the danger had been the result of a motorist's disregard of a stop sign. Mr. Clapp stated that there is to be no relaxation of the current campaign against speeders within the town and called attention to the fact that a Mills child is at present confined to Memorial hospital as a result of a street accident. He said that traffic within Mills has increased steadily in volume during the past few years, creating the necessity for stricter enforcement of regulations, and pointed out that violations are punishable by a fine of up to one hundred dollars.

POLICE CHIEFS (MARSHALS) OF MILLS

05-14-21	Luke M. Wilkerson
05-12-22	F. T. Shackelford
08-27-22	H. A. MacGillioray
10-24-22	Luke M. Wilkerson
05-26-23	L. W. Barfoot
08-10-23	James Hesley
07-25-24	Glen R. Leckey
05-06-25	Frank Robidou
05-27-25	Chris Bodewig
08-12-25	V. J. Frenchville
06-02-26	F.J. Shackelford
	Gould, no first name (fired 10-20-26)
11-17-26	A. J. Weekley (resigned 05-01-29)
05-23-27	Dick Jordan
05-20-29	Frank Stamper (Water Commissioner & Marshal combined for 1st time)
05-15-30	Clyde Riley
05-25-31	H. S. Billingsly (out 5-17-35) Commissioner and fire chief
06-19-34	Norman Hughs
01-02-34	W. M. McCane
05-17-35	Ted Stamper Marshal, Commissioner, Pound Master
06-04-47	Wilber Stocking
06-04-47	Terri Shaffer
02-04-48	Ted Stamper
02-09-48	James H. Ballard
05-05-48	Everett Clark Deputy Marshal
07-08-48	Floyd Wilcox & Alva Humberson Deputies
10-05-49	Everett Clark
10-05-49	James Ballard Deputy
02-04-53	Frederick Vanhorn Deputy
05-21-53	Frederick Vanhorn Marshal and Building Inspector
1954	Warren Haygood & Albert Opitz Deputies
08-19-83	Art Terry Police Chief

Through April, 1960, the Marshal and Clerk's position were part time although they were on call 24 hours a day. The Clerk's office was open from the

1st to 15th of the month.

CRIME NEWS

June 20, 1928 Safe robbers succeeded in looting a safe in the store of Horace Evans at Mills late Tuesday or early today and escaped with a sum of money estimated at from \$230-\$300, sheriff's officers announced. Entrance was apparently gained to the building through a phone booth which is kept open throughout the night. The burglars then broke a window of a bedroom in Evans apartment of the store, opening the window after unlocking it from the inside. The safe combination was opened and the safe rifled. Two checks that were wrapped around a \$5 bill were thrown onto the dresser in the room. After looting the safe, the yeggs locked it and made their escape. No one was in the building at the time, it was said. Mrs. Evans who is postmistress at Mills left early Tuesday evening for Hell's Half Acre, where her husband is stationed. Her son told officers he was in the place later in the evening but noted nothing wrong. The robbery was evidently pulled late at night. Some of the money stolen belonged to the post office fund, it was stated. The exact amount had not been determined. Officers immediately started an investigation. Police Sergeant Ray Ideen took fingerprints from the broken glass. Officers expected to arrest a suspect in connection with the robbery sometime today. The Evans robbery is the third here in the last four days. It was the first one that netted the perpetrators money.

December 7, 1925 Thieves entered the Brakebill grocery store at Mills Sunday night by cutting a hole in the door around the lock. They obtained \$10 in change, 25 pounds of butter and 6,000 cigarettes.



Fred Vanhorn, longtime Mills Police Chief. Lori Weber.

THE MILLS POST OFFICE

The Mills Post Office parallels the history of the town, being established unofficially even before the town, and is an institution central to the life style in Mills. Two long time Postmasters, Mabel Nolan and Faye Sankey compiled a history of the Post Office, Mrs. Nolan starting and Mrs. Sankey finishing:

Through the efforts of George Boyle and other citizens they petitioned the Post Office Department to establish a post office at Mills, Wyoming. Mr. Boyle had a post office box in Casper, Wyoming and was kind enough to bring all mail for the community from his post office box to his store, where with considerable burden to himself, he separated it and we, the residents, picked it up when we went to the store.

Tom Bassett, the first Postmaster, was appointed on June 8, 1921. The Post Office being located in his store, on the corner east of the present fire department. Mr. Bassett resigned the office and Fred Hunter was appointed the 2nd Postmaster, taking office August 13, 1923.

The Post Office was then moved to the little house on the corner of First and Riverview Avenue, 108 Riverview. This house is now owned by Mary Morford.

The third Postmaster, Hedrick Nelson, took office June 5th, 1925 and the office was moved into the Mills Printing Shop now owned by Harry Rude on the corner of Third and Riverview.

Horace Evans was appointed the 4th Postmaster and took office on July 1, 1927. The office was in the Boyle's Grocery Store, where former mayor George Sword now lives. He was Postmaster until he sold out and moved to Hells Half Acre in 1928.

Mr. Jasper Burch, known as "Daddy Burch" was the first mail messenger, he was then nearing his 70th birthday. He used a push cart or wheelbarrow, some ponies and a light wagon to bring the mail. As time went on and the increase in the volume of mail improved, he was no longer able to handle a twice a day mail catch, and I as Postmaster was compelled to pick up the mail. The pay was \$25 a month. It was a rare day when the train was on time. So the mail hauling job fell to Mr. Nolan. Many hours were spent waiting on delayed trains both day and night, and in 20 to 30 degree below zero weather. In those days the cars weren't so well heated and they would take along heated bricks to keep warm. One time Tim had an old Ford car and it backed down a hill and into a telephone pole. This was during a rain storm, lightning hit the pole and splintered it all to

pieces. Fortunately Tim wasn't harmed.

When the Northwestern discontinued, the mail was picked up at the Casper mail terminal. When the Post Office entered the Class of 3rd, Mrs. Neola Lowman bid in the contract, which she filled with credit. When she moved away the bid was accepted by Mr. Fred McDaniel.

When the Mills Post Office was stepped up to that of a third class April 18, 1946, two hours were allowed daily for clerk hire. Previous government employment allowed my husband, Tim to receive the employment at the rate of 59 cents per hour. Stamp sales in 1945-46 were \$1105.

As the town grew so did the Post Office. The stamp sales for 1952 were \$5455. Due to ill health I retired April 30th, 1959 and John Hoffman was appointed Acting Postmaster. (Mrs. Nolan.)

Mabel Nolan took office as Acting Postmaster on August 28, 1928, and was commissioned April 26, 1929 as the Mills 5th Postmaster. The Oath of Office was given by U.S. Commissioner W. P. Wheeler. At this time the office was moved to 424 Riverview. The office was in the Nolan's front room. Stamp sales were \$510.68 Mrs. Nolan's first year and the Post Office consisted of 74 boxes. Later Mrs. Nolan rented more boxes, 48 of which she rented from Postmasters Supply Company for the sum of \$4.20 per quarter. This she paid on until her retirement in 1959. There were now 174 post office boxes. In the 1940s the Nolans built a cinder block building and in 1946 built an addition to make an office 16 by 24 feet. Mrs. Nolan was then able to purchase 200 post office boxes from the estate of a deceased Postmaster at Edgerton, Wyoming. Also other equipment was purchased and at this time had made the building a modern up to date Post Office. Those days all the equipment had to be furnished by the Postmaster. However, all box collections went into Postal Funds. This was in effect until Mrs. Nolan retired in 1959. At that time she was reimbursed for some of the post office boxes and equipment. The rent in 1946 was \$50 per month, which included the building, equipment, utilities, and upkeep.

When Casper found out Mrs. Nolan was going to retire, they wanted to consolidate the Mills and Casper post offices. This met much opposition in the Town of Mills and a petition was circulated and sent to Keith Thompson (Congressman). Through his recommendation against the consolidation the Post Office Department took no action and saved the Mills Post Office.

Before Mrs. Nolan retired she had increased the Post Office receipts to over \$6,000 per year

for two consecutive years so the Post Office would be eligible to become a 2nd Class office July 1, 1959.

John Hoffman, appointed acting Postmaster in 1959, served in this capacity until August 18, 1961, when Faye Sankey was installed as Postmaster by Postal Inspector Robert K. Dillon as Mills' sixth Postmaster.

In January 1962 the officials from Denver came to measure the Post Office to see if it could be remodeled to make space for additional boxes which had been needed for several years. Finding the quarters too small for the changes necessary, bids were advertised April 9 through May 9, 1962. The contract was let to Scott Bertagnole, August 6, 1962. Upon completion of the new building we moved and were open for business February 25, 1963 with 533 boxes. There is space available to add two more sections of boxes when needed. The town continued to grow and new businesses sprouted up with the town stamp sales also continuing to grow, for the year 1962 stamp sales were \$17,586.20. We were now allowed seven hours daily clerk hire with one regular clerk and one substitute.

After the contract was let on constructing the new building, the Real Estate Office in Denver wrote at least once a week for news concerning the progress of construction. As I hardly knew what a door frame looked like, I'd take the letter up to Scott and ask him what they were talking about and where we were on the building. He quickly won my respect as he was always truthful to me about the progress and helped me with the reply. Bob Nab, our District Manager from Cheyenne, was very impressed by the cooperation I was getting from our contractor as other Postmasters hadn't been faring as well in their dealings.

Upon completion we moved into our new building and opened for business February 25, 1963. The moving was an enormous task. The distance was about one mile between buildings. All new post office boxes with keys (some of the keys not opening the boxes they were supposed to), all the old boxes had been combination. To switch 374 combination boxes to boxes with keys and a file to set up with the key numbers to file with the box numbers was difficult. Betty Halsey, Carol Strohecker, and myself were the only employees at this time. Scott Bertagnole and his boys helped us move, without them we would have had to take more time and with the Post Office we had to open for business Monday, February 25, 1963, mail to be put in boxes, keys to be given out and Monday's business as usual. It was

a mad house as I think every one of those 374 box holders showed up to see what happened to their mail. The post office boxes in the old Post Office had been numbered far out as sometimes the old numbers had been left on the old boxes from where they came from and the numbers were high. We had only 374 boxes and my box number was 1441 and I don't remember how high they did run. All those box numbers had to be changed, so we had some unhappy patrons.

It was Carol's job to find where the misplaced mail went (those that would have new box numbers). We had a box to place all this mail in until we could get it sorted to the new boxes. Of course we called this File 13. Our customers got real upset when they heard us talking about File 13, as they thought we were throwing it away. Carol managed to get our box emptied and all the mail sorted before we went home. How with all the other work I'll never know.

The next project was the dedication of our new Post Office. In those days no budget was provided for the dedication and no postal funds were available, however, with the whole town pitching in our dedication was a huge success. Eldon Spade and Fire Chief Al Opitz with the assistance of the Mills firemen built our platform. The firemen were also practicing for their annual fireman's convention but they found time to help us. Bud Strohecker donated the use of his sound system. Mrs. Fred Domsella baked a special cake. During the celebration the police and firemen parked cars and kept order, then helped clean everything away for us.

We had a huge crowd. Boy Scout Troop 62 posted the Colors, Senator Gale McGee presented us with a flag that had flown over the White House. Senator McGee was Chairman of the Senate Post Office Committee and had taken an active interest in our Post Office. The Troopers Drum and Bugle Corps put on a very fine performance. The ladies of the community donated cakes and helped serve. The Postal Service was very surprised and pleased that we had such a good turnout and everything turned out so well. I told them it was the cooperation of everyone that made things turn out well. The people of the town did it.

One Mills resident even wrote a poem to honor the new Post Office:

Our new P.O. is 82644.
Stop in and look is an everyday chore.
They moved it from where it used to be.
There wasn't room for all to see.

It's on a hill near a shopping center, too.
And a wonderful Casper Mountain view.
I enjoy my stop at 82644.
I meet all my friends at the door.
We stop and chat as we always did.
At 82644 since I was a kid.
They changed the name to a number, you know,
But the place is the same wherever you go.
The oldtimers meet and discuss the news.
And in positive terms express their views.
The teenagers gather as if by chance
To make their dates for the weekend dance.
I look forward with pleasure to that daily chore
And the letters from friends I get at 82644.
There's nothing in this world I'd enjoy more
Than to be a member of the staff at 82644.
Elvin St. Clair, Mills, Wyoming

On July 1, 1963 the Zip Code was initiated nationwide by Postmaster General J. Edward Day. Hence the reference to the new name 82644 for the Mills Post Office in Mr. St. Clair's poem. The Zip 82644 meant: 8 - the group of States being Idaho, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, and Wyoming; 2 - the subdivision of area 8, which includes almost all of Wyoming; 6 - the central Wyoming area; 44 - the town or delivery area.

The Mills Post Office was named Petti-Coat Junction by Ray Woods of the Casper Post Office in 1967, because of our all girl staff. This nickname stayed with us for several years.

July 1, 1967, our office became an office of the 1st Class. Our receipts were \$62,430. We were the only 1st Class office in the State with an all woman staff. I continued to be the only woman Postmaster of a first class office until 1978 or 1979. Now there are several women first class Postmasters.

The old Post Office Department with the Pony Express Rider as a symbol came to an end on July 1, 1971, when the United States Postal Service came into being, with the eagle as its symbol.

In 1967 we had the old boxes from the Nolan building stored in the Post Office and as space was becoming scarce we needed to get rid of them. Every time someone from the Inspection Service or Postal Officials came by we asked how to get rid of them and they always got away before we had this taken care of. One day someone said they would take the fronts off for me and take them downtown and sell them for scrap, then take the rest to the dump the next time he went. I thought this was a good deal. He came back with a receipt and a check for \$19.27

for the scrap. The value of the boxes charged to my equipment account was \$1924. I started reading the Postal Manual on how to enter this in the cash book and immediately found out I had goofed and had not handled this correctly. It took until the next morning before I had the courage to pick up the telephone to call Denver and tell them what I had done. I had visions of all sorts of things happening to me as I didn't have \$1900 to make the difference up. The officials in Denver knew I had been trying for years to get rid of these old worn out post office boxes and were very nice and explained how I was to handle the situation. Believe me that was a lesson, and I always did a little reading before acting after that.

May 3, 1973, Girl Scout Troop #9, Junior Troop 100 and Brownie Troop 332 honored the Mills Postal Employees with a pot luck dinner. This was in honor of "Postal Services Week".

Our Post Office continued to grow and in 1975-76 additional boxes were added to bring the total to 2,200. On July 17, 1976 the open house at the Post Office was very nearly a repeat of the excitement of the 1963 dedication, with Ken Barrett, Master Of Ceremonies, Howard Buck from the Post Office Sectional Center, Senator McGee and the Trooper Cadets all participating.

During 1978 and 1979 polls were conducted in Mills to determine if residents were interested in City (street) delivery. Both times the response was four to one against City delivery. Reasons given were; they liked to come to the Post Office because the girls were so nice and friendly, meeting friends, and to get out of the house. (There is the possibility that street delivery of mail in Mills would mean closing the Mills Post Office, which would require the residents to go to Casper to get their mail and see their friends.)

The Post Office installed roll out boxes in the lobby in the late seventies bringing the total number of boxes to 2,500 and receipts of around \$500,000 per year. In October of 1982, Faye Sankey entered the hospital for back surgery and Betty Halsey was Clerk in charge until May 30, 1983, when Lowel Edwards, Postmaster of Wilson, Wyoming was installed as Officer In Charge. Faye Sankey retired on August 18, 1983 and Reggie Jordan was installed as Postmaster on January 7, 1984.

One final note, Etta Christiansen Sims has had the same box at Mills since boxes were first installed at the Mills Post Office and she and her husband Ed continue to rent this box in 1986. (Faye Sankey)²¹



Right: Pop and Mrs. Mitchell, with Mabel Nolan at the Mills Post Office, 1956. Courtesy Faye Sankey. Above: Jim Nolan at the Mills Post Office, 1936, at 424 Riverview. Courtesy Larry Edwards. Above right: The Mills Post Office at 424 Riverview. Courtesy Faye Sankey.





Above: Mayor George Sword delivers his history of Mills at the Post Office dedication. Seated at right are Senator and Mrs. Gail McGee. Senator McGee was a friend of the Mills Post Office. Also, note the portrait of President John Kennedy, who would have been 69 years old in 1986. Courtesy Faye Sankey.



*Honoring the
Dedication of the
Mills
Post Office*

SUNDAY, MAY 26, 1963

Below: The Casper Troopers perform at the Post Office dedication. Courtesy Faye Sankey.





The Mills Post Office.



The Mills community hall, located adjacent to the fire hall on Fourth, providing a meeting hall for the community for over thirty years.

THE BUSINESSES AND INDUSTRIES OF MILLS

Mills has always been a working man's town. The initial reason for Mills was the building of the Amoco refinery and many from Mills worked at the refinery. Brakebill, Boyle, Claughton, and hundreds of others had small stores and business outlets in Mills from the beginning. Sinclair Oil was heavily involved in Mills for years. Western Oil Tool has been a significant and good industry for the town.

Boatright-Smith, Benton Clay and Black Hills Bentonite, although not in Mills, contribute to the town's economy. Salt Creek Freightways, now Edson Express, is a major positive factor.

The Bureau Of Reclamation has been a good friend to Mills over the past almost forty years and the Natrona County Road and Bridge department is a major employer.

The Millview Shopping Center and Hutsell's Pay And Save are landmarks of recent vintage. Mills had the state's largest wholesale bakery during the sixties. The Rainbow Cleaners, Roundup Market, Mills Superette, bars, and other such establishments have had their place in Mills. The Beacon Club, a recent, but widely known nightclub fell on hard times during the eighties and is now temporarily and possibly permanently closed.

Mills even had a bank for a few years. The town and towns people, Hutsell's and the Post Office all worked together to help a group of investors start the State Bank of Mills. In May of 1979 the bank moved into one of the original Sinclair Oil houses at 305 Wyoming Boulevard. President Bob Wonio oversaw the construction of a two story bank and office building adjacent to this house, and the bank

opened for business in their new building August 17, 1981. With the bust of the eighties, the bank was closed by the FDIC on May 4, 1984, leaving Mills again without a bank after a lot of effort.



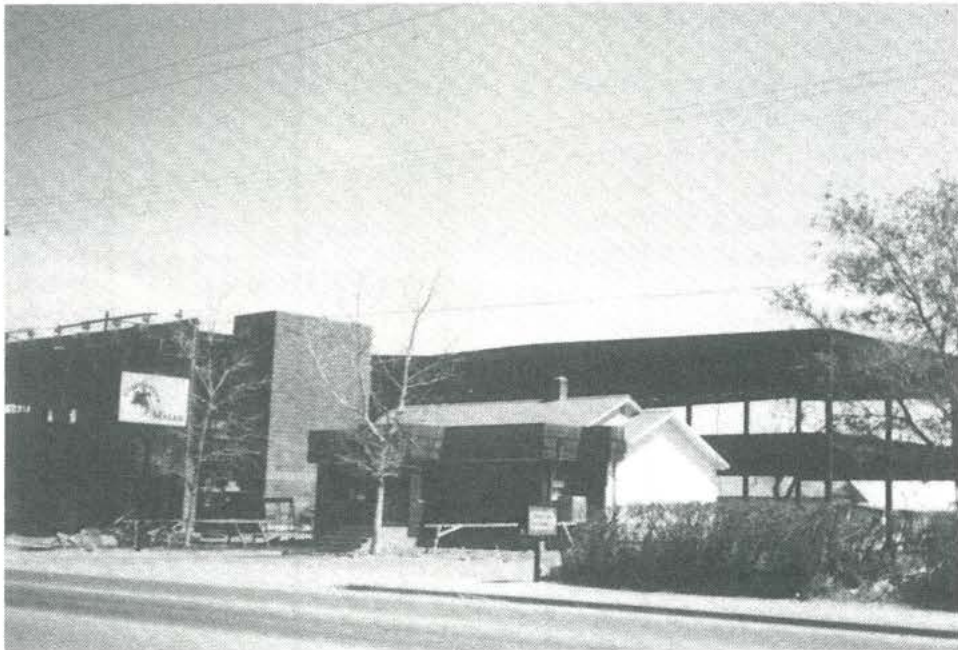
Ray's Liquor on Riverview, now the Hideaway. Courtesy B. K. Farmer.

Mae Claughton, third from left, in front of Claughton's store at First and Wasatch. Courtesy Roy Parks.





The Millview Shopping Center.



The original and new home of the State Bank Of Mills.

WESTERN OIL TOOL AND MANUFACTURING COMPANY, INC.

Western Oil Tool was founded in 1938 at Laramie, Wyoming by Fred Manning Sr. It began as an oil field equipment repair facility to service Mr. Manning's drilling rigs. Western was moved to Mills in 1940-41 to be closer to operations and was located at its present location which had been a government tannery and hotel. In 1944, the engine repair shop was built and Western started repair of engines for the oil industry. Also during the early forties Western expanded with the growth of the oil industry and established shops in Snyder, Texas; Williston, North Dakota; Rangely, Colorado; Worland, Newcastle, and Rock Springs, Wyoming; and Glendive, Montana; as these fields were discovered and developed.

It was during this time that A. D. Hunt Oil Tool from Texas bought Western from Manning. Rene Wells, one of the original employees at Western, now retired, tells how Mr. Hunt showed up at Western dressed in overalls unannounced and wandered around the place for several days and no one knew who he was until he then gathered everyone together and announced he was the new owner. After about six months that deal fell through and Manning retained Western.

On the 1950's, Fred Manning Sr. sold the drilling company and Fred Manning Jr. took over the management of Western. During the early fifties Western had an oil field supply store. That was closed with the depression of the oil industry.

Western built the original building of what became known as the fab shop and started building aluminum flat bed trailers. These were phased out in 1961. In 1959 Western started making fiberglass boats under license by Larson. The manufacture of these was set up in the old Manning truck shop and proved to be a good boat. In 1960 Brunswick bought Larson and cancelled the license agreement with Western.

In the meantime the fabricating shop had been expanded and Wotco was building oil field structures and whatever else it could find during the depressed times.

The 1960s saw a new direction for Wotco. New management came aboard in 1961 and a policy of diversification was further emphasized and implemented. Western continued to service the oil

industry, but adopted the name Wotco to better relate to the construction and mining industry.

Some of the highlights of the '60s and '70s:

1964 - Developed the elevating scraper.

1965 - Associated with Caterpillar Tractor Company as a supplier of fabricated weldments.

1969 - Fire, burned the machine shop, heavy duty shop and office.

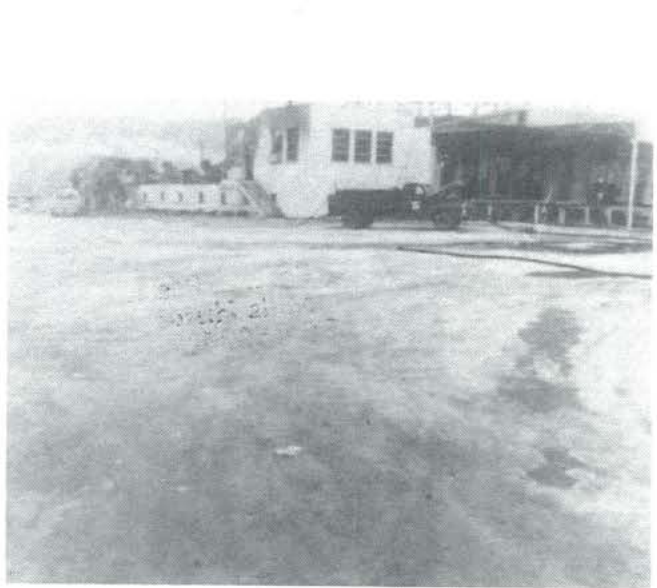
1970 - Large contract with Caterpillar making pipe layer tractor track frames, shop expansion.

1974 - Started manufacture of off highway truck bodies and bottom dumps for Caterpillar, shop expansion.

1976 - Fred Manning Jr. sold Wotco to a group of local investors.

1978 - Shop again expanded with building of the new machine shop, craneway and paint shop. The old buildings removed and another new era begun.

Today - Wotco continues to expand its product line and develop its capability to grow and provide stable employment for the people of Mills.²²



The aftermath of the 1969 fire at Wotco. Courtesy Benjamin Wolf.



Wotco, in the 1960s, looking toward the tannery building across First Street. The majority of the building is now gone, lost in the fire of 1969. Courtesy Wotco.



An aerial view of Wotco in the mid seventies, looking east, with the current Wotco configuration. The Mills Construction Company excavated sand and gravel from this area, which ultimately led to the founding of Mills. Wyoming Boulevard crosses the lower right corner of the picture, while First Street runs left to right in the center. The Amoco refinery and C&NW bridge are in the upper left corner. Courtesy Wotco.

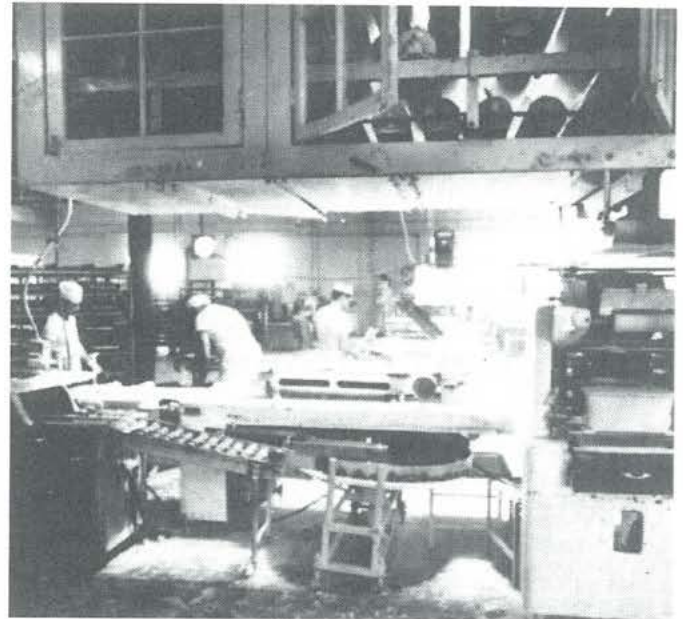
THE BUNNY BREAD BAKERY

Mills had a unique operation for a time when the Bunny Bread Bakery was located on Delmar from 1961 to 1966. This was a unique operation in that it was the last wholesale bakery in the state, and in the style of the building itself. Gene Sneesby operated the Wigwam Bakery, (established in Casper in 1922), from 1940 to 1958, including locations east of the County Library and on South Durbin Street. The bakery became Bunny Bread in 1958 and the operation outgrew its building.

Sneesby found a large tract of land in Mills that was suitable for a large building, had parking for delivery trucks, and was close to the West Yellowstone Highway. He built the new Bunny Bread Bakery there on Delmar in 1960 and moved in April 6, 1961. The building was built as a 120 by 250 foot block structure with 28 beams with 60 foot span, made of 2×11's glued together under pressure, weighing 3 1/2 tons, and 14 beams 36 feet long, made of 2×6's glued together to support the roof structure. These beams, made of laminated wood, spanned the 120 foot width of the building in pairs, supported in the middle by a pole. Looking more like beams for a church building than a bakery, the beams were at that time and may still be, the longest span in a building in the state. This construction style allowed for a wide open interior and made room for the large ovens and packing equipment necessary for a wholesale bakery.

The bakery flourished in Mills, at one point having eighty five employees and twenty one delivery routes. These routes hit every grocery store, restaurant, and cafe in Casper, Rawlins, Riverton, Lander, Sheridan, Douglas, and places in between. Bunny Bread sold out to Wonder Bread out of Denver in 1966 and the era of the wholesale bakeries in Wyoming came to an end. Now in Wyoming all the bread is baked out of state, in Denver, Billings, Salt Lake, or other locations and shipped to Wyoming, except for bread that is baked in the local grocery store bakeries and small bakeries and sold for retail on site.

There is no longer a big eared, ten foot, smiling bunny overlooking the West Yellowstone Highway, and there is no more smell of freshly baked bread for six blocks around the bakery in the west end of Mills.²³



Top: The Bunny Bread Bakery, in Mills from 1961 to 1966, was the last wholesale bakery in Wyoming. Middle: Inside the bakery. Above: An oven at the Bunny Bread Bakery. Courtesy Gene Sneesby.

THE HOUSES OF MILLS

The housing of the past as well as present in Mills defies categorization into classic architectural styles. The salt box, cape colonial, garrison, and other styles don't really describe well progression of the "Mills Houses".

The origins of the town set the pattern for dichotomy of housing styles. The owners of the Mills Construction Company, their foremen, and the owners of other business enterprises could afford to have quality homes built prior to moving to Mills. These were the better houses.

The other type of housing in Mills was that of the teamsters and laborers who worked for the construction companies. This style house could be referred to as "tar paper shack." The teamsters and laborers would work very long hours, save enough money to buy a lot in Mills, and spend every spare penny to dig a well and construct a house of whatever could be found. Once the house was suitable, the man's family would come to live with him. It can be said that many of these homes were owned by people who didn't owe money to anyone and they added on here and there to their house a board at a time as they could afford it.

Tar paper shacks either get improved or fall down and this is the instance of those in Mills in the early days. With the Depression almost everyone lost their property and the shacks were abandoned, fell, or were knocked down. Thus, there are really no examples of this type of house left in Mills, even though the tar paper shack was quite common in Mills and the county at that time.

From the few quality houses which were built originally in Mills still in existence and from recollection of long time residents, it seems the most common house layout was similar to what is known as a bungalow. A bungalow is a rectangular shaped house, narrow left to right and approximately twice as deep as wide. A typical bungalow was twenty to twenty four feet wide and approximately forty feet deep. The housing style fit the lots in which the town had been platted. The platted lots are forty feet wide and one hundred forty feet deep with an abutting alley to the rear. The corner lots were also forty feet wide. To fit on a lot that is forty feet wide, the house can't be much wider than twenty four feet. This leaves sixteen feet of lot for side yards. If there is a garage on the lot with a driveway access to the street, the driveway would take up eight to ten feet in width. In the early days of automobiles garages

were much smaller and the driveways were often closer to six feet in width. With a ten foot side yard on the garage side, there is approximately six feet left between the house and the lot line on the remaining side. This makes a fairly useable lot and building, the side yards being big enough to have a decent distance from your house to the neighbors and enough room to limit the rapid spread of fire from one house to the next, while still allowing enough sunlight in for growing a garden or a lawn. Many of the early houses of Mills had alley entry garages, which allowed for a wider house on the front of the lot if the owner wished.

The bungalow has a living room in front, with kitchen and bedrooms to the rear. The classic bungalow style also included a basement with half or small basement windows and a porch with a gabled roof which is separate from the lower than the main roof of the house. The porch of a classic bungalow was most often about one half to two thirds of the width of the house. There are very few houses in Mills either with a bungalow porch or a half basement. There are good reasons for this. The presence of groundwater close to the surface was a positive factor in drilling a well and building a house, but was a negative factor in having a basement. Construction and maintenance of a basement in such sandy soils with water a couple of feet below the surface makes building a basement something most people avoid. There are a few homes with basements in Mills and some fill partially with water when the river is high; some have water in them year round.

A variant more prevalent in the town than the classic bungalow is a house that was built twenty four feet square with two rooms. The two rooms were apparently a kitchen-living room and a sleeping room. As public sewer was not operational until 1960 it was pretty much the case that the twenty four foot square had an outhouse out the back along with a very small single car garage. The motto, if such a thing applies, for the Mills House is "Two Rooms and a Path". The twenty four foot square can be seen today on the north (or east) side of the One Hundred Block of Benton Street. These houses were likely built as a twenty four foot square with an outhouse and garage out back. The remaining original garages in this area indicate just how small the cars were in the early days of Mills. There is room only for one very small car, probably in most cases a Model T Ford.

From the basic twenty four square it is possible

to visually follow the expansion of these houses. Most typical is a shed roof addition across the full width of the back of the house, then a shed roof porch across part or all of the front of the house, which would likely later be closed in and a new stoop or smaller porch added on out the front of the enclosed porch. Additions to the side of the house were limited because of the narrowness of the lots.

A phenomenon very significant to the housing of Mills is moving houses into Mills from elsewhere. Many of the houses in Mills were moved in from various locations around the county. Houses could be had for a few dollars in those days because of the abandonment by the owners during the Depression. These houses could be moved into town for even less money than the sale price, and it was much cheaper and less time consuming to do this than to build a home. It is interesting to note that in the fifties and sixties the trend was to move houses back out into the country from the communities, because the houses were old, cost only a small amount, and could be purchased and moved for less than the cost of a new house. (These are the same reasons the houses were moved the first time.)

As the years rolled by, there seemed to be no development of a real Mills style house. The most apropos term may be eclectic, a type of house that can't be characterized by any other particular style. The trend continued over the years of moving houses in from other places, which in itself created a mix of house styles.

The real change in Mills housing stock came with the advent of the trailer house, now termed mobile home, evolving into the modular or manufactured house. With the lots in Mills being forty feet wide the mobile home was ideally suited for use in Mills. And, the lots were cheap. When trailers started appearing in the housing market in the fifties, someone got the good idea that they could rent their vacant lot down the street to a mobile home owner. An eight foot wide mobile home (they were very narrow then) fits well on a forty foot lot with much room left over for other things. Most often in Mills the other things became mobile homes. Two narrow mobile homes fit nicely on a single lot if the renters park their cars in front, perpendicular to the street. The economics of this setup were apparent to many people and soon Mills saw a proliferation of mobile homes.

Mobile home living took on new aspects when the town allowed the rear forty feet of two adjacent lots to be split off for an additional mobile home lot on

the alley. This created a forty by eighty foot lot on the rear of two lots, each of which was reduced to forty by one hundred. This leads to many neighbor problems, but is a windfall to the owners of the original lots. The only way to access one of these orphan lots is down a muddy alley among the garbage cans. Parking is at a premium in the alleys and the alley mobile home dweller often has several vehicles which adds to the confusion. The residents of the front lots have to cross the rear lot to empty their trash, which intensifies the interaction between neighbors significantly and sometimes drags the town into the fray to mediate.

At the same time, mobile home parks developed in the original part of Mills, areas of entirely mobile home development with a mobile home located across the back portion of two existing lots. This makes three mobile homes on two lots, two perpendicular to the street on their own lot and one across the back of two lots. This gave rise in the 1970s to the development of new subdivisions west of Wyoming Boulevard designed specifically for mobile homes, with the lots either being sold or rented. The Kapranis and Water Tower additions are entirely mobile home developments.

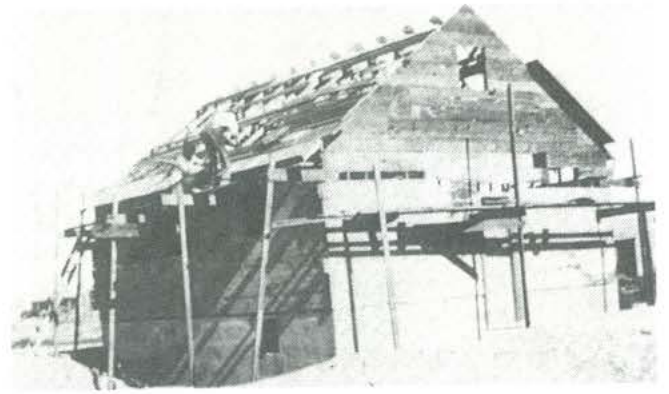
One phenomenon which is quite interesting to observe in Mills is the "demobilization" of owner occupied mobile homes. An owner buys a mobile home on a lot or moves a mobile home into town. After a few years of stable existence, the mobile home sprouts a stick built addition, most often as a porch, then a storage room, a bedroom or a garage. The mobile home eventually loses its outside identity through additions, a new roof line, stick built siding and other modifications, which severely limit its mobility. On occasion two mobile homes are attached to each other and a new roofline built. A number of these demobilization projects have paused at the half mobile half stick built phase, where the two halves of the house are entirely distinct from each other, but attached at the middle.

By the 1970 census, the total number of mobile homes in Mills equaled the number of traditional stick built homes. This ratio has continued in the eighties, with new construction of stick built homes being matched by mobile homes.

There is nothing to indicate future change in the ratio of mobile to stick built homes in Mills. The homeowners will continue to complain about the messy mobile homes, the fire department will have to continue to fight more fires because of the burnable nature of mobile homes, and the town will moan

about the small property tax that a mobile home generates, but the mobile home will continue to be an affordable alternative form of housing and will stay in Mills.

The latest housing style in Mills is the townhouse. This style, which is well accepted in other parts of the country, made it to Wyoming late and has had a rough go of it. Topaz Addition attempted townhouses, which are two story units attached with a common wall. Duplex units on very small lots were built in Amber Valley Addition, with private drives and a common area of open space. Just as these developments got underway, the economy of Wyoming and the Mills area sagged, and all growth stopped. Today the few units that are built wait the coming of better times and construction of new neighboring units.



Building the John Hodgens home at Fifth and Wasatch, 1922. Courtesy Etta Sims.

The original Mills housing style: "Two rooms and a path". Courtesy Bill Yant.



Larry Edwards home, 1937, cost \$750; \$50 down and \$10 per month at 4% interest for the house and nine lots. Courtesy Larry Edwards.



Homes above the flood plain on Platte in the 1930s. Courtesy Larry Edwards.



The original home in Mills of Fred and Mildred Steinle, very much like many others, mostly tarpaper. Courtesy Mildred Steinle.





The Kriener Apartments on Sixth Street, one of the few early apartment houses in Mills. Courtesy Bill Yant.



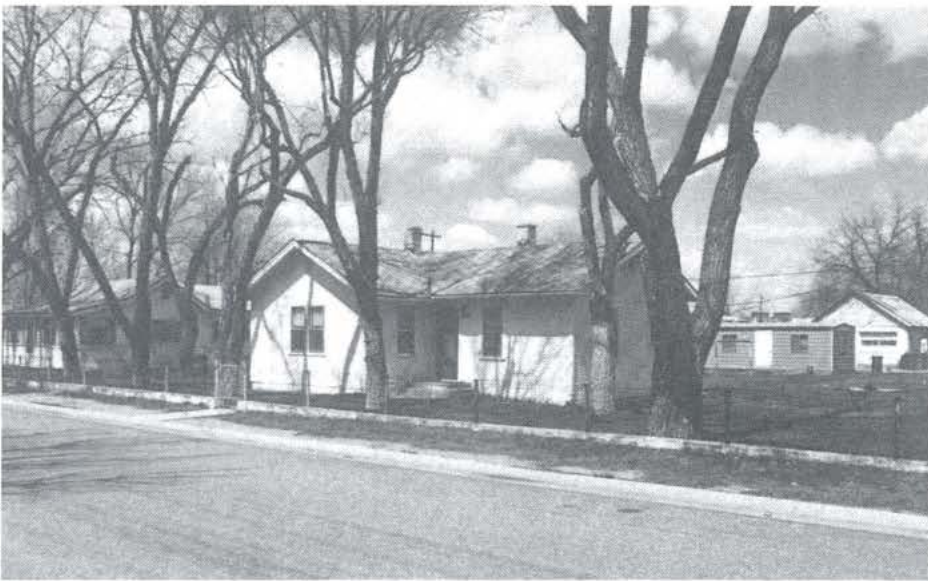
A typical, well kept mobile home in Mills. Over half the houses in Mills are mobile homes, which fit well on the small lots in town and provide an alternative form of housing at the right price.



A half mobile half stick built home, typical of many in Mills. This particular home had outlived its usefulness and was burned as a practice exercise for the fire department.



The George Sword house at Second and Benton, earlier the home and store of George Boyle, first mayor of Mills. Well taken care of and also representative of the early days.



Two early Mills homes located in the 100 Block of Benton, well taken care of and representative of the style house of early Mills.



THE AMOCO CASPER REFINERY

The town of Mills would possibly not have been founded or developed into the community it is today if weren't for the Amoco (Standard) Casper refinery. It is possible that without the refinery the town site could now be a farm owned by the heirs of Charles Hawks, the man who homesteaded the land.

The predominant reason people came to Mills in the twenties, thirties, and forties was to work on or at the refinery. The Salt Creek Field opened up in the early 1900s and construction on the refinery was begun in approximately 1912 by the Midwest Refining Company. During this period and the years that followed there were other locations of oil refining north and west of the town. These were due north of Pendell Boulevard, where the Salt Creek Freightways terminal was located for many years, and along Wyoming Boulevard. Continuous construction and maintenance at the refinery continued for many years, and the main reason to move to Mills remained the refinery through the forties.

Amoco ("The Standard" as the old timers call it) had its own construction crews that used horse drawn wagons, and the company stables were located on Vanhorn Avenue, where the Wagon Wheel Roller Rink is today. There were steam pipes across the river from the refinery to provide heat to these buildings. By the mid thirties the era of the horse had ended, the automobile and trucks were used instead of horses, and the stables there had been abandoned.

The refinery buildings and tanks are of a historic nature themselves, many being made of red brick, including smoke stacks and the oil storage tanks, some of which still stand along the North Platte River.

AMOCO AND CASPER

... over 73 years of progress together "We kind of grew up together." That is what Amoco Oil likes to say about Casper. Amoco's refinery and Casper have grown and prospered together for more than 73 years, and there's no end in sight to this joint progress.

When Standard Oil Company (Indiana) — now Amoco bought 84 acres of land for its refinery a buggy ride west of Casper, the town already was on its way to becoming an important Rocky Mountain oil center.

The year was 1912. Only five years earlier — on October 16, 1908 — the first of many gushers had assured fabulous Salt Creek a place of everlasting prominence among the nation's dozen or so really great oil fields. So rapid had been its development that by 1913, Casper already boasted three small refineries and a pipeline connecting them with the pro-

lific production of the Salt Creek field 40 miles to the north.

Largest and most modern of the three plants were the facilities of Midwest Oil Corporation, located just across the North Platte river from the site chosen by Standard's small party of real estate men. Modern though it was for the times, Midwest's refinery was little more than a topping plant, its facilities no more than simple stills for boiling and collecting relatively small quantities of easily distilled kerosene and low grade gasoline. The large quantities of residuum that remained were suited only for use as industrial fuel oil, a very limited market in the rural West.

To complicate matters, a revolution was on its way: Henry Ford was putting America on wheels, forcing the petroleum industry to seek a means of getting more gasoline from a barrel of crude.

Finally, in 1911, a brilliant team of scientists working at Standard Oil's Whiting (Indiana) refinery solved the problem by superheating crude oil under pressure until its molecules were broken down into lighter products. The process — known as thermal cracking — nearly doubled the yield of gasoline from crude oil, and revolutionized the industry.

The first battery of Burton-Humphreys stills were on stream at Whiting in January 1913, only weeks before the company purchased its small tract of land near Casper. Since Standard itself had no production in Wyoming, its plan was to buy reduced crude, or residuum, and unsaleable lighter oil fractions from the neighboring Midwest refinery, and from it produce a "cracked" gasoline superior to any straight-run product on the market.

The plan worked admirably — providing for Standard a reliable source of raw material, for Midwest a ready market for its otherwise surplus fuel oil. By the end of 1915, when the refinery completed its full calendar year of operation, it was processing some 2,500 barrels a day of partially refined oil.

Complete integration of the two plants' complementary facilities was a natural step in building a more efficient operation. Standard took the step in 1921 — following its acquisition of controlling interest in Midwest Refining Company — and subsequently embarked on an expansion and modernization program that has continued intermittently right up to the present.

Today, the Casper refinery is the only producer of lubricating oils in the entire Rocky Mountain area. Its 560-acre grounds, towering structures, and work force of more than 275 highly trained employees mark it as a major contributor to Casper's busy economy. Its complex facilities can process some 50,000 barrels of crude oil each day (one petroleum barrel equals 42 gallons) converting this raw material into dozens of top-quality petroleum products.²⁴



The Amoco refinery: cleaning the water intake, November 1921. Courtesy Amoco.



Looking west toward Mills along the North Platte across the Midwest (Standard) refinery, 1921. Courtesy Amoco.

U.S. BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

The Bureau of Reclamation began construction of its North Platte Projects headquarters shortly after World War II, adjacent to the Town of Mills. Two "temporary" office buildings measuring 20 feet by 100 feet were erected and 39 houses were constructed for Reclamation personnel. The office building and first houses were occupied early in 1948. This area, known as the "Reclamation Center", was annexed into the Town of Mills in 1961. Nearly all of the houses have long since been sold to the private sector and the original office building has been replaced, but Reclamation remains solidly in Mills and has enjoyed a friendly relationship with the town.

In addition to the direct impact Reclamation has had on Mills by its office location, another impact has been the regulated control of the river flowing through Mills. The system of dams and reservoirs upstream of Mills has ended the seasonal rhythms of the river. Although none of these reservoirs are specifically authorized to provide flood control they have prevented over \$14.6 million in flood damages in the valley downstream as an incidental benefit. Other benefits to the area (including Mills) from Reclamation projects include recreational opportunities, hydroelectric power, and a regional economy supplemented by irrigated agriculture.

Casper has been the center of Reclamation activity in the North Platte Valley for over 50 years. The first permanent office was established in downtown Casper in 1933 to supervise construction of the Kendrick Project. This project, approved by Franklin Roosevelt during the Great Depression, was part of the New Deal program to put people back to work, as well as to develop our water resources. Hundreds of local people worked on Seminole and Alcova Dams and helped dig the Casper Canal.

In 1946, the North Platte Project (Pathfinder and Guernsey Dams and associated canal systems) consolidated with the Kendrick staff. The groundbreaking for Kortes Dam also took place in 1946. The additional staff from these activities cramped the available office space past reasonable limits. A need had also developed for garage space and an automotive repair shop.

An ideal location fitting the needs of Reclamation was found just west of Mills. Here the agency had room for an office building, storage yards, workshops, and warehouses. Small cottages were also

built to house employees. In August 1947, work began on a barracks style office building and 11 houses. Since the new complex was outside of the town's limits the amenities usually provided by a municipality had to be constructed by Reclamation. Sewage and water systems, street lighting, garbage collection, and fire protection all had to be provided.

Work on these projects continued through the fall and the first occupants moved into the new headquarters on January 19, 1948. By July 1950 all the construction was finished even though the office building was still considered to be temporary. A total of 39 houses were built facing Pendell Boulevard or Connie Street, between Delmar Street and Wyoming Boulevard. The houses were either two or three bedroom residences and some had basement apartments. Housing was in short supply following World War II and government-provided housing was necessary to recruit and keep employees.

In the summer of 1946, Reclamation was allowed to salvage the lumber and other materials from the abandoned prisoner-of-war camp at Douglas, Wyoming. In July and August alone over 45 truckloads of materials weighing 204 tons were hauled away. Most, if not all, of this material was taken to the Kortes Dam government camp to build offices and housing for the construction forces; however, it is possible that some of it was used to construct the office building at Mills. It is unlikely that any of this lumber was used to build the Mills houses since they were either pre-cut or prefabricated units.

The housing and office areas were alternately known as the Mills Camp, Reclamation Center, or North Platte River District Headquarters. Many of the North Platte water projects were built after the Mills office was established, including Kortes Dam and Powerplant, Glendo Dam and Powerplant, the Fremont Canyon Powerplant, the Alcova Powerplant, and Gray Reef Dam. After this period of construction activity ended, it was decided that the housing was no longer necessary. In 1956, six of the houses and four vacant lots were transferred to the Bureau of Land Management for their use. These houses were later removed and the land transferred back to the Bureau of Reclamation for storage areas and workshops.

On January 1, 1958 two houses and four vacant lots were transferred to the Casper-Alcova Irrigation District for use as their headquarters and shop area. This irrigation district serves the water users of the Kendrick Project. In July 1961 the remaining 31 houses were sold at auction. Before these houses

were sold the entire area was annexed into the Town of Mills. This permitted the water and sewer systems, the street lights and other community systems to be transferred to the jurisdiction of Mills. On May 9, 1961 the District Judge signed the Order annexing the area to Mills.

The next major change to the physical plant of the Reclamation Center was the construction of the Supervisory Control Building, or Control Center, in 1971-72. The Control Center houses sophisticated computers and communications equipment to allow monitoring and control of electric power generation and water releases for irrigation. Nearly all of the functions at the dams and powerplants along the North Platte River are remotely controlled from Mills.

The barracks-type office building dating from 1947 continued to serve as the headquarters after the Control Center was built. Since it was never expected to be permanent, it had not been very well constructed. In 1983, construction of a new brick building began adjacent to the Control Center to replace the old office. The office staff moved to the new 16,200 square foot building in the summer of 1984 and the old building was torn down.

About 80 people work for the Bureau of Reclamation in Mills. In addition, there are crews stationed near Seminoe, Alcova, Glendo, and Guernsey Dams. The Mills office staff is divided into four divisions:

Operations and Maintenance; Administration; Civil Engineering; and Water and Land Operations. The North Platte River Projects Office, as it is currently known, falls under the jurisdiction of Reclamation's Missouri Basin Region, located in Billings, Montana.

The completion of the new office building in Mills reaffirms Reclamation's commitment to water resource development in the North Platte Valley. Mills has been a good location from which to administer the water projects stretched along the river from Seminoe Dam into the Nebraska Panhandle.²⁵



Bureau Of Reclamation housing being constructed in 1947, when the Bureau was the Mills Camp of the Kortess Unit. These homes, built as two bedroom, prefabricated units, were eventually sold to the public and are still being put to good use today. Photo by L. E. Bowman. Courtesy U.S. Bureau Of Reclamation.



Aerial view of the Bureau Of Reclamation site residential buildings, September 14, 1949, by R. D. Dir-meyer. This view looks southeast along Platte and Morgan Avenues toward the North Platte River. There is no bridge across the river to Fort Caspar, the Mills School can be seen in the top center of the picture. Courtesy U.S. Bureau Of Reclamation.



Aerial View of the Bureau Of Reclamation site, looking south, 1969. Note the Boatright-Smith site and the North Platte River to the south. The large office building in the center has been replaced by an office building located to the bottom of the picture. A new operations center has been built also. Photo by B. F. Cronin. Courtesy U.S. Bureau Of Reclamation.

THE CHURCHES OF MILLS

There was a lot of church activity in Mills during the early days, possibly in response to some of the wild times. The Free Methodists had a congregation during the twenties and thirties at the Mills Church at Second and Wasatch. It later became Nazarene and then Baptist.

"The regular monthly conference will be held in Mills at the Free Methodist Church Thursday November 19, from 9:30 to 11:00 A.M. for babies and preschool children. Mothers are asked not to bring any child with fresh cold or any communicable diseases. Also, bring a blanket and pillow case." (*Casper Daily Tribune*, November 18, 1925)

"The Mills Free Methodists Missionary Society met with Mrs. C. Gould Friday and held a handkerchief shower for Mrs. Ross McNeely, the occasion being her birthday. The next meeting will be held at the home of Mrs. L. Hamilton on January 21, where they will cut and sew carpet rags. This will be an all day meeting. The ladies will carry lunch and everyone is invited. (Mr. E. Gould has been suffering from a very bad attack of the grip)." (*Casper Daily Tribune*, January 16, 1927)

The Midwest Heights Missionary Society was a group that apparently had quite an ongoing program during the twenties, and had members from around the entire area. The Midwest Heights area, north of Mills on the Salt Creek Highway, was platted and developed during the twenties, similar to Mills. This area probably suffered a major setback during the Depression as did Mills, and today has a few houses and mobile homes.

"The Midwest Heights Missionary Society is trying to do its share helping those who are out of employment by sending food and clothing to families who are members of the society. Members from Casper, Mountain View and Mills met at the president's house, the Reverend Hattie Lambert, and worked all day Tuesday filling baskets to be delivered for Thanksgiving dinners. The entire society wishes to thank the businessmen of Casper who so kindly assisted them in helping to make up the baskets. The society was organized with five members on the little hill in Midwest Heights seven years ago when the church was built. The society has now gained a membership of seventy members from Casper, Mills and Mountain View. It is also reaching far out on the Salt Creek Highway, making it possible to keep the good work moving along. The society offers its services in helping the unemployed as much as possible." (*Casper Daily Tribune*, November 30, 1930)

The Mills area must have still been the frontier in the twenties and thirties because there was yet

another "missionary" society active during the early days. This term could be taken to imply that the area residents were heathens who needed saving. Possibly not.

"The Women's Missionary Society met at the home of Mrs. Kraning on Friday afternoon. The following officers were elected: Mrs. Mary Hamilton, President; Mrs. Florence McNeese, Vice President; Mrs. J. E. Chidley, Superintendent J.M.S.; Mrs. R. S. Tudor, Secretary; and Mrs. J. E. Chidley, Treasurer." (*Casper Daily Tribune*, June 10, 1927)

The Presbyterians had a tabernacle in Mills, as it is referred to by Mokler:

The Presbyterians completed their tabernacle, located on the corner of Fifth Street and Midwest Avenue, in March, 1922, and the church was formally organized and dedicated April 1, 1922. The elders ordained and installed at this meeting were John S. McKnight, John Husted, and A. E. Mason. Rev. James S. McInnes of Ouray, Colorado, who was the first Minister in charge, entered upon his duties September 4, 1922.²⁶

The Mills Presbyterian Church was built at 430 Midwest at the corner of Fifth and Midwest in 1922. It was changed to Mills Presbyterian of Casper in 1923. In 1925 there were twenty one members and they shared a minister, P. N. Fredin, with the Kenwood Presbyterian Church. In 1936 the records show six members with no minister and the church was dissolved in 1937.²⁷

"The Rev. A. S. Taylor and his wife arrived yesterday from Pardeeville, Wisconsin, Mr. Taylor is to be the new pastor for Mills and Kenwood Presbyterian Churches and will conduct services in both churches Sunday. Both Mr. and Mrs. Taylor are graduates of the Moody Bible School, Chicago, of the class of 1924. They come well recommended and will enter upon the work with the purpose of the largest possible service in the respective communities." (*Casper Daily Tribune*, February 27, 1927)

The Mills Baptist Church, located at Second and Wasatch, across from the school, is the only long standing church in the town and the building itself was actually built on the same spot it now occupies. This building was originally the Free Methodist Church. In 1950, the Mills Baptist Church first met in the Mills Community Hall for Sunday School only. In December of 1960, the Wyoming Baptist Convention purchased the church from the Nazarenes and in 1962 the Mills Baptist Church was officially formed, with John C. Hall being the initial minister in 1964. The building is now owned by the Wyoming Baptist Churches of the Rocky Mountains, and has been changed to

The Church Of The Abundant Life.

Mrs. Fern Schindler provides a first hand history of the Mills Baptist Church:

Reverend McHenry of First Baptist in Casper had a great desire to extend the local Mission. Mr. and Mrs. Daugherty came to Mills one Sunday morning in the early spring of 1950. There had been some previous visiting and advertising. Hopes were high and on the first Sunday two little girls came. The next Sunday five little girls, all of them from the McIntosh family, came. From these five little girls the Sunday school expanded and Mrs. Bob Lever came to help Mr. and Mrs. Daugherty.

When Mr. Daugherty became ill six years later, Mrs. W. R. Stepheson volunteered to take over. Carlos Moore, Mrs. Minnie Mitchell, and Maxine Watson came as helpers and attendance was between 40 and 62.

In November of 1957 Mr. and Mrs. B. J. Schmitz were asked to be Superintendent and Mrs. Clara Schmitz held this position until 1960. Our first Vacation Bible School was held in 1958. Mayor George Sword donated the use of the fire hall. Reverend Richard Brown appointed a group of Mills people to work with First Church to provide a building, the community Hall being outgrown; Mrs. Eugene Ingram, Mrs. Forrest Schindler, Mr. W. G. McCracken, and Mrs. Carlos Moore. A few weeks later Mrs. Schmitz found that the Nazarene church building was for sale. On December 1, 1960 the Wyoming Baptist Convention entered into a contract to purchase the building. Mr. Charles Mix and Mr. W. G. McCracken were then Superintendents.

In December of 1961 Reverend Wallace Reisinger became the first minister but only stayed two months as he had already applied for a Civil Service job in South Dakota. Mr. Leonard Abee of First Church was okayed to be our lay minister. Early in 1962 Reverend Russell Greenwalt answered our call for a full time minister and attendance grew by leaps and bounds to over 100. In 1964, Reverend and Mrs. John Hall were to become our next minister.

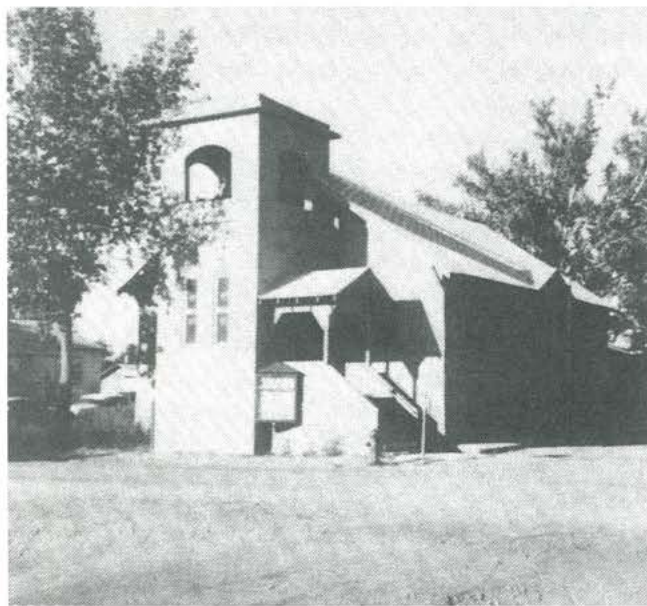
In January of 1965 the congregation voted to extensively remodel the Church. The sanctuary was doubled in size when the old bell tower was taken off the front. New hardwood floors were put down. The nave was done in birch and mahogany. The total cost was \$2,000 and was done by volunteer work of the congregation. Mr. Eldon Spade did the rewiring, Mr. Andrew Schindler acted as Superintendent. Helpers were John Koch, Forrest Schindler, Jay Shockley, Charles Mix, Gene McCracken, Gene In-

gram, Paul Watson, and Reverend Hall. Members of the Women's Society furnished meals for the workers and did the cleanup so church could be held on Sunday morning.

In 1971 Reverend Bill McGuire came as our minister, in 1972 Reverend Blaine Pritchett, 1978 Ross Penny. In April 1986 the congregation decided to disband, but the building is still owned by the American Baptists of the Rocky Mountains.²⁸

MOUNTAIN VIEW BAPTIST

The Mountain View Baptist Church, was annexed to Mills in the 1970s and serves the Mills and Mountain View areas.



The Mills Church at Second and Wasatch, prior to major remodeling in 1965. Courtesy Fern Schindler.

BOY AND GIRL SCOUTS

Scouting has been an important part of Mills life throughout the town's history. Many Mills boys and girls have participated in Scouting, particularly in the early years of the town, when getting out and doing things didn't have television to contend with. Boy Scout Troop Ten was organized in April of 1923, with Elmer Edwards as Scoutmaster. The teachers from the Mills School were quite involved in the Boy Scouts, who were known to have met in the basement of the old town hall where the jail was located. Activities included hikes, overnights, outdoor skills,

and learning about nature. The Boy Scouts have continued strong through the years at Mills, and in the early sixties, the fifty mile hike was a major event that the Scouts trained for and participated in. The Girl Scouts formed their original Mills troop, Troop 1, in 1922. The girls learned many skills often similar to those the Boy Scouts learned and participated in similar activities. Cub Scouts and Brownies have been active in Mills over the years, also.

NATIONAL COUNCIL
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA
CHARTERED BY CONGRESS
JUNE 1916

Boy Scout Troop Ten
Mills, Vermont

Boy Scout Troop Ten
Mills, Vermont

3306778
ELMER EDWARDS

Elmer Edwards
Scoutmaster



"DO A GOOD TURN DAILY"

THE SCOUT OATH
ON MY HONOR I WILL DO MY DUTY
1. TO OBEY MY LEADER
2. TO KEEP MY PROMISES
3. TO BE HELPFUL AND COURTEOUS

THE SCOUT LAW
1. A SCOUT IS TRUSTWORTHY
2. A SCOUT IS LOYAL
3. A SCOUT IS HELPFUL
4. A SCOUT IS FRIENDLY
5. A SCOUT IS COURTEOUS
6. A SCOUT IS KIND
7. A SCOUT IS OBEDIENT
8. A SCOUT IS CHEERFUL
9. A SCOUT IS THRIFTY
10. A SCOUT IS BRAVE
11. A SCOUT IS CLEAN
12. A SCOUT IS REVERENT

SCOUT HISTORY
 QUALIFIED AS TENDERFOOT 19...
 CABIN BOY 19...
 SECOND CLASS SCOUT 19...
 FIRST CLASS SCOUT 19...
 SEA SCOUT 19...
 ASST. PATROL LEADER 19...
 PATROL LEADER 19...
 SENIOR PATROL LEADER 19...
 SCRIBE 19...
 VETERAN SCOUT - 5 YEARS 19...
 TRANSFERRED TO 19...
 QUALIFIED FOR MERIT BADGES
 SUBJECT DATE
 FIRST AID
 PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT
 ATHLETICS
 PERSONAL HEALTH
 PUBLIC HEALTH
 LIFE SAVING
 PIONEERING
 LIFE SCOUT STAR SCOUT
 EAGLE SCOUT
 AWARDED HONOR MEDAL
 CERTIFICATE OF HEROISM

RECEIPT FOR TROOP DUES PAID
 JAN. FEB. MCH. APR. MAY JUNE
 JULY AUG. SEPT. OCT. NOV. DEC.

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE SCOUT NAMED ON THE FRONT OF THIS CERTIFICATE IS A MEMBER IN GOOD STANDING OF THE PATROL, TROOP NO. 10 CITY OF Mills STATE OF Vermont

HE IS ENTITLED TO PURCHASE THE OFFICIAL UNIFORM AND TO WEAR IT AND THE OFFICIAL INSIGNIA OF HIS RANK DURING THE PERIOD COVERED BY THIS CERTIFICATE.

THIS CERTIFICATE IS SUBJECT TO CANCELLATION OR RECALL FOR CAUSE BY THE LOCAL SCOUT AUTHORITIES.

HIS AGE HEIGHT WEIGHT GIVEN ON THIS DAY OF 1924

Elmer Edwards SCOUT MASTER
 Scout Executive

I HEREBY ACCEPT THIS CERTIFICATE WITH ALL THE CONDITIONS STATED HEREOF FOR ITS USE

SCOUT'S SIGNATURE

NOTICE
 THE SCOUT SHOULD CARRY THIS CERTIFICATE WITH HIM AT ALL TIMES. HE SHOULD SHOW IT TO THE OFFICIAL OUTFITTER WHEN PURCHASING HIS UNIFORM. HE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO SHOW IT WHENEVER CALLED UPON.

The Boy Scout membership card of Jonas Eskew, 1927.

DUTY TO SELF DUTY TO GOD AND COUNTRY DUTY TO OTHERS

"BE PREPARED"

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

CHARTERED BY CONGRESS
JUNE 18, 1916

TROOP CHARTER

This is to Certify that

CASPER COUNCIL BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA, TROOP #10, CASPER, WYO.

having made proper application through its duly authorized representatives for the organization of a troop of Boy Scouts to carry out the program of the Boy Scouts of America for

CHARACTER BUILDING
CITIZENSHIP TRAINING
AMERICANIZATION

is hereby granted a troop charter for the year ending APRIL 1927, subject to the provisions of the Constitution and By-Laws and rules and regulations of the National Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

CLYDE RILEY

PERRY HUNTER

JOHN S. MCKNIGHT
Troop Committee

ELMER EDWARDS
Scoutmaster

Assistant Scoutmaster

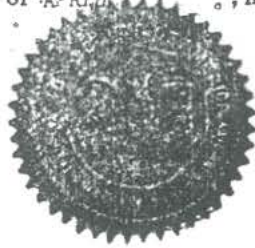
The above-mentioned officials, having been duly certified, are officially registered by the National Council to meet the responsibilities of their respective offices in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and By-Laws of the Boy Scouts of America.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF the National Council of the Boy Scouts of America has caused this charter to be signed by its officers and its corporate seal to be affixed this 4th day of APRIL, 1927, in the year 1927.

[Signature]
Honorary President

[Signature]
Honorary Vice-President

[Signature]
Honorary Vice-President



[Signature]
President

[Signature]
National Scout Commissioner

[Signature]
Chief Scout Executive

"DO A GOOD TURN DAILY"

HELPFUL · FRIENDLY

TRUSTWORTHY · LOYAL

COURTEOUS · KIND

OBEDIENT · CHEERFUL

THRIFTY · BRAVE

CLEAN · REVERENT



The Mills Cub Scouts in the 1920s. Courtesy Ann Brown.

OPPOSITE

The charter of Mills Troop Ten, Boy Scouts of America. Note the listing of the wrong town.



Boy Scouts of Troop 10 at the church. Courtesy Etta Sims.



The Mills Boy Scouts at the Post Office dedication. Courtesy Faye Sankey.



MILLS GIRL SCOUT Troop 1, organized in 1922 by Miss Lillian Larson, was the first troop in Casper. Miss Larson was a first grade teacher at Mills School. The picture, taken in 1923, shows, seated from left, Jean Coughlin, Mary Mills, Opal Campbell, Melda McLane, Ruth Hunter, Louella Robidon (Mrs. Etlin Petersen), Lois Bennett, Lola Adams. Standing, from left, are Edna Campbell, Ann Mills (Mrs. C. M. Brown), Irene Riley, Opal Mills, Pat Williams, Dorothy Cordell, Alice Thompson, Clara Jensen, Adeline Jensen (Mrs. J. L. Christopher), Dorothy Riley (Mrs. John Peach), and Frances Sware (Mrs. George France).

Girl Scouts Started Here In Year 1922

By SANDRA BOOTH
Staff Writer

In 1922 the first Casper Girl Scout Troop, No. 1, was organized by Lillian Larsen, first grade teacher at Mills School with Miss Woth, now Mrs. R. G. Hawkins of Casper, as assistant. Five of the original members of this troop still reside in Casper. They are Mrs. Etlin Petersen, Mrs. J. L. Christopher, Mrs. George France, Mrs. C. M. Brown and Mrs. John Peach.

The troop met for an hour each week after school and scouting was their only social life. They learned knot-tying, how to construct trail signs and studied Indian lore.

The laundress badge was awarded to scouts and they had to use a flat iron. Another badge was "signaller" - using semaphore code with flags. Troop 1 was adept at this and at a Girl Scout "stunt night" in 1923 their proficiency was demonstrated before parents and guests.

A look at the Girl Scout Handbook for 1923 reveals that some badges no longer appear in modern scouting. Among these were beekeeper, bugler, canner, dairy maid (the symbol for this badge was skill at a milking stool and requirements included making butter at four different times, making pot cheese and knowledge of cows).

Other troops were organized through the efforts of Mrs. J. P. Dixon, the former Mary Morrow. The first camp was sponsored by the Kiwanis Club and was held the first week of June above the present Dempsey Stables.

It rained the entire week and the girls had an interesting time on muddy hikes in a khaki middy, knickers, long stockings and high shoes which came in handy.



The Mills Girl Scouts on an outing to Casper Mountain. Courtesy Ann Brown.



A few news items about the Scouts from the *Casper Daily Tribune* and *Tribune Herald*:
February 12, 1928 Mills people turned out well in attending the Scout Jamboree held Wednesday evening at the High School.

The Girl Scouts of Troop #1, passed their cooking test Thursday evening after school by preparing a dinner. Those attending were: Miss Welsh, Edith Smith, Elvira Vant, Marjorie Vail, Irene Bosslow, Jessie Chapman, Roma Large, Wanda Caldwell, Winnifred Dockham, Margaret Beyers, Lorene Wallace, Bessie Hunt, Dever Shroyer, and Mrs. McNamara.

The Girl Scouts of Troop #1 and guests enjoyed an early breakfast Saturday morning which was cooked over a campfire at the big tree near the "Tavern". Among the members were: Edith Smith, Roma Large, Elvira Young, Majorie Vail, Margaret Beyers, and Winnie Dockham. The guests were Jean McIntire, Emily Christiansen, Irma Lucille Wingert, Wanda Coughlin, Scout Leader Miss Irene Welsh, and Miss Dorothy Castledine.

February 26, 1928 The Boy Scout Troop #10 of Mills held a meeting at which they were presented with their badges. Four tenderfoot badges were awarded to Ethelbert Dunham, Durade Gallenger, Ed Hults, and Orrin Dockham. Mr. E. F. Skinner and Lew Gay of Casper were present.

December 7, 1930 Tuesday evening a number of girls met at the school house for the purpose of forming a troop of Girl Scouts with Miss Anna Mills as scout leader. Those present were Lucille and Irene Smith, Genieveve Jones, Grace Hunter, Grace Miller, Marry Ellen Banse, Ruth Soy, Ruby Holt, Hattie Beyer, Geneva Drollinger, Dorthea Forrester, Dorothy Watkins, and Winnifred Dockham.

May 31, 1931 Troop #1 of the Girl Scouts enjoyed a hike Thursday to the Vetex Dairy. Miss McNamara and Miss Harvey accompanied them. Those who were present were Irene Smith, Lorene Wallace, Reba Wallace, Mary Ellen Banse, Ruth Sawey, Dorothy Watkins, Winnifred Dockman, Devere Shroyer, Margaret Kelsey, Hattie Beyers, Doris Laird, Molly Boatman, Jessie Chapman, and Marjorie Vail.

June 4, 1933 A jungle supper was held Wednesday evening under the big tree at the Tavern by the Girl Scouts of Mills. Among them were Marjorie Vail, Edith Smith, Lorene Wallace, Bessie Hunt, Roma Large, Wanda Caldwell, Wanda Coughlin, Jessie Chapman, Irma Wingert, Marjorie Beyers, Darlene Sterner, Winnifred Dockham, Miss Welch, and Mrs. Renneau.

The Girl Scouts have been enjoying visiting the different business places in Casper during the past week. Monday evening, they were escorted through the Troy

Laundry. Tuesday evening they were guests at the Stebbins Motor Company. Then Thursday evening, they enjoyed visiting the greenhouse, finishing on Saturday morning with a tour through the refinery.

October 16, 1933 The first meeting of the year of the Girl Scouts of Troop #1 was held Thursday evening at the school. Election of patrol leaders and assistants were held. Patrol leaders are Edith Smith, Elvira Yant and Margaret Beyers, Assistant leaders are Bessie Hunt, Irene Rosslow, and Marjorie Vail.

November 30, 1933 The Girl Scouts entertained at a 6:00 dinner at the school house Tuesday. Girl Scout colors were used in decorating yellow mums as centerpieces. Guests invited were the following: Mrs. A. C. Winkes, Mrs. O. Patterson, Mrs. Christine Reynolds, Mrs. Dayton Jackman, and Mrs. Percy Large. The following members were present: Miss Welch, Captain, Miss Castledine, Lieutenant, Miss Lorene Walch, Edith Smith, Lorene Wallace, Winnie Dockham, Elvira Yant, Margaret Beyers, Emily Christiansen, Wanda Coughlin, Darlene Sterner, Irma Wingert, and Marjorie Vail.

THE MILLS SENIOR CITIZENS

The Mills Senior Citizen group is very active in the community, and really includes seniors from Mills, Mountain View, Wardwell, and Dempsey Acres. Many fund raising and social activities every year keep the seniors busy. The seniors eat lunch five days a week in the basement of the town hall,

which the seniors have converted to a senior center for Mills. The lunch is provided by Natrona County Senior Citizen Services and about twenty people every day enjoy lunch and activities in the senior center. The seniors manned their own van for a period of time to provide bus service to the seniors in the area. The van has now been made part of the Casper Area Transportation Coalition, but serves the seniors of Mills.



The Mills Seniors with their bus, 1983. Left to right: Ellen Spade, Ted O'Neil, Opal Lacy, Chris McClenan, Mary Howard, Bernarda Burke, Naomi Lammers. Photo by Mary Howard.



The Mills Seniors entertain a speaker at lunch at the senior center in the basement of the town hall. Photo by Mary Howard.

THE MILLS MOUNTAIN-VIEW LIONS CLUB

In early 1957 a group of men from Mills met at the Mills School with the intention of organizing a Lions Club. The sponsoring club was the Casper Noon Lions Club and representatives of that club met with that group. Attendance at the meeting was not enough to meet the required membership for a new club and it was decided to include Mountain View and have one club rather than having two separate clubs in this area. This combination brought membership to 34 when the club was chartered on April 12, 1957. At this writing two charter members remain active, Fred Vanhorn and Eldon Spade.

The Mills-Mountain View Lions Club has been very busy over the years. It has not only paid for eye examinations and glasses for over four hundred needy school children and adults, but has been involved in many other community projects as well. The club has worked with others of the town to put up the first signs telling the names of the streets. Before street signs were posted it was very difficult for ambulances or fire trucks to find any address in town.

A scholarship was established for local students to use in attending Casper College, and later, two scholarships were affirmed. The club sponsored an archery class for youngsters of the community, which many enjoyed. Wes Johnson and Bill Robnett (both now deceased) carried most of the responsibility for this project. The club also covered the cost of oxygen for a child when the expense was prohibitive for the family. In June of 1969 the club purchased a breathing machine for a person with emphysema. The club also provided training for the Golden Gloves boxers. It was brought to the attention of the Lions that a man (senior citizen) was living in a house trailer in Mills and did not have running water and didn't have enough money to connect to the water and sewer systems. The Lions provided money to cover this expense. The club has contributed both money and volunteer labor for the Allen Stewart Camp For The Blind on Casper Mountain, contributes to the Guide Dog For The Blind Foundation, and owns a kennel in Denver which is used to train "hearing ear" dogs to work with the deaf.

The Leo Club, which is a service club for teenagers, was organized in 1970, sponsored by the Mills-Mountain View Lions and was the second club of its kind in the state. The Leo club flourished for

a time but is now inactive.

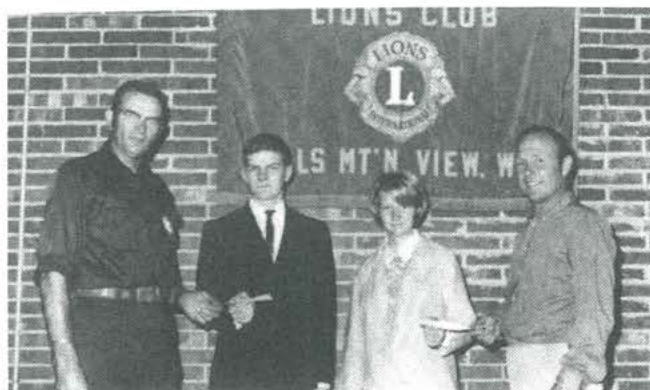
One major activity of the club has been an annual pancake festival, held at the Mills fire Hall. The festivals, begun in 1966, provide an opportunity for many to have a good time working together and feed a lot of hungry people. Children from the State Children's Home have often attended the festivals, hosted by the club. This is one of the fund raising projects most enjoyed by those who work as well as those who come to eat and socialize.

Other money making projects include the sale of brooms and light bulbs, and the food booth at the Central Wyoming Fair, where Lions, wives, and teenagers work together in a fund raising effort.

The Mills-Mountain View Lions Club meets on the second Monday of the month for business and on the fourth Monday with their wives for dinner. New members and visitors are always welcome.²⁹



The Mills-Mountain View Lions Club Charter, 1957.



Mills-Mountain View Lions Club Scholarships presented in 1968 to Pat Fulton and Judy Reed by Eldon Spade and Ray Clamp. Courtesy Eldon Spade.

HI HO EXTENSION CLUB

The Mills Hi Home Extension Club was organized November 13, 1956 at the IOF Hall in Mountain View, with Daisy Shaddox as President, Norma Wilcox as Vice President, and Elsie McPherson as Secretary-Treasurer. Charter members besides the three officers were Loni Jordan, Dorthea Wirth, Amy Finn, Theresa Fulton, Mary Greer, and Grace Cox. After the first meeting, meetings were held at the Mills fire hall. In the beginning dues were 25 cents, now dues are \$3.60.

Mills Hi Ho held the first County Craft Fair in 1960 at the Mills fire hall. Programs held were home canning, basket making, painting, first aid, CPR, home nursing, and Easter hats. In 1968 the club was renamed the Mills Hi Ho Extension Homemakers.

Fern Schindler served as County President in 1982-83 and Susan Laing served as Secretary in 1983-84. Members of the club made curtains for the Mills Community Hall, collected money to support a life line telephone for a handicapped person, support the International Peace Gardens in North Dakota and 4-H.

Active members today are: Mrs. Spencer Kline, Preston Justice, Tracy Grantham, Robert Laycock, Wayne Laing, Perry Hanson, Forrest Schindler; Miss Doris Schindler, and Ella Dean Moore. Kezia Schindler is an honorary member.³⁰



The original officers of the Mills Hi Ho Extension Club. Upper Right: Daisy Shaddox, President; Left: Elsie McPherson, Secretary-Treasurer; Lower Right: Norma Wilcox, Vice President. Courtesy Fern Schindler.

NEWSPAPERS OF MILLS

Mills has had a few attempts at a local newspaper over the years in the form of *The Mills Item*, *The Mills Journal*, and *The Home Town News*. *The Mills Item* had quite a short history:

"The *Mills Item* had very bright prospects to fill a long felt want in the new Town of Mills, but it was the shortest lived newspaper ever published in Natrona County. The first, last, and only edition was published on Saturday, May 27, 1922. Theo. Flanagan was the editor and publisher. He had no type or machinery but arranged with a Casper printing establishment to furnish these necessary articles. In his salutary he said he "hoped the people of Mills would form a good impression of both the paper and the editor. *The Item* is for Mills first, last and all the time." Inasmuch as *The Item* as well as Mr. Flanagan did not again make their appearance the people of Mills did not form a good opinion of the paper or the editor as he had hoped they would."³¹

The Mills Journal was more successful, being published for a number of years, starting in about 1923. This newspaper dealt with the local as well as regional and national issues and seemed to be well accepted for the period of time that it was published. The paper was published in the house at the southeast corner of the intersection of Third and River-view. The Depression and decline of the population of the town were too much for the paper to survive.

"The first issue of the *Mills Journal* was delivered to the Casper Tribune today, published by the Nelson Printing Company of Mills. This company is composed of George L. Nelson and two sons, H. C. Nelson and George H. Nelson." (*Casper Daily Tribune*, May 12, 1923.)

The Home Town News was an entirely local effort published by Billy Humberson, a high school boy who lived in Mills. *The News* was a complete public information forum, with coverage of politics, social, and town issues along with a variety of jokes and stories in the Farmer's Almanac style. *The News*, which had strong support of local advertising, was a two sheet mimeographed form distributed free to the residents of the town.

The household hints section reveals a hint that may be worth trying today . . . "To peel oranges more quickly, place in boiling water for three or four minutes. This will also make them more juicy." Could it be the editor had a female hints consultant?

HOME TOWN NEWS

Vol. 3 No. 2 Mills, Wyo. October 5, 1924		Billy Humberson-Mitor
TOWN TOPICS	TOWN TOPICS	TOWN TOPICS
At a meeting of the town council, held September 27th, Wallace W. Bunt was inducted as commissioner to serve the unexpired term of Charles Evey, resigned. Once again the town has a full complement of "city dads". Mr. Bunt and family has resided in Mills for many years, and is thoroughly familiar with town problems and affairs. Amongst other business, the application of Ray's Liquor Store was heard and approved, and considerable discussion was had relative to the possibility of enlarging and improving the town fire department. If this is accomplished, the savings in insurance premiums in the town would soon pay for the equipment necessary. Also considered was an ordinance regulating the operation of trailer courts within the town. Following some revision the ordinance is expected to be successful.	Carl Althoff of Chicago, half brother of Edwin Mills, visited briefly with the Millises while on a business trip. Coming from Aruba, Dutch West Indies, Mrs. Margaret Ferris has arrived in Mills for a visit with her relatives. Mr. Ferris will join her once she has some business.	A party was held at the Mills Community Hall on Sunday last, in honor of Bonnie Wells' sixth birthday. Twenty-two children attended, and were served ice cream and cake. Games were played, and a very good time was had by all.
Mr. and Mrs. William Mills Senior, with Mr. and Mrs. Alceo Mills were travelers to Albuquerque, N. M. recently, visiting with the Charles M. Brown family. Returning, they broke their trip at Denver, arriving back in Mills last Wednesday. Mr. and Mrs. Alceo Mills will visit at the William Mills for a few days before returning to their Tennessee home.	Mr. and Mrs. William Mills Senior, with Mr. and Mrs. Alceo Mills were travelers to Albuquerque, N. M. recently, visiting with the Charles M. Brown family. Returning, they broke their trip at Denver, arriving back in Mills last Wednesday. Mr. and Mrs. Alceo Mills will visit at the William Mills for a few days before returning to their Tennessee home.	Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Wiltsey motored to Douglas Thursday to attend an antelope supper given by the Moose Lodge.
A surprise farewell party was given at the W. J. Ramsey home in honor of the H. W. D. Fletchers, who are departing for Arkansas to make their home. A lovely blanket was given as a going away gift, with all present wishing the Fletchers every success in their new home.	A surprise farewell party was given at the W. J. Ramsey home in honor of the H. W. D. Fletchers, who are departing for Arkansas to make their home. A lovely blanket was given as a going away gift, with all present wishing the Fletchers every success in their new home.	Clarence Wiltsey was reported as sick this week, but is said to be OK now.
Among those attending the affair were the Mesdames Bald; Humberson; Edwards; Landers; D. Ellis; Varah; Baker; Stamper; L. Mills; Frenchville; Hughes; Willi; Ballard; G. Ellis; Russell; Matthews; Cagle; Hicks; C. Drom; Sattell; Simpson; McKibben; Johnson; Brooks; D. Garner; M. Lowron; the hostess, Mrs. U. J. Ramsey and the honoree.	Among those attending the affair were the Mesdames Bald; Humberson; Edwards; Landers; D. Ellis; Varah; Baker; Stamper; L. Mills; Frenchville; Hughes; Willi; Ballard; G. Ellis; Russell; Matthews; Cagle; Hicks; C. Drom; Sattell; Simpson; McKibben; Johnson; Brooks; D. Garner; M. Lowron; the hostess, Mrs. U. J. Ramsey and the honoree.	Jimmy Wilcox left Friday for the Prather ranch where he will spend the week end.
Mr. and Mrs. Brooks are residing in the U. J. Ramsey home while the Brooks house is being finished.	Mr. and Mrs. Brooks are residing in the U. J. Ramsey home while the Brooks house is being finished.	The regular meeting of the Community Club will be held Friday, Oct. 8th, at 7:30PM. Everyone interested is urged to attend.
T. L. Knutson, of Plentywood, Montana, is visiting with his daughter, Mrs. Howard Engel. He expects to leave Sunday.	T. L. Knutson, of Plentywood, Montana, is visiting with his daughter, Mrs. Howard Engel. He expects to leave Sunday.	With the completion of the new building next to Knights Grocery, Mills has another business location. The building is occupied by Ray's Liquor Store.
Earl Johnson, brother of Mrs. Irene Wells, is up from Douglas visiting with his sister. He is unable to attend school due to ill health.	Earl Johnson, brother of Mrs. Irene Wells, is up from Douglas visiting with his sister. He is unable to attend school due to ill health.	It was constructed by Peggy and Howard Christiansen, with Howard doing the carpenter work and Peggy doing the painting. Howard says "no more carpentering". If Peggy wants as much as a nail driven to hang a picture, there'll be a carpenter hired. Howard also remarked that if anyone notices that Peggy doesn't wear any make-up anymore, it's because she is so sick of "point". Nice going, any way folks.
Mrs. Sadie Wiltsey is visiting in Torrington with her sister, Mrs. M. W. Johnson.	Mrs. Sadie Wiltsey is visiting in Torrington with her sister, Mrs. M. W. Johnson.	MILLS NAZARENE CHURCH Sunday School 10:00AM Worship Service 11:00AM Devotional Service 6:45PM Evangelistic Service 7:30PM Bible Study & Prayer Meeting on Wednesday evening at 7:30PM. You are cordially invited to attend all services.

THE MILLS JOURNAL

Vol. 1, No. 8

MILLS, NATRONA COUNTY, WYOMING, FRIDAY, JUNE 29, 1923

1923 a Year

WORLD NEWS

News and Comment of General Interest

Governor Ross issued a call Monday for a special session of the legislature to be convened July 15th for the purpose of enacting an amended state farm loan act. This act failed of passage because of an oversight by an enrollment clerk who failed to include the amendments in the bill as it went to the governor. The legislators have promised the governor to serve without pay, the state to pay the mileage expense only.

William Swanson, claiming to be a Minneapolis newspaper man and nearly naked, (scandalous!) was picked up near Clayton by officers a few days ago. He was temporarily insane as a result of a protracted spree, said to have begun in Chicago. When picked up he was clad in a D's, and his bare feet were badly lacerated by cacti. After a night's rest in jail he was restored to his senses. He had a very vague idea of what had happened to him or where he had been during his debauch and had no idea what had become of his clothes.

Almost serious automobile tragedy Sunday near Denver, which cost the lives of three prominent men and the serious injury of another, marred the pleasure of the presidential party's trip thru Colorado. A party of visiting newspaper representatives and Denver newspaper men after attending a luncheon on Lookout Mountain tendered the visitors by the Denver Press club were going over one of the scenic highways when one of the automobiles while rounding a sharp curve in Bear Creek Canon swerved, crashed thru the protecting cable and went over a 75-foot embankment. Thomas F. Dawson, Colorado state historian and well known newspaper man, Sumner Curtis, representative of the Republican National committee and Washington newspaper correspondent, Donald A. Craig, manager of the New York Herald's Washington bureau, and Thomas French, driver of the car, an employe of the Great Western Sugar company, were

What Farmers Need Added to Credit And Good Advice

By WALTER W. HEAD

First Vice President American Bankers Association.

If the farmer is not prosperous there is no permanent prosperity in the United States, because the farmer's purchasing power, under normal conditions, is one of the most potent influences we have in the United States. When conditions with the farmer are good, and he is receiving the cost of production plus something more for his labor, he is in a position to buy from the manufacturer.

A condition that affects the farmer, cutting off his purchasing power, depriving his belt in himself, in the banker and in everybody else, can only bring about a chaotic condition which affects every business man and every man in the United States, regardless of what job he may have. The farmer had all the credit and

advice he needed during the period of prosperity, but he, with us all, suffered depression. There clearly must have been something lacking to enable him to go on the even tenor of his way. The answer is very plain. It is that some means need to be provided to enable the farmer, after his labor has been expended, when the crops have been harvested, or when his live stock have reached the stage where he must ship it, to liquidate his indebtedness. He must have somebody interested in him sufficiently, not altogether from his own standpoint, but from the standpoint of the banker and business man, so that he can put his products on the market at the time when they will bring him the most

profit. I do not mean to endorse every imaginable scheme for co-operative marketing, but I do believe the basic idea is worthy of consideration from the banker's standpoint as well as the farmer's standpoint. Bankers are certainly interested in the farmer, by reason of the fact that they cannot be prosperous if their own business unless the farmer also is prosperous. They must interest themselves in the farmer, not only in giving him the business advice he needs, and in financing him during the period of construction, but in helping him place his products on the market at the time when they will bring him the most profit. This is the only way of production plus reasonable addition for the services rendered in payment for his labor expended.

BUSY TIME FOR LITTLE DAN CUPID
Mills People Interested in Several Recent Nuptial Events

Boyle-D'Amico—Miss Mary Boyle and Mr. Peter D'Amico were united in marriage last Friday at the M. E. church, Casper, Rev. Lewis E. Carter performing, the few relatives being present. The bridal party came to Mills and enjoyed a sumptuous wedding dinner.

(Continued on Page 2)

the occupants of the car. French and Curtis were killed and Mr. Dawson died at a hospital during the night and Mr. Craig was badly injured but is expected to recover.

President Harding and party spent Sunday and part of Monday at Denver on his tour of the west and Alaska. He also made a stop at Cheyenne Monday where the president was given a great ovation. The main objective of the trip is to enable the president to inspect the railroad in Alaska which the government has constructed to help in development of the coal and mineral resources of that territory.



Walter W. Head

advice he needed during the period of prosperity, but he, with us all, suffered depression. There clearly must have been something lacking to enable him to go on the even tenor of his way. The answer is very plain. It is that some means need to be provided to enable the farmer, after his labor has been expended, when the crops have been harvested, or when his live stock have reached the stage where he must ship it, to liquidate his indebtedness. He must have somebody interested in him sufficiently, not altogether from his own standpoint, but from the standpoint of the banker and business man, so that he can put his products on the market at the time when they will bring him the most

profit. I do not mean to endorse every imaginable scheme for co-operative marketing, but I do believe the basic idea is worthy of consideration from the banker's standpoint as well as the farmer's standpoint. Bankers are certainly interested in the farmer, by reason of the fact that they cannot be prosperous if their own business unless the farmer also is prosperous. They must interest themselves in the farmer, not only in giving him the business advice he needs, and in financing him during the period of construction, but in helping him place his products on the market at the time when they will bring him the most profit. This is the only way of production plus reasonable addition for the services rendered in payment for his labor expended.

Casper City Council Granted Right to Lay Tracks, North and South Sides of Railroad Avenue

At a recent meeting of the Casper City Council granted the right to lay tracks on the north and south sides of Railroad avenue as far as South Wolcott street, by the adoption of the following resolution:

"Motion that there be granted to the Wyoming North and South Railroad company, a Wyoming Corporation, the right to construct, operate and maintain a railroad along and on the north side of West Railroad avenue from the extreme west boundary line of West Railroad avenue, thence northeasterly to South Wolcott street, thence curving across Railroad avenue to the south side of West Railroad avenue to South Oak street, such right of way to be confined to a strip 30 feet in width and to permit the construction of a double track, if desired by said railroad company, upon the consideration of ten dollars to be paid the city of Casper, and upon the further consideration that the said railroad company assume and pay the proper proportion of the cost of local improvements, the districts of which may embrace said premises or property abutting thereon."

Comment by the Casper Tribune on the motion is that: "The motion gives the railroad company this privilege, assuming that the

(Continued on Page 2)

IMPORTANT OIL DEVELOPMENTS

Mammoth Gets Big Gasser
The Mammoth Oil Company has uncorked a gasser said to be good for 70,000,000 cubic feet a day last Thursday in the Teapot field.

Another Refinery For Evansville
The White Eagle Oil & Refining Company has purchased a quarter section of land from the Producers & Refiners corporation which lies east of the Texas refinery site at Evansville. The White Eagle has announced that it will erect a new refinery with a capacity of 3,000 barrels a day. Fuel gas will be supplied to the new refinery by the P. & R. from its Mills-Glenrock line which is to be completed this season. This will be the fourth refinery to be built on this line, the other three being at Texas at Evansville, and Standard at Texas.

Powell Field in Texas Improving
The Humphreys Oil company has brought in a new well on the Powell Structure near Corsicana, Texas, with initial production of 300 barrels a day. This is the Humphreys-McKee No. 2. This well is to be a south extension of the Powell field proper. We expect to see the main field developed in the north or northeast of the Powell field. The discovery well, Col. A. E. Humphreys predicts that by August 1st the Powell field will be producing 100,000 barrels a day.

P. & R. Corp. Opens New Shallow Field

The deep test started a few weeks ago to explore the lower sands in the Simpson Ridge field about 40 miles east of Parco, the company's refinery town on the U. P. Ry., unexpectedly encountered a pay sand, said to be the Shannon, at 640 feet. The company has a block of 4,000 acres under lease and should this sand develop into the producer indicated by this well the Wall Creek series probably will not be explored for some time to come, as the shallow sand may give the company enough production to supply the refinery at P. & R. capacity in a short time.

(Continued on Page 2)

THE PEOPLE OF MILLS

The people who founded Mills and made it their home appear to be of mostly western European lineage. The names that recur throughout writings about the town and the newspapers have a British, Scottish, and Irish flair to them. The listing of mayors, councilmen, town clerks, teachers, and others involved in the town, as well as those fortunate or unfortunate enough to appear in the newspapers, all have a similarity of western European names.

There are occurrences of Germans and a rare Frenchman in town, but French are few and far between, and it is hard to find a person in Mills who remembers a Black, Asian, or an Eastern European. Many of the original deed transactions in Mills, probably as well as in most towns during the early 1900s, restricted purchasers to use of the land not to include sale to Negroes or for use as a liquor establishment. It would seem that the reason for this pattern of mostly European stock in Mills is due to migration to Mills of working class people from other parts of Wyoming. When the oil boom of the teens and twenties was on and the refinery was being built at Casper, the word got out that there were jobs to be had. Many people came to Mills to work for the refinery or on the construction of the refinery. This was the place to be. Many came here from ranches, and some returned to ranching after their time in Mills. Some came from the Salt Creek Field, moving from one oil related job to another.

Most seem to have come to Wyoming first and then come to Mills. Many came to Mills from Casper, not a long trip, because it was a good place for them to live and work at the refinery.

Migration was the big factor in growth of the town and it will continue to be so. With a 1925 population estimated by some at 800 and by others at 1500, there was a lot of outmigration, as indicated by the official census population of 350 in 1930. This means that there were very few children born and raised in Mills. Most moved on with their parents to somewhere else when the Depression hit. There are a few second and fewer third generation Mills people. The natural growth of the population through growth of families has not accounted for the growth of the town. From the thirties on the growth in Mills has been slow and steady, with the vast majority of the growth coming from those moving in as the county itself grew. Mills was apparently the fastest growing town in Wyoming in the 1950s, however, although

the number of actual new residents was smaller than those of the larger communities.

From the early days when the population was loaded with young single men who worked construction and young families, the population has changed to be quite average statistically as compared with the rest of Wyoming. The male/female ratio is about fifty-fifty, there are about ten percent senior citizens, less than two percent minorities, and the average age is in the twenties, as it is for the rest of the state. The migration of young families to Mills accounts for the growth that has occurred for the past decades, and the town is not growing old with its founders.

The major characteristic of the work force is that these are working people, people who work in construction, manufacturing, and the oil field, people looking for a good place to work and raise a family without a lot of hassle from the outside.

MOUNTAIN VIEW

Mountain View is a subdivision in Natrona County that is contemporary to Mills. This subdivision is adjacent to the west and north of Mills along the West Yellowstone Highway and the Poison Spider Road. Originally platted in 1921, the Mountain View subdivision has grown at the same pace as Mills over the years, but probably has grown faster than Mills in the past thirty years. Mills and Mountain View are similar areas, but the town has had the advantage of having a tax base and the authority to take care of its own business. Mountain View, on the other hand, has never had real access to tax money for providing utilities and streets and is served by the county sheriff and fire departments.

There have been jealousy and infighting over the years between individuals in Mills and Mountain View. It isn't apparent to the outsider what the major differences are between Mills and Mountain View, but those who have lived in the area for a while know them very well. The Mountain View people appear to be more independent and don't want the restrictions a town government would impose, but they would like the improvements Mills has, as well as the availability of the tax revenues to construct the improvements.

This all came to a climax in 1978 when residents of Mountain View proposed incorporation of Mountain View as the Town of Maverick. In 1976 Mills had annexed a six block area of Mountain View and there was commotion about the validity of petitions.

Mills protested the incorporation of the Town of Maverick and took the position that the Mountain View people would be better off to annex to Mills. The County Commissioners denied the petition stating that the protest from Mills was valid and that the Maverick proposal was not based on an actual survey of the proposed town's boundary.

Since that point things have been fairly calm between Mills and Mountain View and the differences between the two life-styles continue. Mills residents who live in the Six Block Area and others on the west end of Mills do not have the feel of belonging to Mills that those from the old part of town have. Some people who live in Mills are served water and sewer by the Brooks Water and Sewer District and have Mills police and fire protection, while others across the street have Brooks utilities but not Mills police and fire. There are few residents from the west end who participate in the town government and there are some who even live in the area who aren't sure whether they live in Mills or Mountain View.

A TOWN OF ROADWAYS

Mills is not the quiet little town one would expect from a population of 2139 because it is bisected by two of the busiest roadways in the state, the West Yellowstone Highway (U.S. 20-26), and Wyoming Boulevard. Mills originally was located well south of West Yellowstone, tucked down on the flood plain of the river and out of the way of traffic on West Yellowstone, which came through the Amoco refinery and then on to the west on top of the bluffs above the floodplain. West Yellowstone was the only connection between Mills and Casper and the refinery bridge was critical to getting back and forth. As the area grew in population the Natrona County International Airport grew and lands around it along West Yellowstone were developed as industrial and residential subdivisions. The frontage along West Yellowstone became commercial and Mills grew up around the highway. West Yellowstone initially was a two lane roadway which crossed the river at the refinery and then swung north around Mills. Eventually the five lane roadway was built with an overpass on the C&NW. Today the old highway still exists in the form of Highway Street, which runs through Mountain View north of the current West Yellowstone Highway.

In about 1950 a bridge was built across the North Platte near Fort Caspar which connected the Casper

area to Mills. This made access to Mills much easier for everyone and helped the community grow. Getting across the river and through Mills was still a tricky situation, however, until the mid seventies, when the Highway Department built Wyoming Boulevard through Mills. This five lane roadway connects from Highway 220 (CY) to West Yellowstone and carries over 11,000 vehicles a day. Wyoming Boulevard has helped open up the lands around the Airport to development and serves as a major route for those going to work and back home.

The Salt Creek Highway was the one way to get from Midwest to the Amoco refinery for many years. This roadway comes southward down the hill toward the river and refinery, along the tank farms, across the Casper Creek, and intersects with West Yellowstone just south of the creek. In the early days, horse drawn wagons brought the oil from Midwest to the refinery on this road. In later years the road was constructed on a trestle, which carried the road across and above the Burlington Northern main line precipitously down to a horrendous intersection with West Yellowstone at the end of the refinery bridge. A right turn off Salt Creek onto West Yellowstone required a sweeping 180 degree turning maneuver across Salt Creek and oncoming traffic and a dash into traffic coming blindly off the bridge. The Salt Creek has now been relocated to a location further west and the trestle is gone.

RAILROADS

Railroads are a key to founding of communities everywhere, and the railroads were important in opening up Wyoming and Natrona County. The railroads came to Natrona County in the late 1800s. Casper's first train arrived in about 1888. The two rail lines in Natrona County are the Burlington Northern and the Chicago and North Western. Both have evolved over the years under different ownerships and names, but have maintained the same main lines through the area. The Burlington line crosses the North Platte at Casper and runs north of the river past the Amoco refinery and to the west, while the C&NW runs through the refinery, across the river at Mills, and then west.³²

The railroads have had a positive effect on the industrial development of the area, but Mills has actually very little contact with either railroad. The C&NW main line runs through Mills and the

crossing on First Street has been a controversial site over the years, as there have been a few accidents on the crossing. A few years ago, even a psychic from California or some other far away place predicted a horrible accident there, which has not yet happened. Although the C&NW runs through Mills, it didn't stop in Mills until a few years ago. In the early days the mail was sent from Mills in a mail pouch hooked by the train as it came through. This was a social event for the residents, who often gathered to see the mail pouch catch on the hook as the train rolled by. Today, two bentonite plants, Benton Clay (Black Hills) and Davis Mud, used the railroad to ship their products on the C&NW, but there is no Mills stop on the line. In 1986, the C&NW terminated its service to Lander via their own main line, and now the track is not used from a point west of the airport about five miles west of Mills.

The Burlington runs through the very northern edge of Mills, and Wotco and Black Hills Bentonite ship their products on the B-N from there, but there is no Mills stop for the Burlington either.

One major effect the railroads have had on Mills is that the original town was laid out parallel and perpendicular to the C&NW. This created a street system 45 degrees off north and requires a mental adjustment for new folks trying to find their way around town.

WHICH WAY IS NORTH?

One very confusing phenomenon in Mills is the orientation of the streets in the lower portion of town. The town was laid out by the Mills Construction Company surveyor Cleary in a pattern which was parallel and perpendicular to the Chicago and North Western Railroad track. The named streets ran parallel to the railroad and the numbered streets ran perpendicular to the railroad.

The railroad track, at the point where it comes across the North Platte and through the town, runs at approximately a forty five degree angle north of west, or northwest. The geographical direction that the named streets run is, then, northwest, or northwest/southeast. The numbered streets, therefore, run perpendicular to the railroad and named streets, run southeast/northwest.

This is a confusing scheme for a town's streets, because cardinal directions get mixed up with the directions the streets run. When the town was laid out in the beginning, someone decided that north in the Town of Mills was away from the river



The Bridge on Wyoming Boulevard, built in 1952. Courtesy B. K. Farmer.



The infamous C&NW crossing on First Street. Courtesy *Casper Journal*.

along the named streets. Since the true direction is northwest, it must have been the toss of a coin that decided which way was going to be north. Ask anyone who lives in Mills and they will refer to north by pointing to the northwest along the named streets. This process is made more complex by the fact that you can't say that the North Platte River is to the south of Mills, because it runs to the due south of town along Fort Caspar and parallel to the named streets, but also runs north along the east side of town roughly parallel to the numbered streets. You can't say that the river is to the south and have people understand you.

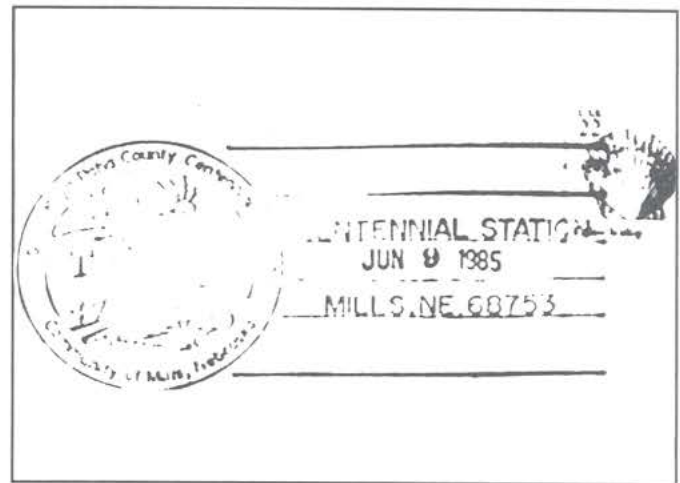
This is confusing enough, but there is more complexity. Legal descriptions of lots and property in Mills are very confused because of these mixed directions. The east half of Lot 2 Block 10, for example, could be that part of the lot front to back, a parcel twenty feet wide and one hundred forty feet deep. Or, the east half of the same lot could be the rear half of the lot adjacent to the alley, a parcel forty feet wide and seventy feet deep.

Another compounding aspect is that very few buildings had addresses until recently because everyone knew where they were going by referring to one landmark or another. Also, there is no demarcation point for north/south versus east/west. In Mills what would be south? South of the railroad? Good idea. What would be north? North of the railroad? Another good idea, but there are no streets that are located on both sides of the railroad and these directions aren't needed. First Street is a great place to break between directions, but there is little need because there are only about a half dozen houses located south or south-east of First Street anyway.

West of Wyoming Boulevard the streets are laid out north/south, which helps with directions, but it is still difficult to make the transition between the two parts of town. The secret to finding your way around Mills is to forget which way is north and to not be critical of those who appear to be lost.

MILLS, NEBRASKA

The only other town in the United States named Mills, according to Rand McNalley, is a near ghost town in northern Nebraska. Mills, Nebraska had about one hundred residents in its heyday, was an agricultural town, and celebrated its founding along with the centennial of Keya Paha County. For its centennial in 1985 the town had a special commemorative postmark made.



Postmark from Mills, Nebraska's Centennial, 1985. Courtesy, Lois Libolt.



Mike Johnson

LOCALLY IMPORTANT PLACES: HISTORIC SITES AND LANDMARKS OF MILLS

One of the major focuses of the Mills Historic Preservation Project is to develop a list of those sites and locations which are of importance to the history of the town. Those places initially designated by the town as historic under this program number nineteen. It is difficult to designate a site historic if it doesn't exist in its original form any more. However, many of the sites on the list are designated so because they were important in the heritage of the town and played an important part in the life of the town during their existence.

The criteria for designation of a locally important place are taken directly from the criteria for nomination to the National Historic Register, and apply to each place in the light of local importance to the town itself. Locally important sites:

1. Are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the history of Mills.

2. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in Mills' past.

3. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction: or

4. That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.

The following places, in no particular order of importance, have been designated as the first listing of Locally Important Places for the town. Descriptions and details of these places are found throughout this history, with this listing being a short summary:

1. The several routes of the Oregon Trail through Mills.
2. The Caspar Collins/Oregon Trail Monument.
3. The Platte Bridge.
4. Boatright-Smith.
5. The Casper Creek-Vanhorn Area.
6. The Wagon Wheel Roller Rink.
7. The Plunge-Riverview Park area where the Bayou Bar is located.
8. First Street Park.
9. Wotco (Western Oil Tool).
10. The Mills Hotel.
11. The 100 block of Benton.
12. The George Sword home.
13. The Post Office.
14. The Bureau of Reclamation.
15. The Fire Hall.
16. A typical mo-

17. The Mills Baptist Church.
18. The water tower.
19. The Platte River itself.

1. The Oregon Trail routes.

There are several locations that settlers took through Mills to get to the west along the Oregon Trail. The Oregon and Mormon trails were routes that immigrants used to get to Oregon and California from the midwest. The busiest years of migration were the 1840s and 1850s. The Oregon Trail itself came west from Fort Laramie to central Wyoming along the North Platte. Some routes crossed the Platte at the Reshaw (or Richaud) bridge in Evansville. Other routes progressed around the top of the sand hills north of the river. These routes then came southward just east of what is now the Salt Creek Highway, down off the bluffs and across the Casper Creek into the original area of Mills. The southerly routes that crossed the river south to north at Fort Caspar joined in here and all crossed Wyoming Boulevard at Pendell, and moved on westward to the Emigrant Gap.

2. The Caspar Collins/Oregon Trail Monument.

There is a granite marker located on the north side of West Yellowstone at the intersection with Highway Street which commemorates the Oregon Trail and the murder of Caspar Collins. This may be the only monument in Mills and is therefore unique in itself. The monument, although marking the spot of Caspar Collins' murder, has been moved to its current location from further east along the highway, which leaves room for discussion as to the locations of the events the monument commemorates.

3. The Platte Bridge.

The Platte Bridge was located at Fort Caspar, mostly within the future Town of Mills. The possible south end of the bridge stands just south of the town limits on the Fort Caspar site. The bridge was built out of poles and was twelve wide and six feet high, and may have run 1000 feet northward with an angle point in the middle which turned the bridge northwest to a point west of the Mills town hall. The river was probably wide and shallow in those days and the bridge built to get across the total width of the water. The bridge was first built in 1857-58 with Fort Caspar built soon after to protect the bridge, settlers making their way on the Oregon and Mormon trails, and a telegraph line. The bridge served the purpose of getting the settlers across the



Larry Edwards stands in his back yard, where he filled in ruts that were possibly part of the Oregon Trail.



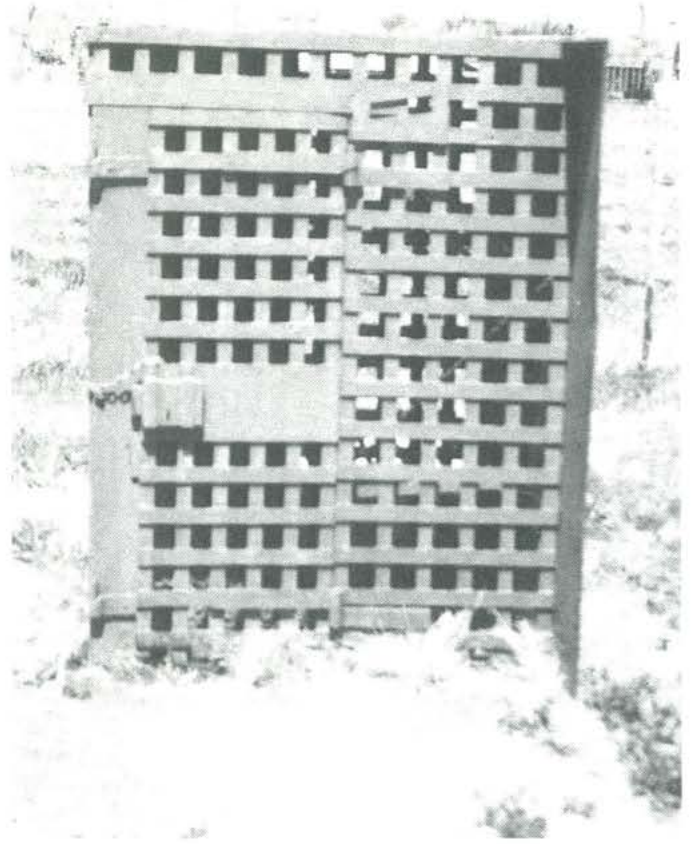
The often moved Oregon Trail-Caspar Collins Monument, now located at the intersection of the West Yellowstone and Highway. Highway Street was the old West Yellowstone.



The Boatright-Smith facility on Wyoming Boulevard, possible site of the Caspar Collins battle.



The Casper Creek looking south to where it flows into the North Platte.



The jail cell from the basement of the original town hall, now located at Fort Caspar.



The Wagon Wheel. Courtesy *Casper Journal*.

river well, but it was quite expensive. The bridge and fort were abandoned and burned by the Indians after the battle of Platte Bridge Station, when Lieutenant Caspar Collins was killed. It is interesting to note that during a 1933 Fourth of July celebration parts of the fort, recreated for that occasion, were burned once by an arsonist, and rebuilt only to be burned to the ground again by an errant flaming arrow of an overzealous "Indian".

4. Boatright-Smith.

Various sources relate that Caspar Collins was killed at the current location of the gate of Boatright-Smith. The stories also explain that he was dragged by his horse some distance to the north, where his body was found later near Casper Creek.

5. The Casper Creek-Vanhorn Area.

The Casper Creek is a tributary of the North Platte River, which rises in western Natrona County and flows to its union with the Platte in Mills, just east of Vanhorn Avenue. This area is rich in the history of Mills. The Standard refinery had their stables here in the early years as did the 58th Brigade of the Wyoming National Guard, a cavalry unit, and the Sprague-Nisely Construction Company. The area was even heated by steam heat, piped across the river from the refinery. Later, the VanHorns raised pigs and cattle on the land and today the Wagon Wheel, Mills' most famous institution, dominates the site. Arrowheads and other Indian artifacts have been found on the site, indicating that there were dugouts, or other Indian camping areas here.

6. The Wagon Wheel Roller Rink.

This is Mills' most unique place at this time in history, famous statewide as a place to roller skate and have a good time. The construction of the building, with its arched roof, is also an interesting study in itself.

7. The Plunge-Riverview Park.

In the twenties and thirties there was an amusement park in Mills, located where the Bayou Bar is today at Second and Platte. One channel of the river flowed through at the present Wyoming Boulevard location, and this made a good spot for a huge swimming pool and dance hall. The people from the area played hard during the summer here and the Plunge was indicative of life in the early days of Mills.

8. First Street Park.

The original town hall, built in 1921 and torn down in the early fifties, was located at First and Benton on a lot donated to the town by the Mills Construction Company. This was a concrete block building, only about sixteen by twenty four feet, with one meeting room upstairs and a large room downstairs, which housed the Mills jail. There were no town offices here, just meeting rooms, and it is possible that the Boy Scouts used the jail more than anyone else.

9. Wotco - Western Oil Tool And Manufacturing Company.

The site of the current Western Oil Tool Company is the very heart of the original Town of Mills. Mills began as a gravel pit along the river, where gravel was removed by the Mills Construction Company to be hauled by horse drawn wagon across the North Platte to the Amoco refinery for use on construction of roads, and for construction of the tank farms around the refinery. The Wotco site, over seventy acres stretching from First Street to the river, was also the location of the Mills Construction Company barns, where hundreds of horses were stabled. Over the years, the Wotco site has been home to many of the important events of the town's history.

10. The Mills Hotel

The Mills Hotel was a symbol of the "Roaring Twenties" in Mills. You could get whatever you wanted there, from women to gambling to liquor. The place had quite a reputation across the west. The wild times ended with the Depression, and the Hotel was torn down in the early thirties. Now at the Wotco site there is nothing to indicate that which occurred during the early times of Mills.

11. The 100 Block of Benton Avenue.

Several of the first quality houses of the town were built in the 100 Block of Benton in the 1920s, and stand today, well kept in style faithful to the originals. Many of the original long term families resided here at one time or another. The block retains its original character well but has added a couple of mobile homes, a symbol of the modern times in Mills.

12. The George Sword house - 131 Benton.

This house, originally the home of George Boyle, the first mayor of Mills, was a store and the temporary post office of the town. George Sword, current

owner, has maintained the home quite well and was mayor for about fifteen years himself.

13. Post Office.

The Mills Post Office was located for years in the houses and stores around town. In 1963 the current Post Office on Wyoming Boulevard was dedicated. The Post Office is an important place to Mills because it is the social center of town. There is no street delivery of mail in Mills, and everyone goes to the Post Office almost every day (some more than once a day) to find out the latest on what is happening in town, and to get their mail.

14. The Bureau Of Reclamation.

The Bureau has been an integral part of the town since the late forties when the residences and the original offices were built. The homes were sold to individuals and the original office buildings have been replaced by modern facilities, but the Bureau's impact of providing jobs in the community continues.

15. The Fire Hall.

The fire hall was built in 1953 to house the Mills Volunteer Fire Department, a meeting place for the council which also was the courtroom, and a large meeting room for events. The building has proven to be indispensable over the years and has been the scene for many important events in the town's history.

16. A typical mobile home.

Half of the housing units in Mills are mobile homes, partly because the lots in town are ideally shaped for mobile homes and because mobile homes provide an alternative form of affordable housing. Mobile homes have their advocates and opponents in Mills, but both sides can agree that mobile homes have had a major impact on the life-style of the town.

17. The Mills Church

Originally Free Methodist, then Nazarene, Baptist, and now Church of the Abundant Life (with ownership retained by the Baptist Church), the church, located across from the school on Wasatch, is one of the few public buildings built in Mills during the twenties that still exists. Apparently, the basement was built first, and the building constructed later, although there is discussion that the building was moved in from Edgerton or Midwest. It is truly a Mills landmark.

18. The Original Water Tower.

The original Mills water tower, located across Wyoming Boulevard from the Post Office, was a Mills landmark. If you ever came through Mills you likely remember the water tower as it was visible from everywhere and a notable reference point. Built in 1924 as part of the original water system, it served the town until purchased by the Wardwell Water and Sewer District and moved to Bar Nunn in July, 1975.

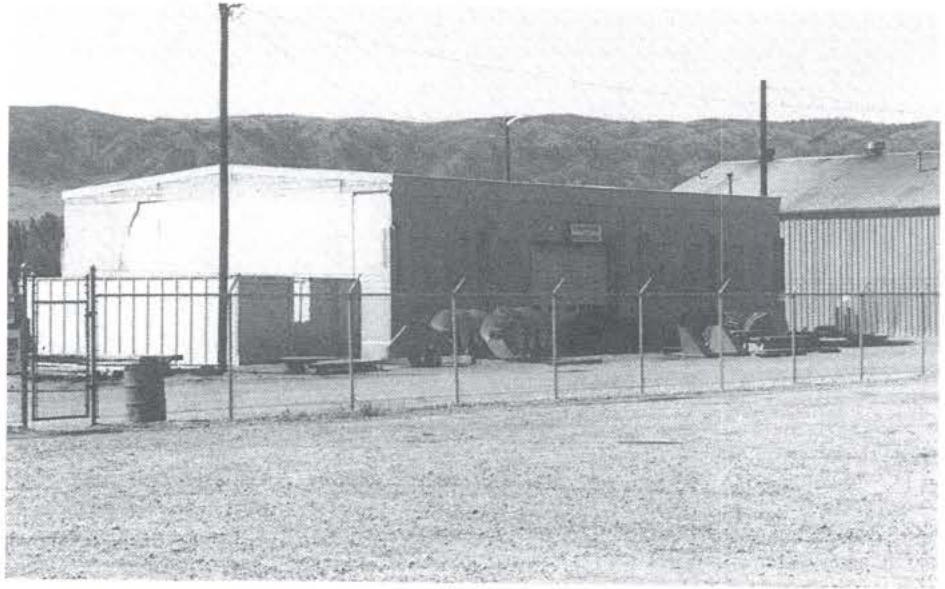
19. The North Platte River.

The North Platte River is not a place, but the river has affected the Mills life-style more than any other single factor in the town's history. The founding of the town occurred because the river had deposited sand and gravel on the site of Mills, and because it provided the water necessary for the Standard refinery. Other positive effects of the river are the recreation opportunities and adequate water for the town, yet high water causes flooding and groundwater problems, and the river has taken lives of residents and occasionally isolates the town from points south and east. The river has created jobs and improved the quality of life in Mills, but it at the same time it takes life and requires much attention from the town. The symbiosis of Mills and the North Platte River will continue . . .



The Mills fire hall. Note the hose cart and fire bell. The hose cart was pulled behind a fireman's car (whoever got to the fire hall first) to the fire, where the hose was hooked to a hydrant.

The tannery at Watco, now used for shipping and receiving.



The 100 Block of Benton.



The new Bureau Of Reclamation office building.



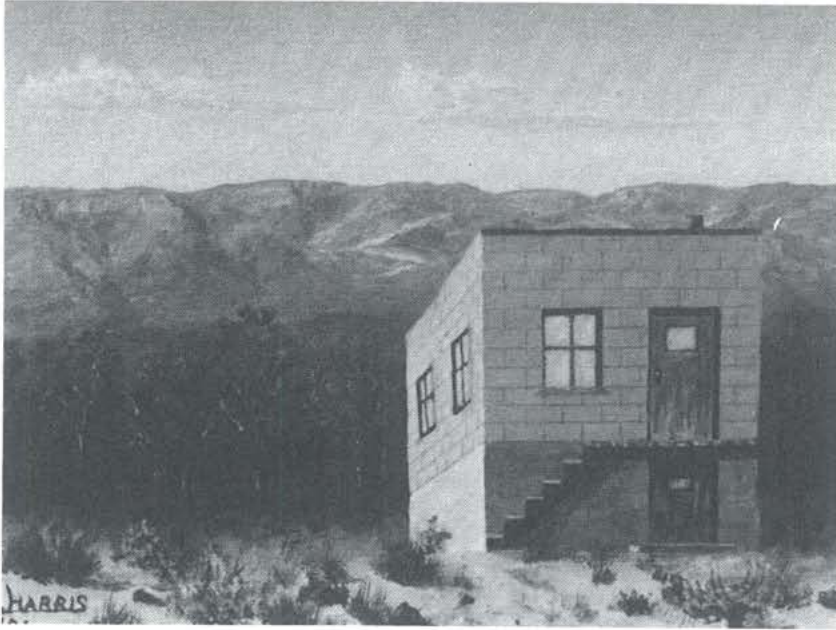


The Bayou Bar, site of the Plunge.



The Mills water tower being taken down and moved to Wardwell in 1975. Courtesy Larry Edwards.

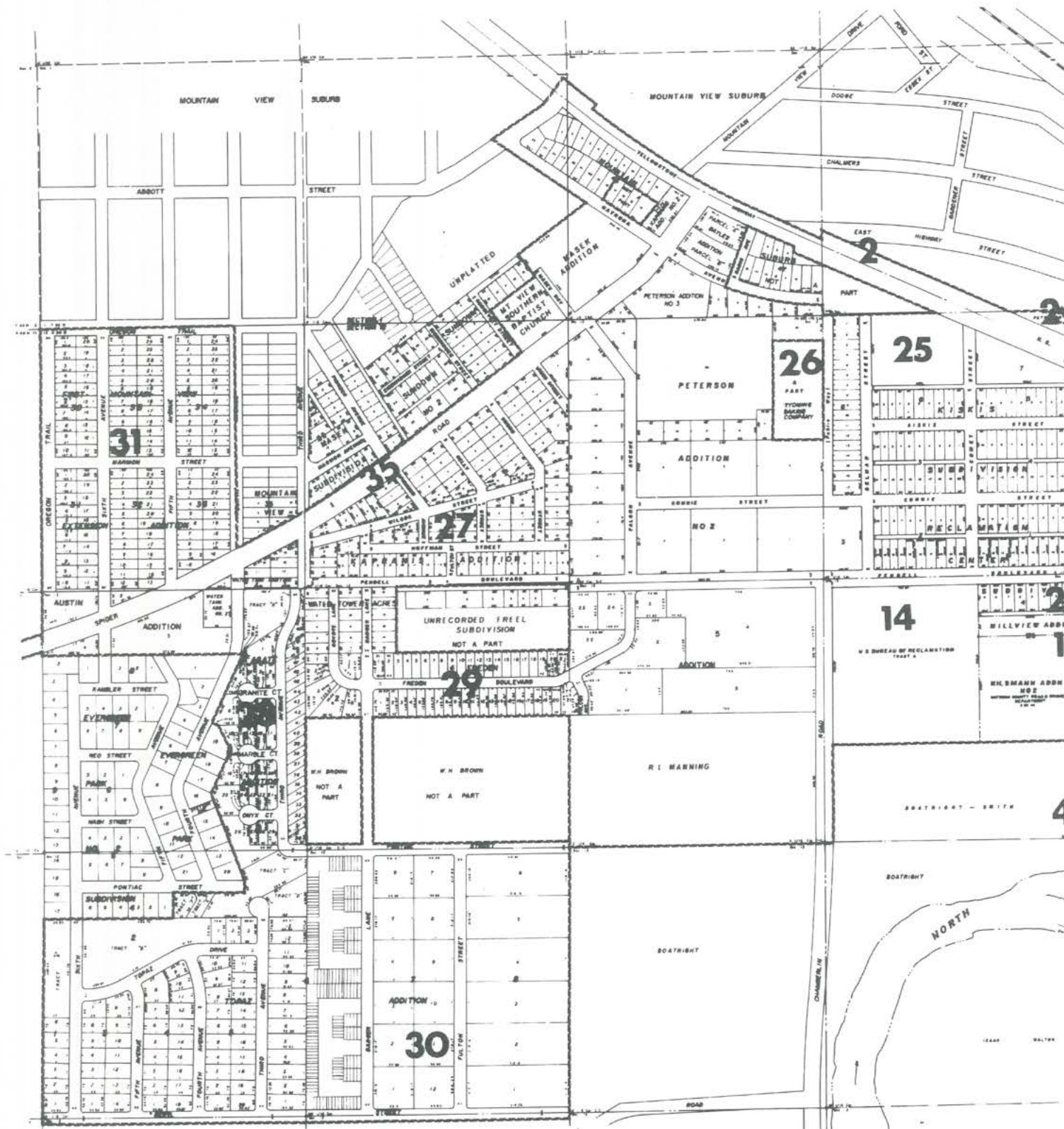




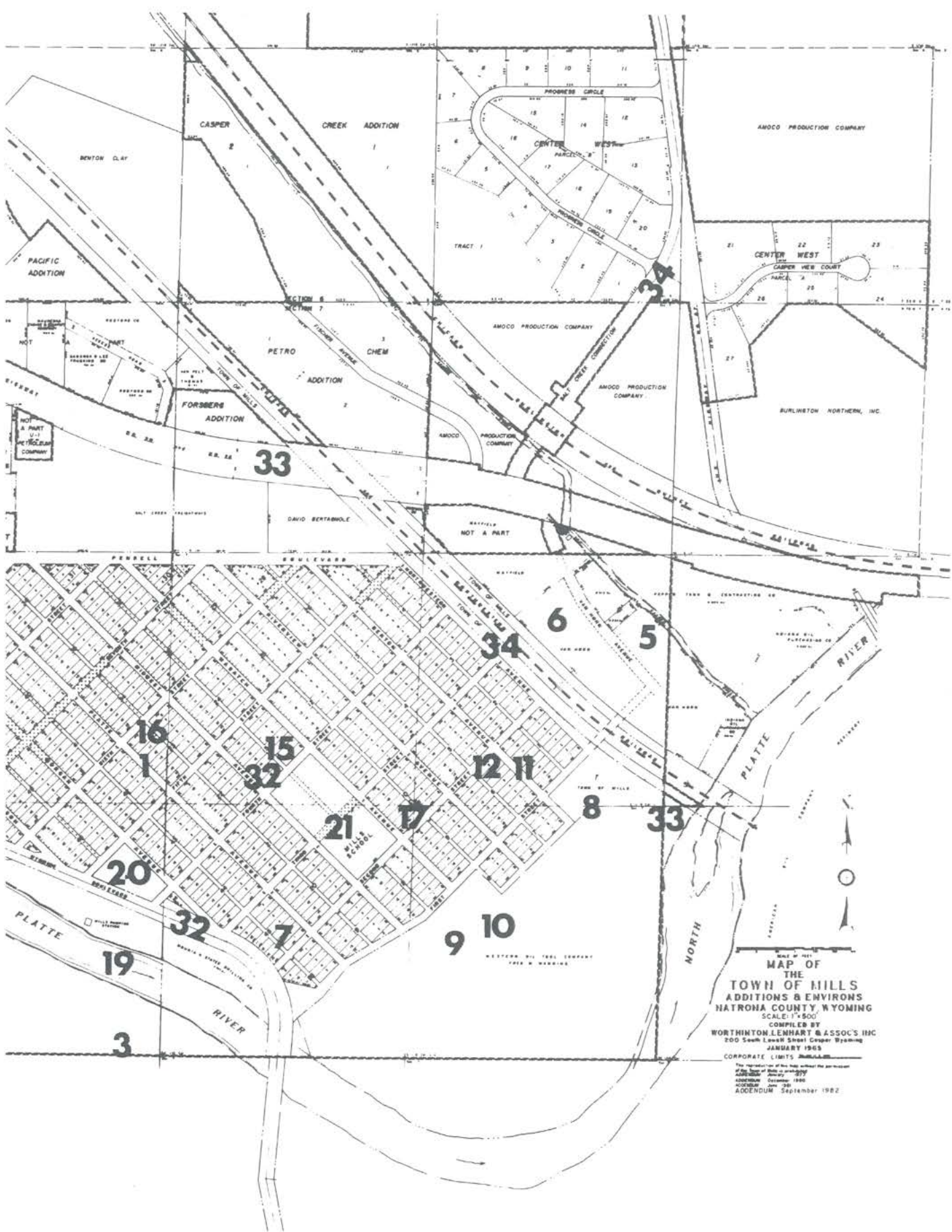
Herb Harris painting of the original town hall, located at First and Benton. Mr. Harris painted the picture for this history, mostly from memory, as pictures of the building are quite rare.



Honorable Mention: The Harry Rude house at Third and Riverview, once the Mills Construction Company office, the post office, the school, and home of the *Mills Journal*, now vacant.



The Town of Mills today, showing the town limits, Locally Important Places, and other locations. 1. Platte Street, route of the Oregon Trail. 2. The Caspar Collins-Oregon Trail monument. 3. The location of the Platte Bridge. 4. Boatright-Smith. 5. Casper Creek-Vanhorn area. 6. The Wagon Wheel. 7. The Bayou Bar, site of the Plunge. 8. First Street Park, site of the first town hall. 9. Wotco. 10. The Mills Hotel. 11. The 100 Block of Benton. 12. The George Sword House. 13. The Post Office. 14. The Bureau of Reclamation. 15. The Fire Hall. 16. A typical mobile home, Sixth and Platte. 17. The Mills Church. 18. The water tower. 19. The North Platte River. 20. The new town hall. 21. The Mills School. 22. Millview Shopping Center. 23. State Bank of Mills (now vacant). 24. The Beacon Club (now vacant). 25. The Lariat mobile home park. 26. Bunny Bread (in the 60s). 27. Kapranis Addition. 28. Agate Addition. 29. Freden Addition. 30. Topaz-Amber Valley. 31. The Six Block Area. 32. Wyoming Boulevard. 33. West Yellowstone. 34. The Salt Creek Highway. 35. Poison Spider Road.



MAP OF
 THE
 TOWN OF MILLS
 ADDITIONS & ENVIRONS
 NATRONA COUNTY WYOMING
 SCALE: 1"=500'
 COMPILED BY
 WORTHINGTON, LENHART & ASSOC'S INC.
 200 South Lower Street Casper Wyoming
 JANUARY 1965
 CORPORATE LIMITS SHOWN

The reproduction of this map without the permission
 of the State of Wyoming
 is prohibited. December, 1960
 ACCORDING TO SECTION 20
 ARTICLE 20, CONSTITUTION OF WYOMING
 APPENDUM September 1982

FOOTNOTES

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9 Interview, William Mills, Mills, Wyoming, July 13, 1985.

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10 Manuscript, Mildred Steinle, Casper, Wyoming, June 1986.

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11 Interviews and manuscript, George Adams, Casper, Wyoming, July 1985, June 1986.

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12 Mokler, History Of Natrona County, p. 239.

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13 Conversations with Fred Vanhorn, Mills, Wyoming, April, May, 1986.

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14 Interviews and manuscript, William Clapp, Casper, Wyoming, October 1985 through June 1986.

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15 Mayor George Sword, address at the dedication of the Mills Post Office, May 26, 1963, and interview August 1985, Mills, Wyoming, 1985.

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17 George Adams, manuscript, Casper, Wyoming, June 1986.

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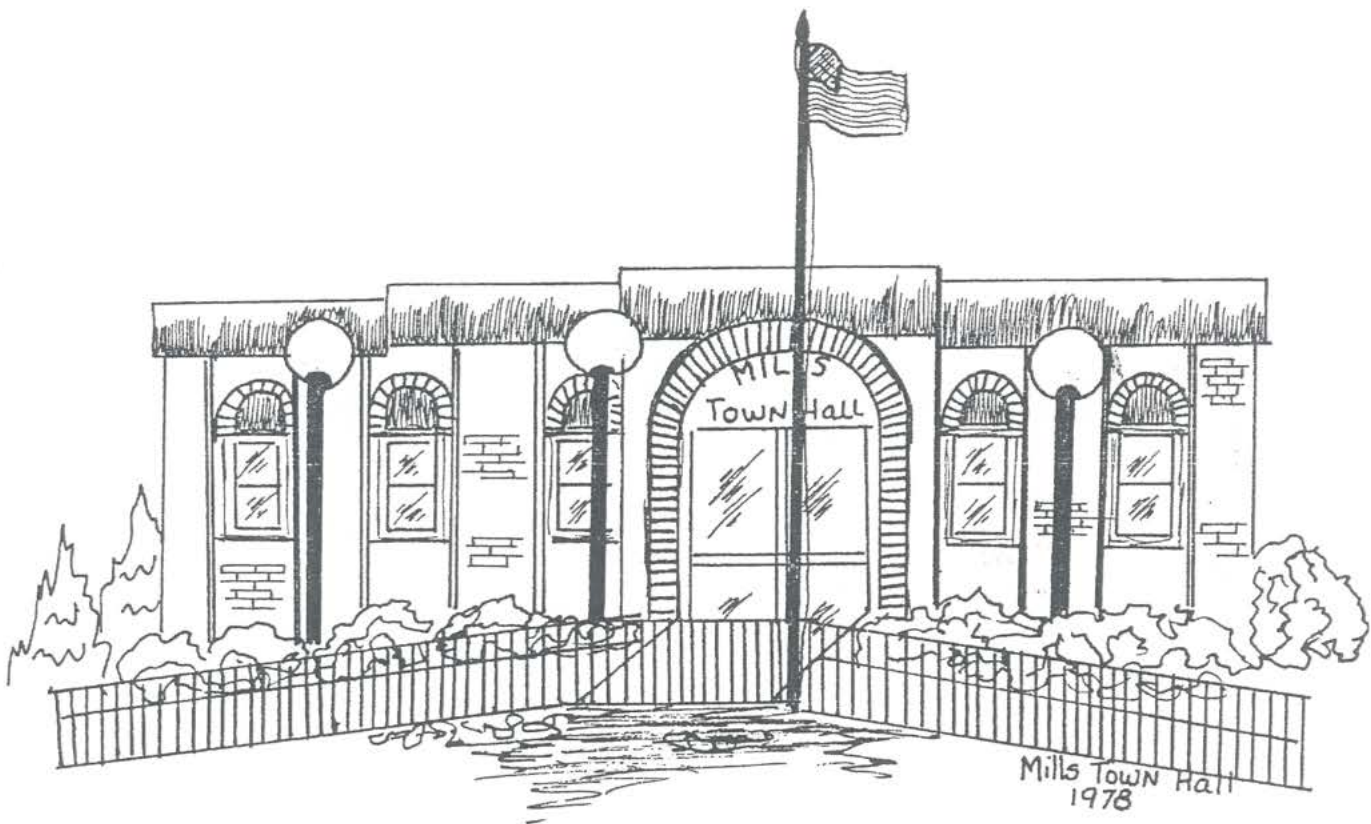
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Lori Weber

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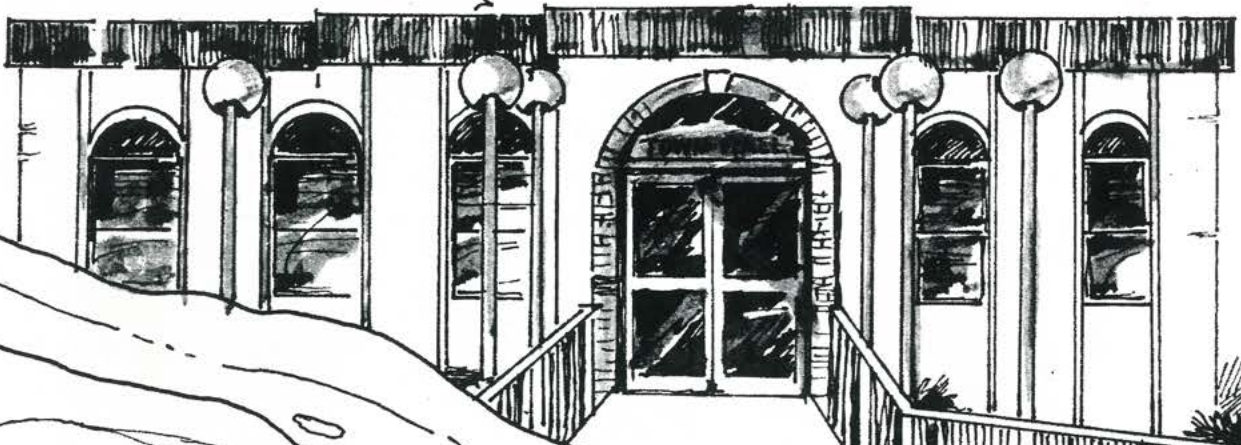


An aerial photograph of Mills, Wyoming, showing a river, industrial buildings, and a residential grid. The river flows through the center of the town, with several large industrial buildings and structures along its banks. A dense residential grid is visible in the lower half of the image. The overall scene is a mix of natural and man-made elements.

ABOUT THE BOOK

Separate And Distinct: A History of the Town Of Mills, Wyoming, is a significant community accomplishment. Many persons contributed to the book with a sense of community spirit that makes this book unique. This history is finished, but it is just one part of an historic preservation program that has just begun. In addition to the history, a repository has been established at the Mills Town Hall for those who wish to contribute information, documents, pictures and memorabilia about Mills to the Town's history collection. The collection will be cataloged and made available to those who wish to study the history of the Town. It is also our hope that those who read this history and who have additional information and pictures about the Town will contribute copies to the collection, so that the process of collecting and writing the Town's history will continue.

Most of the sites that would be considered historic to the Town have long since disappeared. We can't save what is now gone, but the Town hopes to help preserve and use those buildings and sites that are now important to the Town, so that they will not follow the Mills Plunge, the original Town Hall and the Mills Hotel into the past.



M. JOHNSON