

“Entering Wyoming”



***A Brokeback* enthusiast's guide to Wyoming**

5th PDF Edition, 30 March 2013

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www.FindingBrokeback.com

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“Entering Wyoming”



DVD capture - Chapter 14, 01 19 35



Contributed photo

Brokeback pilgrims have long sought to see, and experience first-hand, the landscapes and scenery that so profoundly inspired the story and the film they treasure. Here you will find a collection of Wyoming places that have strong *Brokeback* ties. Some are quite specific, while others are merely suggestive of locations which stimulated the creative energies of those who told the *Brokeback* story in words and on film.

Note: Despite claims published on various websites that parts of *Brokeback* were filmed in locations other than Alberta, Canada, to the best of our knowledge no one has ever published photographic evidence in support of these claims. The only scene that was filmed in another location is the “[Juarez Skyline](#),” which is in La Mesilla, New Mexico, U.S.A.

Revised 05 October 2012

Planning a Wyoming *Brokeback* Trip

The geography of Wyoming is, at the same time, alluring and intimidating. A complete tour of all the Wyoming *Brokeback* sites covers almost 2,000 miles (3,200 km), touching every quadrant of this huge state. Use “Entering Wyoming” to identify the places that interest you the most and to plan your route. As you may note, we have included several locations that are not directly related to *Brokeback Mountain* but which we feel may be worthy of your time. This interactive map will help you to organize your trip: [Wyoming Map](#).

One circuit that works well is Salt Lake City (Utah), Sage, the Tetons, Riverton, Worland, Ten Sleep, Brokenback Mountain, Sheridan, Lightning Flat, Owl Canyon (Colorado), Laramie, Centennial, Saratoga, and Salt Lake City.

Another option, starting in Denver (Colorado), is Owl Canyon, Lightning Flat, Sheridan, Brokenback Mountain, Ten Sleep, Worland, the Tetons, Sage, Saratoga, Centennial, Laramie, and Denver.

If you are in a hurry, or simply want to see as many *Brokeback* Wyoming locations as possible, you can make the full circuit in four long days. If you want to enjoy the sublime and, at times, overpowering beauty of this place, consider giving yourself a week or ten days.

A special note about the Tetons: Annie Proulx made one incidental reference to these awesome mountains in her story. McMurtry and Ossana gave them low-profile treatment, as well. But the Tetons are a world-class attraction and, coupled with neighboring Yellowstone National Park, attract over 4 million visitors annually, many from abroad. If you can check your *Brokeback* obsession for just a few days, seriously consider enjoying these must-see places while you are there.

Getting There

Most Wyoming visitors will find it easiest, and most economical, to fly to Salt Lake City (near the southwest corner of Wyoming) or Denver (near the southeast corner). Although regional air service is available to Wyoming cities, both airfares and car rental rates there tend to be much higher. Try [Kayak.com](#) for major carrier airfares and separately check [Southwest.com](#). As it always does, flexibility in your travel dates and routings can save you a considerable amount of money.

Getting Around

You’ll need a car. Use [Travelocity.com](#) or [Expedia.com](#) to get a good rate. Then, to save even more money, use [Priceline.com](#) and try for a rate 20% less than your best rate from the other two. Many of the Wyoming *Brokeback* locations are accessible from paved or well-graded gravel roads. The principal exceptions are the last two miles leading up Brokenback Mountain and the 0.2 mile driveway leading to the old Childress place. These are both easy walks, but if that sounds unappealing consider renting a high-profile vehicle.

Gas stations are not plentiful in Wyoming once you leave the Interstates. Fill your gas tank at 50%, especially when you are travelling to the desolate area near Rockypoint and Lightning Flat.

A PDF version of “Entering Wyoming” is available in **Downloads**. We recommend that you print a copy to take with you. Note that the pages of the PDF are arranged in map order, just like the website, starting on the western border at Sage. However, you can enter Wyoming wherever you choose and still find the locations easily, moving either frontward or backwards from your starting point in the PDF. Used in conjunction with a good state roadmap, you should have no trouble making your way around in the state. The official state highway map of Wyoming is available free

of charge, as is the Wyoming Travelers Journal, at <http://www.onefulfillment.com/rack/WyomingTourism/>. State roadmaps are also available at most gas stations. And, though it is not necessary, a GPS receiver is a terrific and useful road travel aid. Remember to bring along water and snack foods.

Lodging

Summer motel rates tend to be high, especially in the heavily toured areas of western Wyoming. Accommodations in the two parks ([Grand Teton](#) and [Yellowstone](#)) are especially expensive. Consider staying outside of the parks proper. Motels are abundant in towns such as Afton, West Yellowstone, Alpine, and Dubois, but, even there, summertime bargains are rare.

Travel search engines like [Travelocity.com](#) and [Expedia.com](#) are a good starting place for lodging searches. Most Wyoming towns have a Super 8 motel which tends to be a reliable, if uninspired, option. ([Super8.com](#)) If local motels or guesthouses are an option, you might also want to consult www.wyomingtourism.org/planning/stay/hotels_motels.php.

A list of some of the motels we stayed at in July 2010 follows. Please let us know if you have any others to suggest.

Evanston:



Motel 6 Evanston #4026 - 261 Bear River Drive, I-80 at US 189 / Bear River Drive, Exit #6, Evanston, WY, Phone: (307) 789-0791. Evanston is about 90 miles from Salt Lake City, which makes it a convenient stopping point for air-travelers driving into Wyoming from Utah.

Alpine:



3 Rivers Motel - Main Street (US-89), Alpine, WY, Phone: (307) 654-7551. We stayed here two nights and found the rooms to be large and very comfortable. It's a quiet location and you can easily walk to several restaurants and a grocery store. We stayed here our second night in WY in order to position ourselves for our horseback ride the following day in the Salt River Range, and it was a great place to return to after all that time ahorseback.

Riverton:



Paintbrush Motel - 1550 North Federal Blvd., Riverton, WY, Phone: (307) 856-9238 / (800) 204-9238. Family owned and operated, very clean rooms, on the strip, close to shopping and restaurants yet very quiet. We stayed here for one night on our way from Alpine to Buffalo.

Buffalo:



Z-Bar Motel - 626 Fort St. (US-16), West Buffalo, WY, Phone: (307) 684-5535 / (888) 313-1BAR. This family-run motel offers clean log cabins and motel rooms, each with cable TV, microwave, refrigerator and in-room coffee. Kitchenettes are available. The cabins are clustered around a large grassy area which offers plenty of room for kids to play, and includes a BBQ and picnic area. We found Buffalo to be a wonderful town and would have liked to have

stayed longer. It is convenient to Sheridan, Lightning Flat, and Ucross, or to Bighorn Canyon if you are heading west.

Weather

By far the most comfortable (and consequently the most crowded) months to visit Wyoming are July and August. Early summer and early fall can be lovely, but plan your wardrobe accordingly.

Bars

Wyoming is perhaps the only state in the U.S.A. without a gay bar. If you decide to make friends elsewhere, be careful.

Precautions

“Truth is” you will be in much greater danger of being hit by a drunk driver while driving down the highway than of being bitten by a snake or attacked by a bear. Nevertheless, consult rangers and heed their advice before hiking in parks. Snakes are common in locations such as Sage, Lightning Flat (the old Scott place) and East Ulm (the old Childress place). Watch your surroundings. If you have cowboy or hiking boots, wear them in open areas.

Should you find yourself inside old buildings, be especially careful. Floorboards may be weak, missing, or loose. Railings may be missing or insecure. You may need a flashlight.

Of course, always secure permission of owners before entering private property. Leave property as you find it.

Remember

Here is a short list of things often forgotten that may be useful to *Brokeback* travelers: sunglasses, Neosporin, lip balm, Q-tips, Post-its, a hat, medicines, water bottles, address book, chargers for cameras and cellphones, extra batteries and memory cards.

Above All

This site was assembled by volunteers who feel strongly that *Brokeback Mountain* is an important film which has a deep and unique power to touch lives and improve understanding. We urge you to absorb as much of the *Brokeback* travel experience as you possibly can and to share it with those around you. Have a great trip!

Feedback, Please!

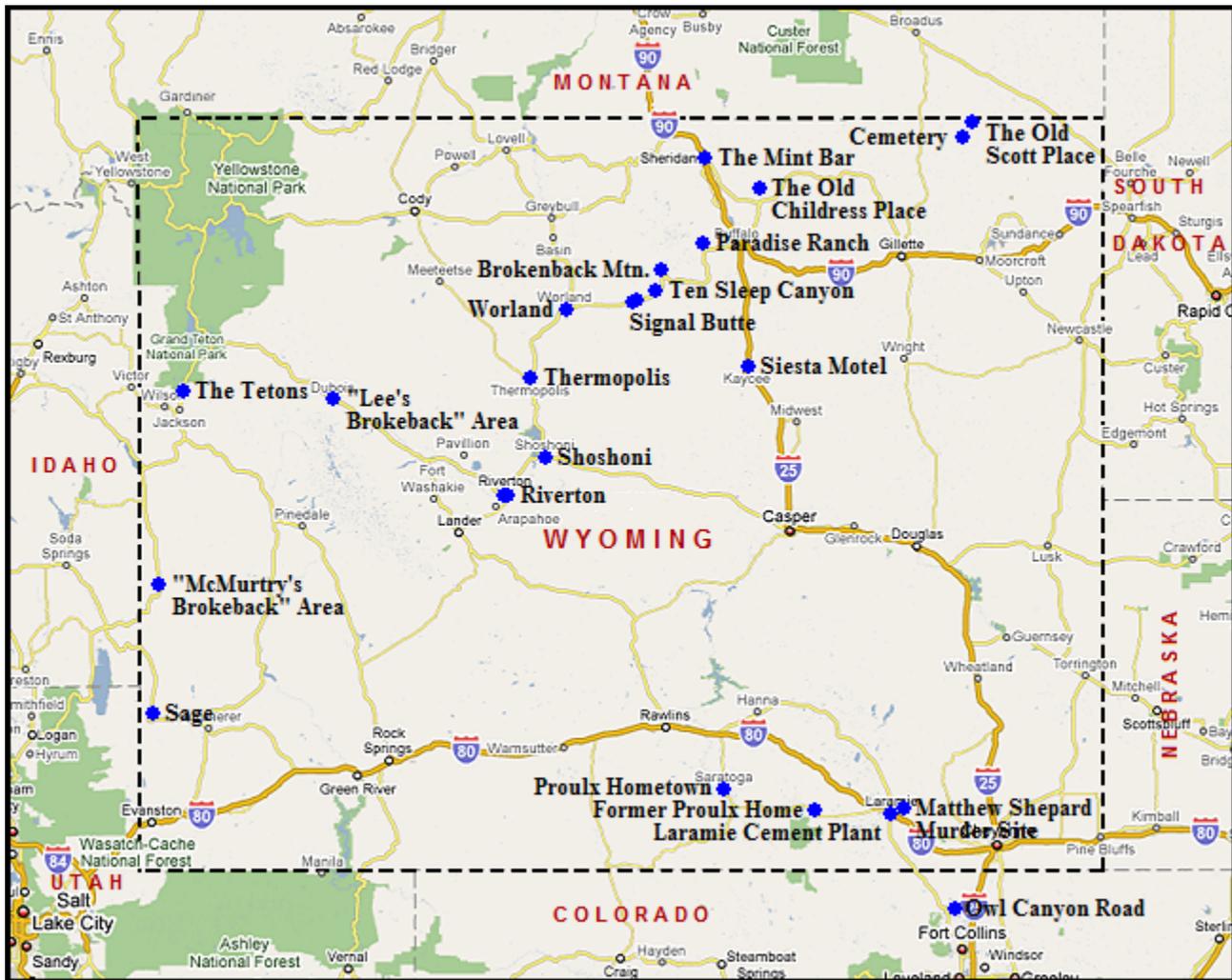
No guide is perfect. We have undoubtedly made mistakes and need your help in correcting them. Please let us know which locations you found and if there were any sites you looked for but did not find. If you encounter problems with the directions or the information contained here, we would be

grateful for a chance to correct our mistakes. Moreover, if you know of a way to make this resource more useful, or have other suggestions, please email and let us know!

Revised 17 March 2011

Map of Wyoming, U.S.A.

Showing places of interest to *Brokeback* enthusiasts



km	40	80	120	160	
mi	20	40	60	80	100

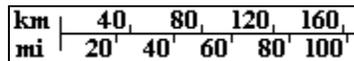
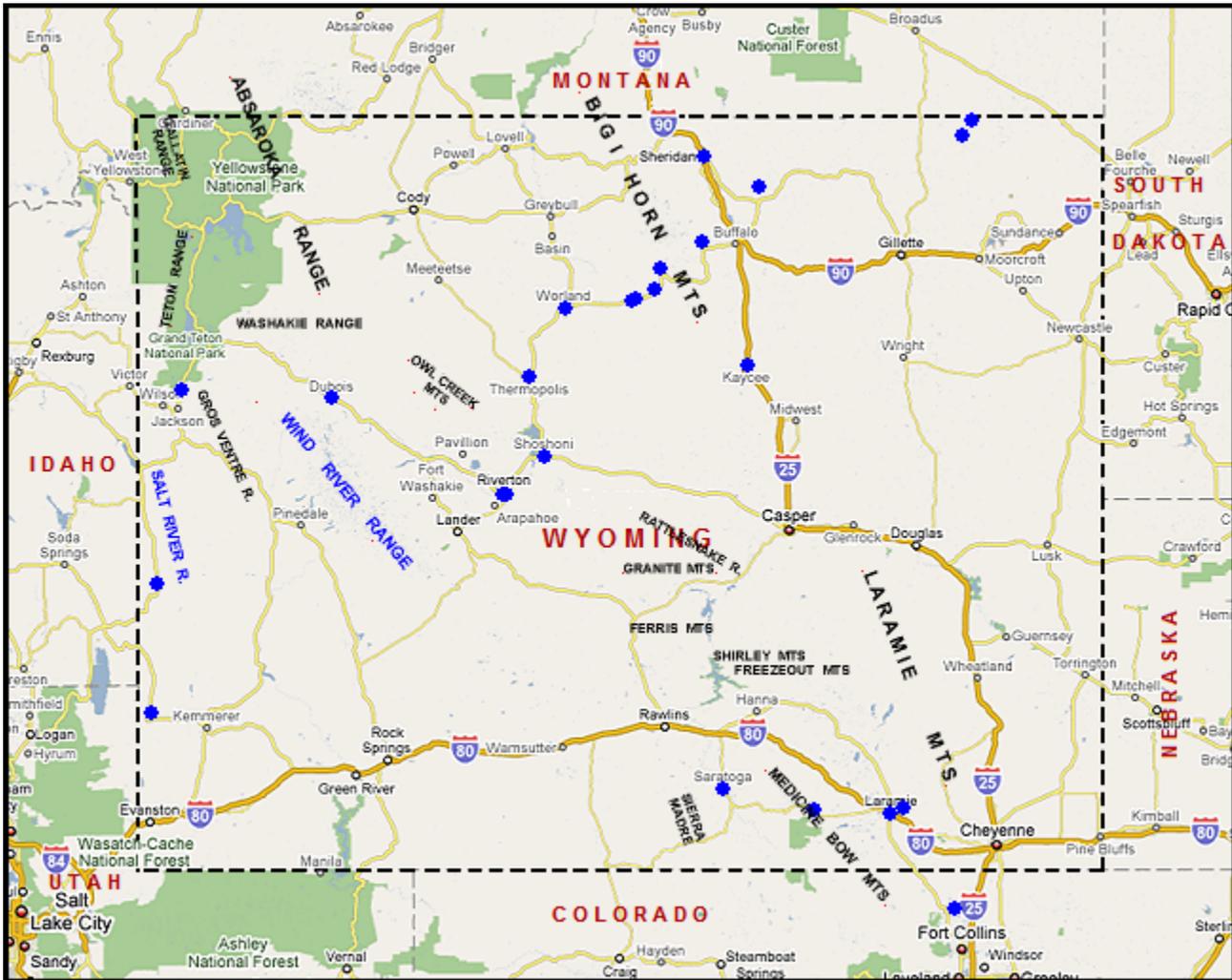
The region shown is approximately 587 x 727 km (365 x 452 miles).

Map courtesy: <http://maps.google.com/>

Revised 20 December 2010

Map of Wyoming, U.S.A.

Showing 17 mountain ranges mentioned in *Brokeback Mountain*



The region shown is approximately 587 x 727 km (365 x 452 miles).

Map courtesy: <http://maps.google.com/>

Revised 16 March 2011

Sage



Contributed photo



Contributed photo

Location: US-30, Lincoln County, WY

GPS: 41d 48m 50s -110d 57m 33s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

From I-80 take WY Exit 5, "Front Street / WY-89 N"

Follow WY-89, UT-16, UT-30, and WY-89 for 50.0 miles.

Turn Right (E) on US-30; go 1.1 miles.

Look for the "Sage" sign. The town is to the right, across the rail tracks.

Remarks:

Sublime in every sense, Sage now makes its ghostly return to nature. It was once the tough, independent kind of community that Annie Proulx had in mind when she named it Ennis's boyhood home. Now it is home to coyotes and weeds. Visitors here can feel a special closeness to the setting which shaped the life and fate of *Brokeback's* most celebrated character.

We do not know why Sage is often overlooked by *Brokeback* visitors to Wyoming. Doing so is a big mistake.

In addition to its considerable *Brokeback* credentials, Sage is well known to western ghost town photographers and aficionados.

See:

http://ghost-town-photography.com/wyoming_ghost_towns.htm

Important:

Wear boots and protective gear. Snakes may be active in this area. Always obtain appropriate permission before entering private property. Those planning to enter old buildings should bring flashlights and be cautious of loose or missing floorboards and railings.

Quotation:

"Ennis del Mar from around Sage, near the Utah line." [1]

[1] *Brokeback Mountain - Story to Screenplay* by Annie Proulx, Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana (Scribner) ISBN-13: 978-0-7432-9416-4, page 1.

Pictures of surrounding area:





Revised 30 August 2010

“McMurtry’s *Brokeback*” Area



Contributed photo



Contributed photo

Location: US-89, between the Salt River Pass and Hoback Junction, WY

GPS: 42d 30m 23s -110d 54m 30s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

From I-80 take WY Exit 5, “Front Street / WY-89 N”

Follow WY-89, UT-16, UT-30, and WY-89 for 50.0 miles.

Turn Left (N) onto US-30; go 29.6 miles.

Bear Right (N) onto WY-89, ID-61; go 10.1 miles.

Turn Right (E) onto US-89; go 16 miles to the Salt River Pass overlook.

From here the area extends for approximately 45 miles along US-89.

Remarks:

Just where is Annie Proulx’s magical, mystery mountain? Larry McMurtry’s vast knowledge of western history and lore led him to conclude that it was in the picturesque Star Valley region near the Wyoming / Idaho border. [1] Here, verdant rolling hills and rugged mountains encircle tiny towns with names like Alpine, Etna, Afton, and Smoot. He has an excellent argument. Forest Service grazing allotments, Basque heritage, and large-scale sheep ranching are especially prominent elements in the life and times of this region.

Stop and enjoy the scenic Salt River Pass just south of Smoot. The Salt River Range [2] is visible to the east between Afton and Etna.

Brokeback’s elk was raised on a farm in Canada; its valuable antlers were carefully cultivated for the production of Chinese aphrodisiacs. By contrast, antlers from its Wyoming cousins, “thousands of ’em,” have been used locally to form exotic arches and monumental structures. Notable examples of “antler architecture” can be found in Afton and Jackson.

See:

<http://www.greater-yellowstone.com/Swan-Valley/index.htm>

<http://www.jacksonholechamber.com/>

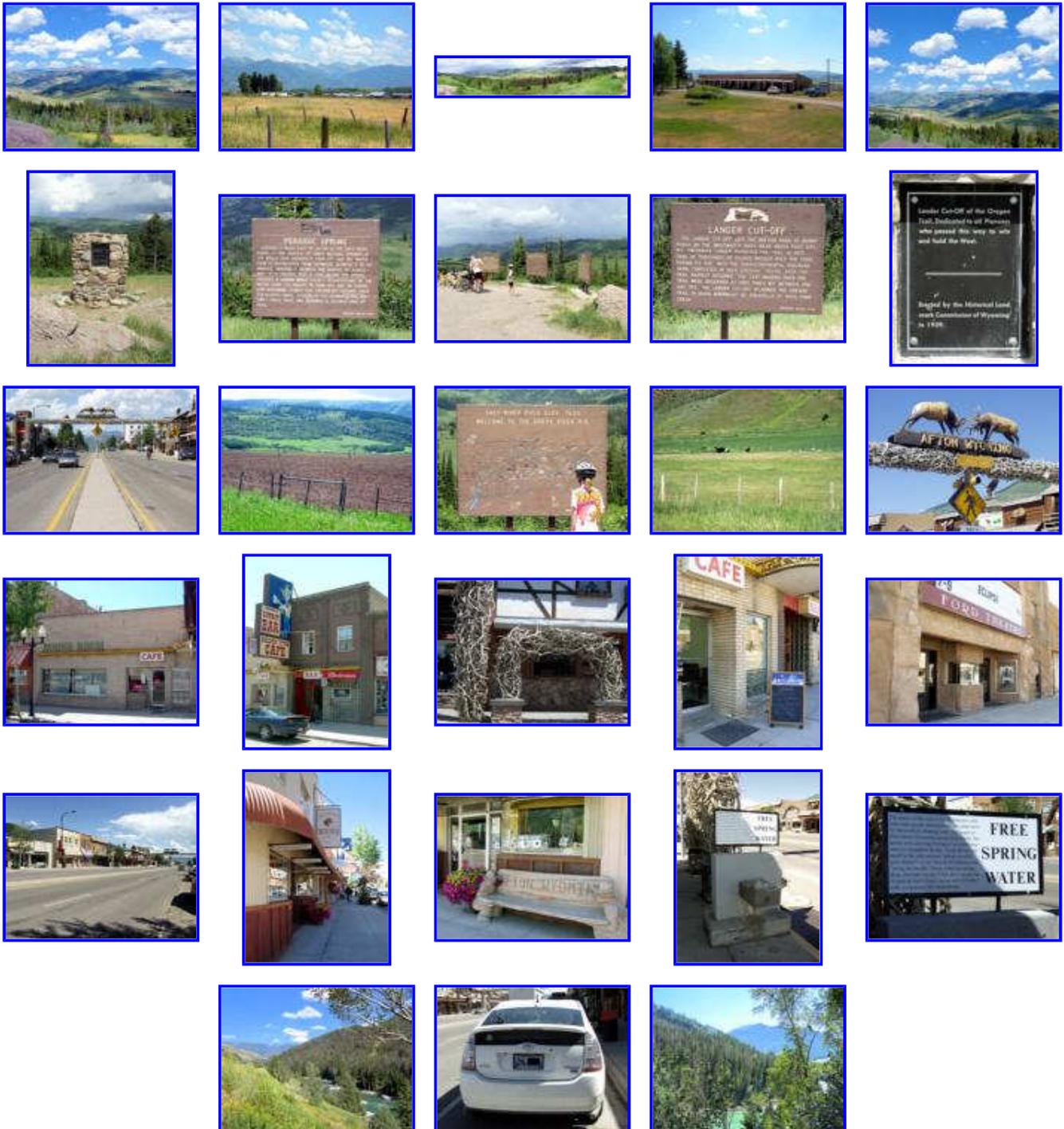
Quotation:

“Larry has a different idea of where it is,” Lee said “He believes it’s an area just south of the Tetons, where there is actually more business for sheep herding” [1]

[1] "Where in Wyoming," *Chicago Tribune*, Robert K. Elder, January 4, 2006, Tempo section, page 1.

[2] "Years on years they worked their way through the high meadows and mountain drainages ... Salt River Range, into the Wind Rivers over and again ..." *Brokeback Mountain - Story to Screenplay* by Annie Proulx, Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana (Scribner) ISBN-13: 978-0-7432-9416-4, page 17.

Pictures of surrounding area:



Revised 13 March 2011

Salt River Range



Contributed photo



Contributed photo

Location: East of Alpine, WY

GPS: 43d 8m 47s -110d 52m 22s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

From I-80 take WY Exit 5, "Front Street / WY-89 N"
Follow WY-89, UT-16, UT-30, and WY-89 for 50.0 miles.
Turn Left (N) onto US-30; go 29.6 miles.
Bear Right (N) onto WY-89, ID-61; go 10.1 miles.
Turn Right (E) onto US-89; go 59.2 miles to Alpine, WY.

Remarks:

The Salt River Range, located in western Wyoming, is one of 17 mountain ranges mentioned by Annie Proulx in her "Catalogue Aria" [1] of locations where Ennis and Jack spent time together over their 20 years of "high-altitude fucks." [2] It is one of several mountain ranges within the Bridger-Teton National Forest, an area of more than 3.4 million acres (5,300 sq. miles; 13,800 sq. km).

The Salt River Range spans a distance of nearly 55 miles (88 km), from the village of Alpine, WY, (population 550) in the north, to Smoot, WY, in the south. It is bounded on the west by the Salt River and on the east by the Greys River and the Wyoming Range. The Salt River gets its name from the naturally occurring salt deposits located along its banks. Early Native Americans discovered these deposits and exploited them for their own needs, as did later Wyoming settlers.

The Salt River Range and the Wyoming Range are part of a complex watershed. The Salt River flows north into the eastern portion of the Palisades Reservoir about 2 miles (3 km) southwest of Alpine. The Greys River also flows north and is joined by the Little Greys River about 8 miles (13 km) east of Alpine. The river then flows northwest and joins the Snake River just north of Alpine. The Snake River also flows into the Palisades Reservoir.

Alpine is a convenient starting point for anyone wishing to explore these mountains and rivers. Motel accommodations are available in "downtown" Alpine and scattered campsites can be found along the banks of the Greys / Little Greys Rivers east and southeast of Alpine. For the extreme adventurer, Jackson Hole Outfitters, of Alpine, can provide day-long horseback rides deep into the mountainous back country. For pictures taken during such a ride, see [Riding the Salt River Range in Albums](#).

See:

<http://www.3riversmotel.com/>

<http://www.jacksonholetrailrides.com/>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt_River_\(Wyoming\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt_River_(Wyoming))

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greys_River

[1] “Years on years they worked their way through the high meadows and mountain drainages ... Salt River Range, into the Wind Rivers over and again ...” *Brokeback Mountain - Story to Screenplay* by Annie Proulx, Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana (Scribner) ISBN-13: 978-0-7432-9416-4, page 17.

[2] *Ibid.*, page 21

Pictures of surrounding area:



Revised 16 March 2011

The Tetons



Contributed photo



Contributed photo

Location: Grand Teton National Park, Teton County, WY

GPS: 43d 32m 48s -110d 43m 58s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

From I-80 take WY Exit 5, "Front Street / WY-89 N"

Follow WY-89, UT-16, UT-30, and WY-89 for 50.0 miles.

Turn Left (N) onto US-30; go 29.6 miles.

Bear Right (N) onto WY-89, ID-61; go 10.1 miles.

Turn Right (E) onto US-89; go 101.4 miles to Grand Teton National Park.

Remarks:

Anyone scheduled to work in the magical Tetons would understandably hesitate before cancelling. Long before its designation as a National Park in the 1920s, these inspiring peaks awed all who saw them. Remains of ancient Native American fire pits document the presence of humans here some 6,000 years ago.

Ennis's concerns notwithstanding, today there is probably more fun than work going on here. Hiking, rafting, fishing, horseback riding, canoeing, skiing, snowmobiling, and camping opportunities abound. And, although they aren't *Brokeback* material, trendy Jackson to the south, and world-class Yellowstone Park to the north, are well worth exploring while you are in the neighborhood.

For fans of the vintage Western *Shane*, the Tetons are an especially significant place. Most of the scenes in the movie were filmed in the Teton Valley. The John and Thomas Alma [Moulton barns](#), probably the two most photographed barns in the U.S.A., are also nearby.

See:

<http://www.nps.gov/grte/>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Teton_National_Park

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_Teton

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Teton

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Owen_\(Wyoming\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Owen_(Wyoming))

Important:

Some roads are subject to seasonal closure. Hikers should consult park rangers, wear boots and protective gear, and bring ample water. Never leave valuables in a car at trailheads. Use caution; animal activity is common in this area, and in all mountain locations.

Quotation:

“Yeah, I think I’m supposed to be on a roundup down near the Tetons.”

Pictures of surrounding area:



Revised 15 September 2010

“Lee’s Brokeback” Area



Contributed photo



Contributed photo

Location: US-26 / 287 between Jackson Lake and Bull Lake Dam, WY

GPS: 43d 32m 53s -109d 38m 57s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

From US-191 at Grand Teton National Park,

Turn East onto US-26 / US-287.

From here, the area extends approximately 90 breathtaking miles along US-26 / US-287.

Remarks:

Ang Lee saw the enchanting Wind River Valley in December of 2003, and again during the following spring before production of the film commenced in Alberta: “... I found a place in between, which is my idea of Brokeback Mountain: it’s called Wind River, just east of Yellowstone, near Dubois. Wind River is a valley area [in western Wyoming], just below Wind River Mountain. It’s so beautiful, quiet” [1]

Make the impressive drive between Grand Teton National Park (Jackson Lake) and the Wind River Indian Reservation (Crowheart) during daylight hours. It is a special adventure. Among its many spectacles are the Togwotee Pass at the Continental Divide, Brooks Lake near Union Pass, and the windswept red canyon country southeast of Crowheart. Only fools fail to stop and appreciate the McKinley Avenue Overlook at Dubois. “Truth is,” the “Avenue” is only a bumpy dirt road, but the view it affords of “Lee’s Brokeback” is incomparable.

The arresting mountains to the north of the highway are the volcanic Absarokas, but the real geological star of this show is the Wind River Range, visible to the south between Burris and Lander. [2] The Wind Rivers form a scenic span of the Continental Divide, including eight peaks which rise over 13,500' (4,115 m). The largest glaciers of the U.S. Rocky Mountains are found here in the Wind Rivers, on the flanks of Wyoming’s highest mountain, Gannett Peak, at 13,804' (4,207 m).

The town of Dubois embraces the hoards of tourists that pass through its small streets *en route* to and from the nearby national parks. To pronounce the town’s name correctly, forget any French that you may happen to know, then try “DUE-boys.” We stopped for dinner at one of Dubois’ restaurants without any adverse consequences.

See:

<http://www.duboiswyoming.org/>

Quotation:

“... thought I ate somethin bad at that place in Dubois.” [3]

[1] “Where in Wyoming,” *Chicago Tribune*, Robert K. Elder, January 4, 2006, Tempo section, page 1.

[2] “Years on years they worked their way through the high meadows and mountain drainages ... the Absarokas ... into the Wind Rivers over and over again ... but never returning to Brokeback.”
Brokeback Mountain - Story to Screenplay by Annie Proulx, Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana (Scribner) ISBN-13: 978-0-7432-9416-4, page 17.

[3] *Ibid.*, page 13.

Pictures of surrounding area:





Revised 09 January 2011

Wind River Range



Contributed photo



Contributed photo

Location: Dickinson Park, West of Lander, WY

GPS: 42d 50m 19.83s -109d 7m 57.46s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

From Lander drive 14 miles NW on US-287 to Hines General Store, turn left on Trout Creek Road and go 4.5 miles to end of pavement. From there on it is a dirt road which winds up two different groups of switchbacks gaining 4,000' (1,220 m) of elevation in 15 miles. Leave with a full tank of gas and spare tire. This scenic 35 mile drive across the Wind River Indian Reservation into the Shoshone National Forest usually takes 1.5 hours from Lander; from Riverton add another 45 minutes.

Remarks:

The Wind River Range, located in western Wyoming, is one of 17 mountain ranges mentioned by Annie Proulx in her "Catalogue Aria" [1] of locations where Ennis and Jack spent time together over their 20 years of "high-altitude fucks." [2] The western slopes of the Wind River Range lie within the Bridger-Teton National Forest, an area of more than 3.4 million acres (5,300 sq. miles; 13,800 sq. km). The eastern slopes lie within the Shoshone National Forest, an area of nearly 2.5 million acres (3,786 sq. miles; 10,000 sq. km).

The Wind River Range spans a distance of nearly 100 miles (160 km), from near Dubois, WY, in the north, to near Lander, WY, in the south. The Wind River Range lies on the Continental Divide. Rivers west of the Divide flow into the Pacific Ocean. Rivers east of the Divide flow into the Atlantic Ocean. The Wind River is east of the Divide; water from it eventually flows into the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico.

Gannett Peak, 13,804' (4,208 m), is the highest peak in Wyoming. It is in the Wind River Range, about 70 miles (112 km) southeast of Grand Teton.

Both Dubois, to the north, and Lander, to the south, are convenient starting points for anyone wishing to explore the eastern slopes of the Wind River Range. Motel accommodations are readily available in both locations. Allen's Diamond 4 Ranch, located in the Wind River Range west of Lander, can provide week-long accommodations, and, for the extreme adventurer, guided horseback and overnight pack trips into the mountainous back country. For pictures taken during a day-long horseback ride, see [Riding the Wind River Range](#) in **Albums**.

See:

- <http://www.holidaylodgeland.com/>
- <http://www.diamond4ranch.com/>
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wind_River_Range
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Continental_Divide

Important:

You will need a tribal fishing license to use the road to Dickinson Park. These can be purchased in Lander at the Exxon station, in Dubois at Whiskey Mountain Tackle, in Crowheart at the Crowheart Exxon, in Riverton at Rocky Mountain Sports, or in Ft. Washakie at the Sinclair Station before driving up. The road is dirt / gravel with many switchbacks and hairpin turns; it is also in an area that is very isolated. If your vehicle can't stand it, don't attempt to drive it.

[1] "Years on years they worked their way through the high meadows and mountain drainages ... Salt River Range, into the Wind Rivers over and again ..." *Brokeback Mountain - Story to Screenplay* by Annie Proulx, Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana (Scribner) ISBN-13: 978-0-7432-9416-4, page 17.

[2] *Ibid.*, page 21

Pictures of surrounding area:



Revised 22 March 2011

Riverton Grocery Store



Contributed photo



Contributed photo

Location: 1200 W Main Street, Riverton, WY
GPS: 43d 1m 32s -108d 24m 31s
Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

Entering Riverton from the west, US-26 becomes Main Street. Smith's Food Center is to the left at 1200 W Main Street, between N Major Avenue and N 11th Street W.

Remarks:

Annie Proulx once told a reporter that she gets interesting story ideas while waiting in line at the grocery store. As such, we are not surprised that Alma and her second husband ended up working in one.

Unlike the film's vintage grocery, the store we found in Riverton is pretty modern. But, true to the film, it is an easy walk from the laundry, which is just down the street.

See:

<http://services.smithsfoodanddrug.com/mapquest/storedetails.aspx?recordId=70600183>

Quotation:

"She was working at a grocery store clerk job, saw she'd always have to work to keep ahead of the bills on what Ennis made." [1]

[1] *Brokeback Mountain - Story to Screenplay* by Annie Proulx, Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana (Scribner) ISBN-13: 978-0-7432-9416-4, page 15.

Pictures of surrounding area:



Riverton Laundry



Contributed photo



Contributed photo

Location: 611 W Main Street, Riverton, WY

GPS: 43d 1m 28s -108d 23m 53s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

Entering Riverton from the west, US-26 becomes Main Street.

The laundry is to the right (S) side at 611 W Main Street, one block east of the Seventh Street W intersection.

Remarks:

It is hard to miss Riverton's prominent laundry building and the tiny walk-up apartment above it. Coincidence or inspiration? Come visit it and decide for yourself. The laundry is now closed, as is the adjacent motel.

We stood outside of the laundry for a few minutes, taking pictures, when the apartment's occupant came out to greet us. Just as our fantasy was starting to get interesting, he asked, "Do you want to buy this place?"

Though the irony is undoubtedly lost on (or ignored by) the town's ambitious tourism promoters, Riverton bills itself as "The Rendezvous City."

See:

<http://www.riverton.wyoming.com/>

<http://www.rivertonchamber.org/>

Important:

Always obtain appropriate permission before entering private property.

Quotation:

"When the Hi-Top folded they moved to a small apartment in Riverton up over a laundry." [1]

[1] *Brokeback Mountain - Story to Screenplay* by Annie Proulx, Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana (Scribner) ISBN-13: 978-0-7432-9416-4, page 9.

Pictures of surrounding area:



Revised 07 October 2010

Riverton Methodist Church



Contributed photo



Contributed photo

Location: 1116 W Park Avenue, Riverton, WY

GPS: 43d 1m 37s -108d 24m 35s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

Entering Riverton from the west, US-26 becomes Main Street.
Turn Left (N) onto N 11th Street W; go 0.1 mile to W Park Avenue.
Riverton United Methodist Church is ahead at 1116 W Park Avenue.

Remarks:

From the looks of this place, Alma Jr.'s wedding must have been "real nice." Standing here, it is very easy to picture Monroe, dressed in his smartest apron, punch ladle in hand, presiding over the chafing dishes, finger sandwiches, condiments, and rented cutlery.

Although we don't doubt that Kate Mara's memorable articulation of the word "Methodist" ("METH uh dist") is an authentic Wyoming pronunciation, none of several locals we asked about the word followed her example.

See:

<http://archives.umc.org/Directory/ChurchDetails.asp?mid=222&FAC=74362>

Quotation:

"The weddin'll be June 5th at the Methodist Church. Jenny'll be singin', and Monroe is gonna cater the reception."

Pictures of surrounding area:



Revised 21 March 2009

Riverton Post Office



Contributed photo



Contributed photo

Location: 501 E Main Street, Riverton, WY

GPS: 43d 1m 28s -108d 23m 5s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

Entering Riverton from the west, US-26 becomes Main Street.

The post office is to the right, one block east of the Broadway Avenue intersection, at 501 E Main Street.

Remarks:

Riverton's post office is home to the much-celebrated 1942 mural, "Lambing Time," by American artist George Vander Sluis (1915-1984). It shows two herders, one with a white hat, the other a dark one, tending sheep and lambs on a ranch. It is evocative of the regionalist style which emerged during the Great Depression and enjoyed a revival during World War II. Vander Sluis's work enjoyed a degree of prominence and has been shown in major American museums, among them the Metropolitan, the Whitney, and the Corcoran. Of course, it is the subject matter of the Riverton Post Office mural that draws us here.

After you are done admiring and photographing the mural that somehow anticipated an international cultural phenomenon more than 60 years later, purchase a blank postcard or two from the friendly clerk, who will gladly hand-cancel them "Riverton, WY 82501" for you. You can even mail a card to Jake Gyllenhaal from here, although your card may not get the same results that Ennis's did.

See:

http://www.askart.com/askart/v/george_j_vander_sluis/george_j_vander_sluis.aspx

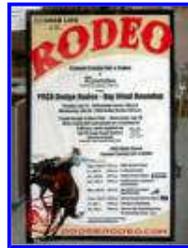
<http://www.wpamurals.com/riverton.htm>

Quotation:

"ENNIS comes out of the little post office, casually shuffling through a handful of mail." [1]

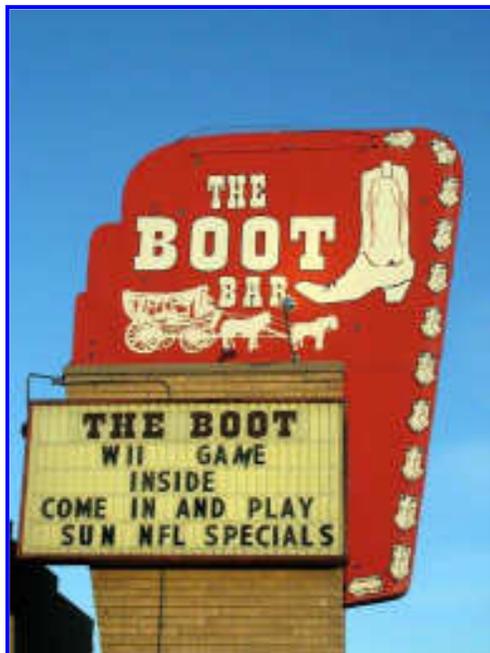
[1] *Brokeback Mountain* Screenplay, April 16, 2004 white pages with May 5, 2004 blue page revisions, Scene 148, page 101.

Pictures of surrounding area:



Revised 07 October 2010

Riverton Boot Bar



Contributed photo



Contributed photo

Location: 702 E Main Street, Riverton, WY

GPS: 43d 1m 29.47s -108d 22m 54.83s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

WY-789 (Federal Boulevard) and US-26 (E Main Street) intersect in downtown Riverton. The Boot Bar is a block east of the intersection on the north side of E Main Street, two blocks east of the post office.

Remarks:

To prepare for her work with the *Brokeback* cast, dialect coach Joy Ellison went to Riverton where she paid a visit to this “roughneck bar.” With her were Michelle Williams and a hidden tape recorder. Inside, they “just started asking questions about the town and what had changed.” The recordings, and Ellison's notes, gave her the tools she needed to bring a widely acclaimed level of authenticity to the actors’ diction.

See:

<http://www.smithmag.net/obsessions/2006/03/01/brokeback-mountains-dialect-coach/>

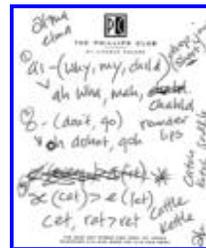
Important:

Obtain permission before photographing bar patrons.

Quotation:

“I held my beer up and leaned my elbow on the bar”

Pictures of surrounding area:



Revised 25 March 2013

Shoshoni Bar



Contributed photo



Contributed photo

Location: Lucky 5 Lounge, 205 E Second Street, Shoshoni, WY

GPS: 43d 14m 7s -108d 6m 31s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

Entering Shoshoni from the west, US-26 becomes E Second Street.

The Lucky 5 Lounge is to the right at 205 E Second Street, between Wyoming and Main Streets.

Remarks:

You'll find lots and lots of western grit here at Shoshoni's Lucky 5 Lounge. Like most of Shoshoni, the luck seems to have blown away, but this place manages to survive.

Some believe that Ang Lee's "Signal" was influenced by this decaying Wyoming town. If it was, the Lucky 5 Lounge was a likely model for the Signal Bar. It has been here for a long while; every surface, furnishing, fixture, appliance, utensil, washroom, container, window, door, and patron there is extremely worn.

Did Lee actually spend time in Shoshoni as he prepared to make his masterpiece? We asked the three Lucky 5 patrons who happened to be there at the time of our brief (10 a.m.) visit. None knew. In fact, we are pretty certain that none of them knew Ang Lee from Bruce Lee, or Annabel Lee, or Robert E. Lee.

See:

<http://www.windrivercountry.com/other/shoshonifrontpage.html>

Important:

Obtain permission before photographing bar patrons.

Quotation:

"They found a bar and drank beer through the afternoon, Jack telling Ennis about a lightning storm on the mountain ..." [1]

[1] *Brokeback Mountain - Story to Screenplay* by Annie Proulx, Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana (Scribner) ISBN-13: 978-0-7432-9416-4, page 3.

Pictures of surrounding area:



Revised 06 November 2010

Shoshoni Gas Station



Contributed photo



Contributed photo

Location: 306 E Second Street, Shoshoni, WY

GPS: 43d 14m 8s -108d 6m 27s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

Entering Shoshoni from the west, US-26 becomes E Second Street.

The Greasy Wrench is to the left, at the corner of Main Street and E Second Street.

Remarks:

Although we were thinking of Signal during our Shoshoni visit, the derelict "Greasy Wrench" tire and auto repair shop captured our imagination. One of Shoshoni's few remaining businesses, the Greasy Wrench was disposing of its excess tools at a sidewalk sale on the day we passed by. Among them was a collection of tire irons.

Important:

Always obtain appropriate permission before entering private property.

Quotation:

"Jack's truck pulls up to the dirt lot next to the gas station. A mechanic, tire jack in hand, fiddling with a car, takes a beer from his buddy, who sits on a tire nearby. They both watch as Randall gets out of the truck and walks to his own truck parked in the lot, waving back at Jack. The mechanic trades glances with his friend." [1]

[1] *Brokeback Mountain* Screenplay, April 16, 2004 white pages with May 5, 2004 blue page revisions, Scene 147a, page 100.

Pictures of surrounding area:





Revised 06 November 2010

Shoshoni Rail Track and Trailer Office



Contributed photo



Contributed photo

Location: SW of W First Street and Muskrat Road, Shoshoni, WY

GPS: 43d 14m 3s -108d 6m 34s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

Entering Shoshoni from the west, US-26 becomes E Second Street.
Turn Right (S) on Wyoming Street (which becomes Muskrat Road).
Proceed 0.15 mile to the rail track. The trailers are to the right (W).

Remarks:

Wyoming has a seemingly limitless inventory of rusting old trailers. Plenty of examples can be found here in Shoshoni.

Although Lee's famous image of Ennis, shot through a passing train, was inspired by what he found at Cowley, Alberta, all of its elements—tracks, trains, and trailers—can be found here in Shoshoni.

See:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shoshoni,_Wyoming

Important:

Always obtain appropriate permission before entering private property.

Quotation:

“They shook hands in the choky little trailer office in front of a table littered with scribbled papers, a Bakelite ashtray brimming with stubs.” [1]

[1] *Brokeback Mountain - Story to Screenplay* by Annie Proulx, Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana (Scribner) ISBN-13: 978-0-7432-9416-4, page 2.

Pictures of surrounding area:

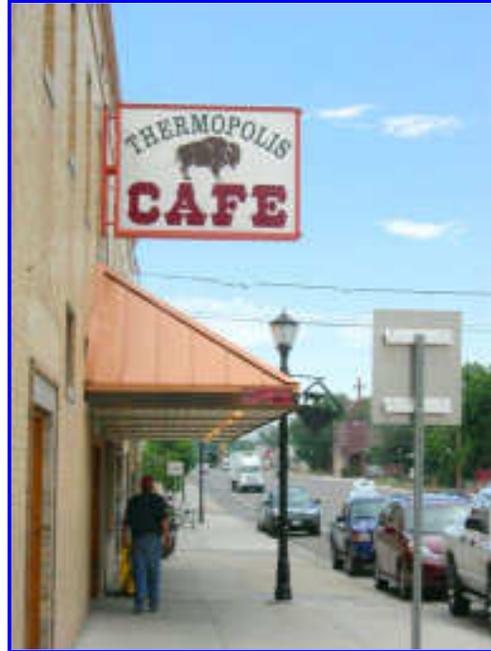


Revised 23 November 2010

Thermopolis



Contributed photo



Contributed photo

Location: US-20, 34 miles S of Worland, WY

GPS: 43d 38m 46.7s -108d 12m 43.0s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

Thermopolis is on US-20, 32 miles north of Shoshoni and 34 miles south of Worland.

Remarks:

Thermopolis, once known to Native Americans as the “place of the smoking waters,” boasts the world’s largest complex of mineral springs. You can soak here amidst a wonderland of pools, mineral terraces, and bridges at Hot Springs State Park. (Free; bathing suit required.) Hiking among the mineral pools and formations is another fun option here.

A rancher monument in the downtown area of Thermopolis underscores the important relationship between the land and the people of this area. Note the associated display of livestock brands from area ranches.

Those anxious to view the ranges mentioned in Proulx’s “Catalogue Aria” of mountains visited by Ennis and Jack [1] can catch a glimpse of the Owl Creek Mountains by going 0.9 mile west from Thermopolis on WY-120. The Owl Creeks are on the left (south) side. (Reference: 43d 38m 45s, -108d 13m 47s)

See:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wind_River_Canyon

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bighorn_River

<http://www.wind-river.org/info/scenicbyways/windrivercanyon.php>

<http://www.thermopolis.com/>

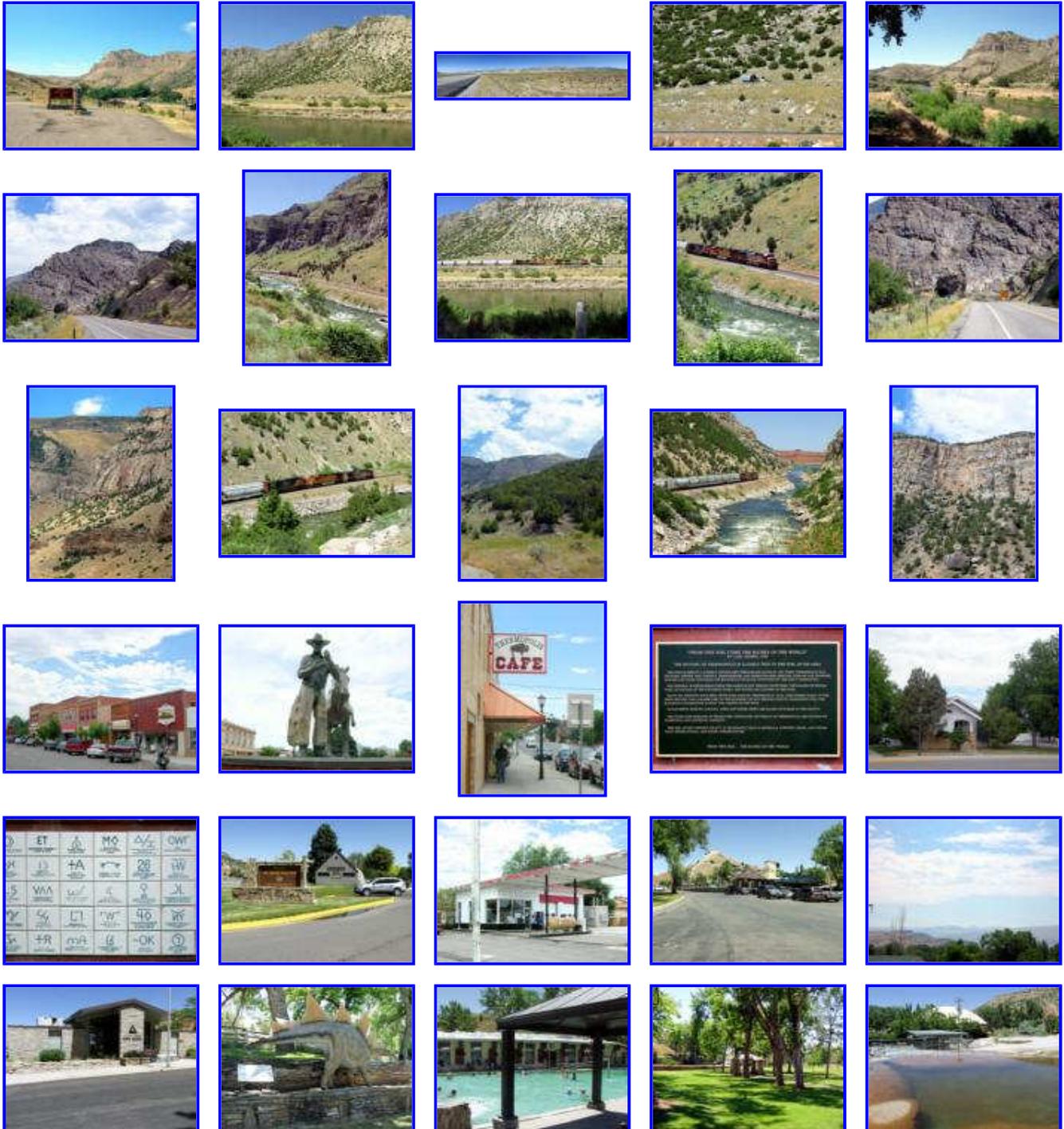
<http://wyoparks.state.wy.us/Site/SiteInfo.asp?siteID=9>

Important:

Do not leave valuables in a parked car. Consult a physician before using mineral springs; take appropriate precautions.

[1] "Years on years they worked their way through the high meadows and mountain drainages, horse-packing into the Big Horns, Medicine Bows, south end of the Gallatins, Absarokas, Granites, Owl Creeks, the Bridger-Teton Range, the Freezeouts and the Shirleys, Ferrises and the Rattlesnakes, Salt River Range, into the Wind Rivers over and again, the Sierra Madres, Gros Ventres, the Washakies, Laramies, but never returning to Brokeback." *Brokeback Mountain - Story to Screenplay* by Annie Proulx, Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana (Scribner) ISBN-13: 978-0-7432-9416-4, page 17.

Pictures of surrounding area:



Worland



Contributed photo



Contributed photo

Location: US-20, 34 miles N of Thermopolis, WY

GPS: 44d 1m 1s -107d 57m 20s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

Worland is 34.0 miles north of Thermopolis on US-20, and 26.4 miles west of Ten Sleep on US-16.

Remarks:

Ennis and his brother worked on a ranch here until K.E. got married. It was then that Ennis left for Signal. Presumably, Alma Beers lived near Worland, as well.

For countless generations the Crow, Sioux, Arapahoe, and, later, the Shoshone hunted abundant herds of buffalo in this Big Horn basin region. In 1900, pioneer "Dad" Worland founded a stage stop here along the Bridger Trail. A few years later, a small community of settlers launched an ambitious project to dig miles of irrigation canals, bringing water to the nascent town. In 1906, when railroad tracks were laid on the opposite side of the Big Horn River, the hearty Worlanders decided to move the town's buildings across the frozen river by sliding its buildings on skids.

You might want to see Peter Toth's Native American monument on display in front of the courthouse here. It is #36 on the nationwide "Trail of the Whispering Giants." A metal sculpture depicting western settlers is located across the street in Pioneer Park.

See:

<http://www.worlandchamber.com/>

Quotation:

"Me and my brother, we went and got ourselves some work on a ranch up near Worland 'til I was 19, and then he got married. And, uh, no more room for me. And that's how come me end up here."

Pictures of surrounding area:



Revised 29 November 2010

Signal Butte



Contributed photo



Contributed photo

Location: N of US-16, 1.45 miles W of Ten Sleep, WY

GPS: 44d 1m 40s -107d 28m 1s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

Signal Butte is on the north side of US-16, 24.8 miles east of Worland (1.45 miles west of Ten Sleep).

Remarks:

Signal Butte is a colorful escarpment just west of the village of Ten Sleep. Although its claim to *Brokeback* status is limited to its very familiar name, Signal Butte is a striking formation in a state that is brimming with striking land formations.

See:

<http://www.mountainzone.com/mountains/detail.asp?fid=4338456>

Important:

Always obtain appropriate permission before entering private property.

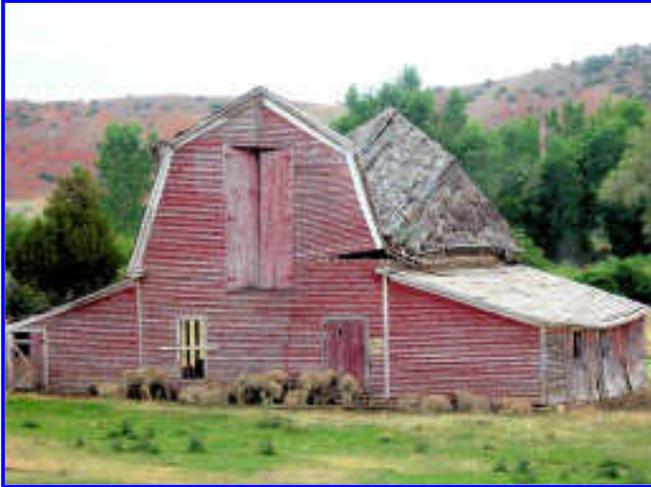
Pictures of surrounding area:



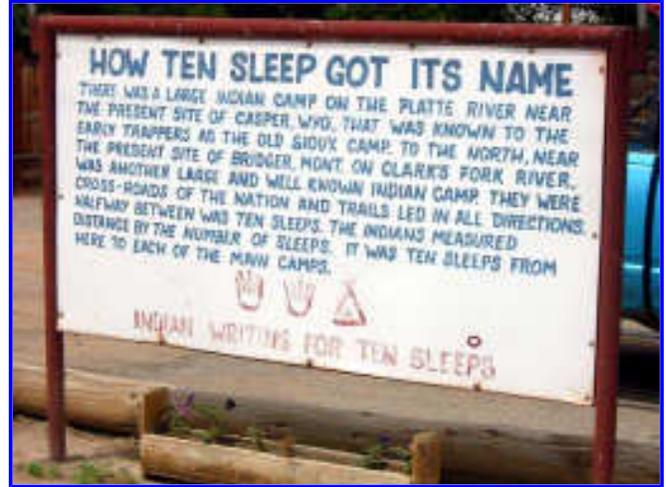


Revised 29 November 2010

Ten Sleep



Contributed photo



Contributed photo

Location: US-16, 26.4 miles E of Worland, WY

GPS: 44d 2m 2 -107d 27m 0s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

From Worland, go 26.4 miles east on US-16 to the WY-434 intersection.

Remarks:

Ang Lee and Judy Becker passed through this quintessential western town of Ten Sleep (sometimes "Tensleep") during their survey of Wyoming locations in the spring of 2004. Its major attraction is its location near the head of the glorious Ten Sleep Canyon.

Ten Sleep's unusual name reflects the historical travel time, and hence the distance, to ancestral Sioux camps near Fort Laramie, Yellowstone Park, and southern Montana. The area has an intriguing modern history, including a period of extreme lawlessness during which powerful cattle interests took on the smaller-scale sheep ranchers in the famous range wars.

See:

<http://www.wyomingbnb-ranchrec.com/City.TenSleep.html>

Pictures of surrounding area:



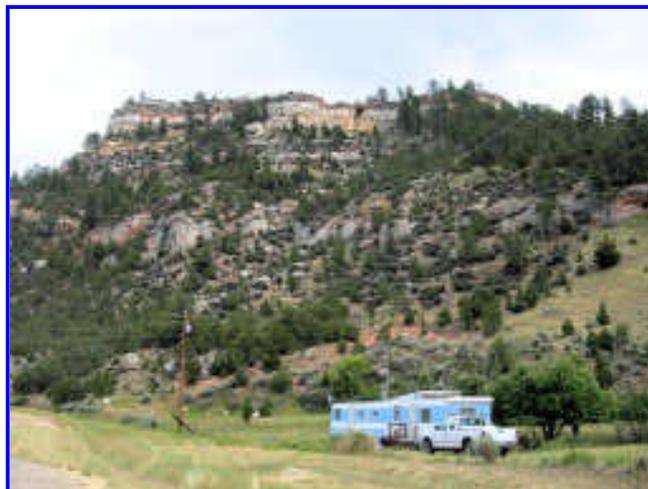


Revised 29 November 2010

Ten Sleep Canyon



Contributed photo



Contributed photo

Location: US-16 between Ten Sleep and Buffalo, WY

GPS: 44d 5m 10s -107d 18m 39s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

From Worland, go 26.4 miles east on US-16 to Ten Sleep. The awesome Ten Sleep Canyon area extends approximately 64 miles along US-16, from Ten Sleep to Buffalo.

Remarks:

Annie Proulx has said again and again that her fiction arises from the places she writes about. Ten Sleep Canyon is an inspiration to all who get to see it.

The road from Ten Sleep to Buffalo is the justifiably famous Cloud Peak Scenic Byway. Captivating in every way, the Canyon begins as a small creek bed and grows to massive gorges which handily dwarf the landscape around them. Allow yourself time to enjoy the flora, and the impressive geology, of this rugged and inspiring area.

See:

<http://www.wyomingtalesandtrails.com/10sleepcan2.html>

Important:

Some roads are subject to seasonal closure. Hikers should wear boots and protective gear, and bring ample water. Never leave valuables in a car at trailheads. Use caution; animal activity is common in this area, and in all mountain locations.

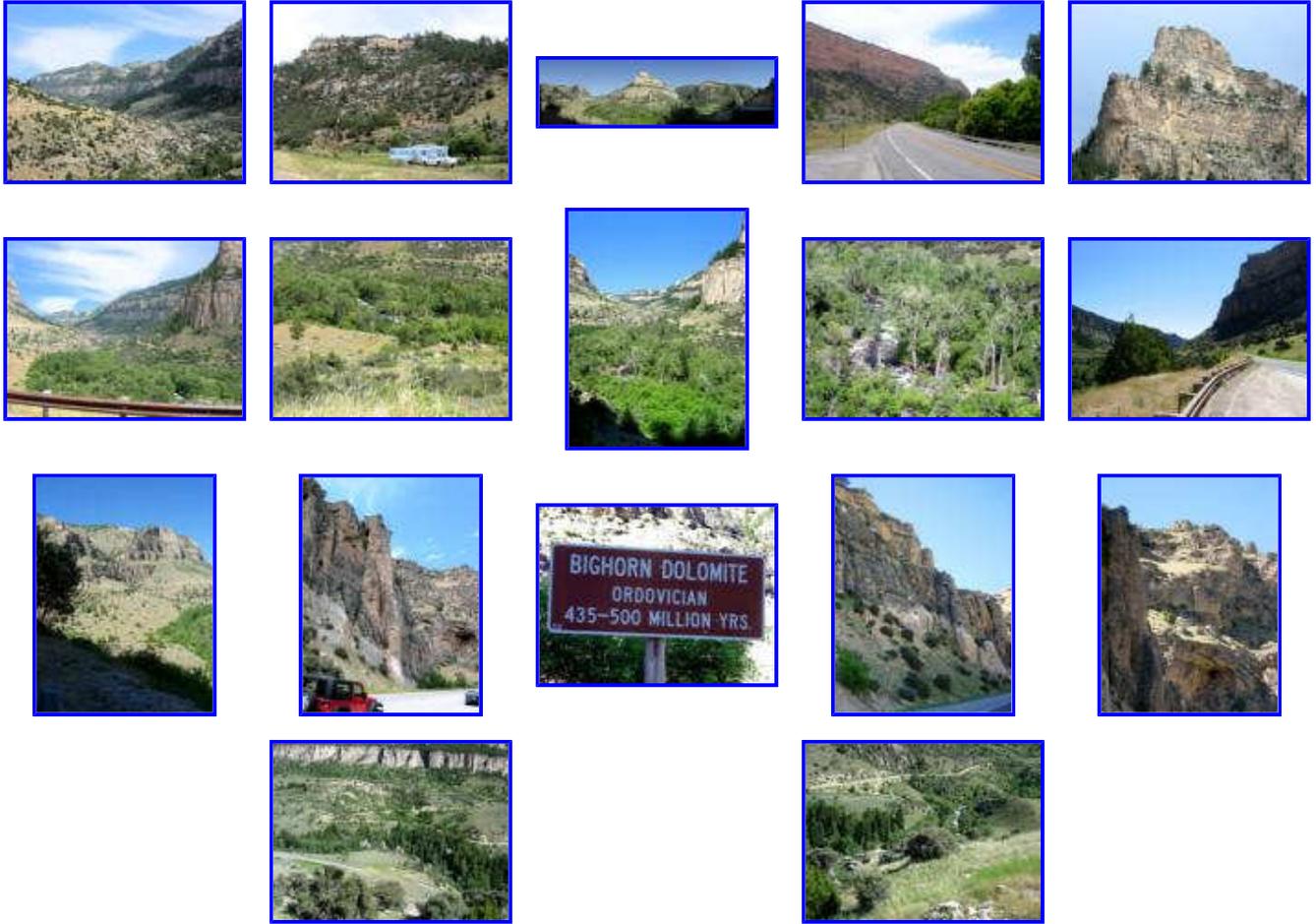
Quotation:

“The Wyoming landscape, like human behavior, is extremely complex, and I think the basic basin-and-range topography, the mix of high plains, forested mountains, desert, highways and dirt roads, with all that such varied landscape can mean psychologically, is expressed in both the story and the film.” [1]

[1] Annie Proulx interview, *Planet Jackson Hole*, December 7, 2005, page 12,

http://www.planetjh.com/music_arts_culture/A_100138.aspx

Pictures of surrounding area:



Revised 04 December 2010

Brokenback Mountain



Contributed photo



Contributed photo

Location: Bighorn National Forest, Bighorn County, WY

GPS: 44d 12m 1s -107d 15m 44s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

Follow US-16 for 17 miles east of Ten Sleep (48 miles west of Buffalo).

Turn Left (W) at the “Deerhaven Lodge” and “West Tensleep Road” signs onto Deer Haven Lodge Road (aka Bower Road, Tyrrel Ranger Station Road, Tensleep Road). Go 1.2 miles to the fork. (Reference: 44d 10m 58s, 107d 15m 11s)

Bear Left (W) at the fork onto Road 24; go 1.7 miles to the Road 411 junction. (Reference: 44d 11m 14s, 107d 16m 19s)

[If you do not have a high profile vehicle, or if you want to enjoy the approximately 2 mile hike on this gentle grade, leave your vehicle here.]

Turn Right (NE) onto Road 411; go 1.6 miles. Stop near the crest of the hill where the rock outcropping, livestock watering tank, and three-post frame are to your left. You’ll find a worn path through the scrub to your right. (Reference: 44d 12m 14s, 107d 15m 57s)

[Again, you can take a high profile vehicle beyond this point but this is also a good place to park and walk the remaining 1/3 mile to the top.]

Follow the worn path upward through the scrub, generally southeast, approx ¼ mile around Brokenback Mountain. Within a minute or two you will see the split rock uphill to your immediate right and the telecommunications tower ahead to your right.

The cache is in an area to the right of the split rock, between two smaller rocks and near the ground, at the very far northern end of the ridge. (Reference: 44d 12m 7s, 107d 15m 47s)

The gnarled tree, rock altar, and communications tower are on the opposite (south) side of the ridge. (Reference: 44d 12m 1s, 107d 15m 44s)

Remarks:

Annie Proulx never saw Brokenback Mountain, but that does not mean that you can't! A decade ago she adapted her short story title from this mountain's unusual name. Today, "Brokeback" is a household word around the world.

Pick a clear day for your adventure. Whether you drive the entire way or decide to hike the last couple of miles, you'll enjoy the pristine Wyoming mountain scenery. During the summer months you will encounter grazing Hereford and Angus cattle on Brokenback's open range.

Important:

This area is dear to members of the *Brokeback* community. Please treat it with respect and leave what you find here for others to enjoy.

Roads (especially 411) may require a four wheel drive / high-profile vehicle. Use caution. Some roads are subject to seasonal closure. Hikers should consult rangers, wear boots and protective gear, and bring ample water. Never leave valuables in a car at trailheads. You may encounter roaming livestock; drive slowly and be prepared to stop. Use caution; wild animal activity is common in this area, and in all mountain locations.

Quotation

"Brokeback is not a real place. There is, on a map I once saw, a Break Back Mountain in Wyoming which I have never seen, but the name worked on several levels and replaced half a dozen more pedestrian names I had been trying out." [1]

[1] Annie Proulx interview, *Planet Jackson Hole*, December 7, 2005, page 12, http://www.planetjh.com/music_arts_culture/A_100138.aspx

Pictures of surrounding area:



Revised 18 December 2010

Brokenback Mountain Summit



Contributed photo



Contributed photo

Location: Bighorn National Forest, Bighorn County, WY

GPS: 44d 12m 1s -107d 15m 44s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

Follow US-16 for 17 miles east of Ten Sleep (48 miles west of Buffalo).

Turn Left (W) at the “Deerhaven Lodge” and “West Tensleep Road” signs onto Deer Haven Lodge Road (aka Bower Road, Tyrrel Ranger Station Road, Tensleep Road). Go 1.2 miles to the fork. (Reference: 44d 10m 58s, 107d 15m 11s)

Bear Left (W) at the fork onto Road 24; go 1.7 miles to the Road 411 junction. (Reference: 44d 11m 14s, 107d 16m 19s)

[If you do not have a high profile vehicle, or if you want to enjoy the approximately 2 mile hike on this gentle grade, leave your vehicle here.]

Turn Right (NE) onto Road 411; go 1.6 miles. Stop near the crest of the hill where the rock outcropping, livestock watering tank, and three-post frame are to your left. You’ll find a worn path through the scrub to your right. (Reference: 44d 12m 14s, 107d 15m 57s)

[Again, you can take a high profile vehicle beyond this point but this is also a good place to park and walk the remaining 1/3 mile to the top.]

Follow the worn path upward through the scrub, generally southeast, approx ¼ mile around Brokenback Mountain. Within a minute or two you will see the split rock uphill to your immediate right and the telecommunications tower ahead to your right.

The cache is in an area to the right of the split rock, between two smaller rocks and near the ground, at the very far northern end of the ridge. (Reference: 44d 12m 7s, 107d 15m 47s)

The gnarled tree, rock altar, and communications tower are on the opposite (south) side of the ridge. (Reference: 44d 12m 1s, 107d 15m 44s)

Remarks:

In a state rich in majestic mountains, how very strange that the most famous one of all is little more than a grassy knob. Indeed, you will have difficulty finding “Brokenback Mountain” on most maps.

Size matters. Or does it? Perhaps you had expected Brokenback, elevation 9,335' (2,845 m), to be more of a mountain. Nevertheless, loyal *Brokeback* pilgrims have been making the trek up here since 2006. Enjoy the mountain with a group or, better yet, share the perfect peace of this place with someone you love.

While you are here, look to the north and take in Cloud Peak, a picture-perfect 13,167' (4,013 m) snow-capped giant 13.3 miles away. Cloud Peak ranks 20th on Wyoming’s list of 33 mountains that are more than 13,000' (3,962 m) high. Unlike Brokenback, you really can buy a postcard of Cloud Peak!

Important:

This area is dear to members of the *Brokeback* community. Please treat it with respect and leave what you find here for others to enjoy.

Roads (especially 411) may require a four wheel drive / high-profile vehicle. Use caution. Some roads are subject to seasonal closure. Hikers should consult rangers, wear boots and protective gear, and bring ample water. Never leave valuables in a car at trailheads. You may encounter roaming livestock; drive slowly and be prepared to stop. Use caution; wild animal activity is common in this area, and in all mountain locations.

Quotation

“Tell you what, I know where Brokeback Mountain is.”

Pictures of surrounding area:



Revised 18 December 2010

Brokenback Mountain Cache



Contributed photo



Contributed photo

Location: Bighorn National Forest, Bighorn County, WY

GPS: 44d 12m 7s -107d 15m 47s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

Follow US-16 for 17 miles east of Ten Sleep (48 miles west of Buffalo).

Turn Left (W) at the “Deerhaven Lodge” and “West Tensleep Road” signs onto Deer Haven Lodge Road (aka Bower Road, Tyrrel Ranger Station Road, Tensleep Road). Go 1.2 miles to the fork. (Reference: 44d 10m 58s, 107d 15m 11s)

Bear Left (W) at the fork onto Road 24; go 1.7 miles to the Road 411 junction. (Reference: 44d 11m 14s, 107d 16m 19s)

[If you do not have a high profile vehicle, or if you want to enjoy the approximately 2 mile hike on this gentle grade, leave your vehicle here.]

Turn Right (NE) onto Road 411; go 1.6 miles. Stop near the crest of the hill where the rock outcropping, livestock watering tank, and three-post frame are to your left. You’ll find a worn path through the scrub to your right. (Reference: 44d 12m 14s, 107d 15m 57s)

[Again, you can take a high profile vehicle beyond this point but this is also a good place to park and walk the remaining 1/3 mile to the top.]

Follow the worn path upward through the scrub, generally southeast, approx ¼ mile around Brokenback Mountain. Within a minute or two you will see the split rock uphill to your immediate right and the telecommunications tower ahead to your right.

The cache is in an area to the right of the split rock, between two smaller rocks and near the ground, at the very far northern end of the ridge. (Reference: 44d 12m 7s, 107d 15m 47s)

The gnarled tree, rock altar, and communications tower are on the opposite (south) side of the ridge. (Reference: 44d 12m 1s, 107d 15m 44s)

Remarks:

It was an inspired act. Wyoming *Brokeback* enthusiast Dana placed a weather tight container atop Brokenback Mountain shortly after the film became the object of worldwide fascination in 2006. Since then, a diverse community of people have come from around the world to leave something special “up on Broke(n)back.”

Among the many touching items there as of this writing are personal and group photos, notes, letters, poetry, a fishing lure, harmonicas, printouts of website postings, foreign coins, whisky bottles, a soup box, cigarettes, a lighter, name tags, a mug, and various Heath Ledger and Matthew Shepard remembrances. The variety of items, and the creative genius they reflect, beautifully mirrors the diversity and the resourcefulness of the *Brokeback* community. A logbook records the thoughts, many of them quite poignant, of pilgrims to this spot.

The cache is, in itself, a work of art. It is a powerful focal point of honor, inspiration, and remembrance.

Important:

This area is dear to members of the *Brokeback* community. Please treat it with respect and leave what you find here for others to enjoy.

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Quotation

“He used to say he wanted his ashes scattered on Brokeback Mountain, but I wasn’t sure where that was.”

Pictures of surrounding area:

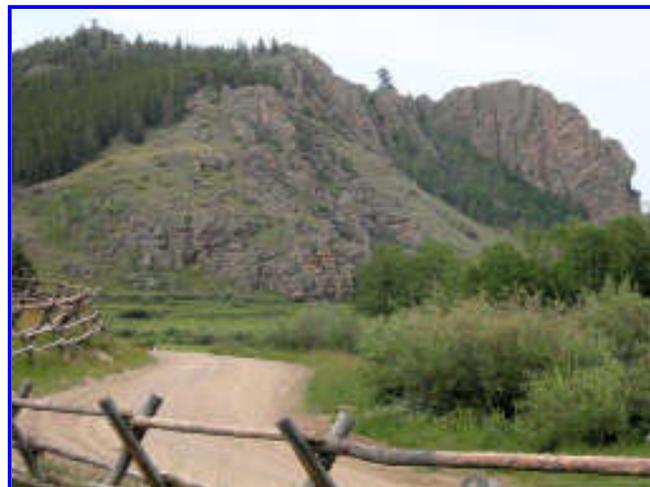


Revised 18 December 2010

Paradise Ranch



Contributed photo



Contributed photo

Location: N of US-16, 13 miles W of Buffalo, WY

GPS: 44d 20m 23s -106d 57m 47s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

50.7 miles east of Ten Sleep (13 miles west of Buffalo) on US-16, turn north onto Hunter Creek Road. (Reference: 44d 18m 56s, -106d 56m 20s)

Follow Hunter Creek Road 2.25 miles to the Paradise Ranch gate.

Remarks:

In late 2003, Ang Lee had agreed to make *Brokeback Mountain*, but he faced what every director loathes—money problems. *Brokeback Mountain* was a complex movie with over 80 locations, spanning almost two decades. Focus Features had raised money to make the film, but it would need to be shot quite frugally, in *Canada*.

Lee, who had never before made a film outside of its “real” location, resisted. He made an exploratory trip to Alberta where he met with prospective production manager Tom Benz and toured possible shooting locations there. Then he visited Wyoming, still hopeful of finding a way to make *Brokeback Mountain* there.

This is how Ang Lee came to stay at the exclusive Paradise Guest Ranch near Buffalo, Wyoming, in December 2003. Proprietors Clay and Leah Miller hosted the famous director and did their best to extol the virtues of Wyoming scenery, and their claim to the cowboy life and lore. Lee surveyed the area, especially the Wind River Valley to the west, where he found what he imagined to be the perfect *Brokeback* setting.

In the end, economics won out over the director’s passion for authenticity. Movie making requires infrastructure, services, equipment, and skilled professionals that simply do not exist in Wyoming. The film was made in Canada and, even then, the filmmakers ran short of money. “This is not a low-budget film,” he once complained to the producers, “this is a NO-budget film.”

A few of the locations Lee would later choose for filming, especially some of the ones at Buffalo Paddock (the Sheep Tangle, Dead Sheep Rock, Chilean Rock, and Coyote Hill), were plainly influenced by the stunning scenery he found surrounding the Paradise Guest Ranch. As you see, the rock outcroppings in both places are remarkably similar and consistently beautiful.

The stratospheric rates at the Paradise Guest Ranch make it unlikely that most of us will ever have the chance to stay there, but visitors to the area can see some of the ranch by driving along Hunter Creek Road to the gate. The next best thing? Spend a bit of time with their interesting website and learn more about this unique and exclusive place.

See:

<http://www.paradiseranch.com/>

Important:

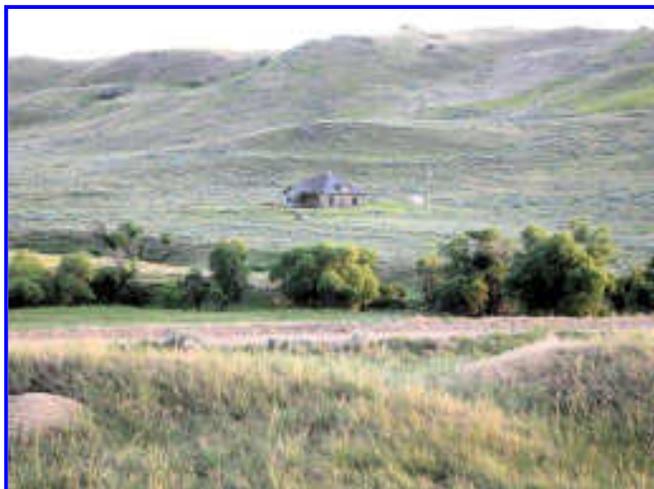
Always obtain appropriate permission before entering private property.

Pictures of surrounding area:



Revised 18 December 2010

The Old Childress Place



Contributed photo



Contributed photo

Location: Near East Ulm, WY
GPS: 44d 38m 33s -106d 32m 46s
Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

From Buffalo follow US-16 for 18.6 miles northeast to Ucross. (Reference: 44d 34m 0s, 106d 32m 04s).

Turn Left (NW) onto Coal Creek Road / County Road 195; go 7.1 miles, eventually crossing rail tracks, (Reference: 44d 39m 02s, 106d 35m 13s) to the “T” intersection.

Turn Right (E) onto Ulm Road (also known as Sheridan-Ulm-Clearmont Road); go 2.0 miles, passing the “East Ulm” railroad sign.

The driveway (which requires a high profile vehicle) and house are to your right, 0.2 mile south.

Remarks:

One in a long list of *Brokeback* paradoxes is that Annie Proulx never went to Lightning Flat, yet she saw her Twist Ranch long before she wrote about it.

Annie Proulx grew to love Wyoming as a resident writer at the Ucross Foundation, a 22,000 acre creative campus on the site of a working cattle ranch at Ucross, WY. She wrote much of *The Shipping News* there and continues to serve as a trustee emeritus of the foundation. The elite organization provides a supremely peaceful setting where carefully selected resident writers, artists, and composers are indulged with the luxuries of time, space, and quiet to do their work.

It was during her residency at Ucross that Proulx first saw “the old Childress place,” an isolated ranch house some 10 miles from the Ucross campus. Beautiful in its austerity and supremely true to its setting, it made an enduring impression, one that she would summon to paper in writing what many consider to be *Brokeback Mountain*’s most dramatic scene.

In 1998, when Proulx showed director Gus Van Sant potential Wyoming locations for his ill-fated *Brokeback Mountain* attempt, she arranged for him to see the old Childress place. Proulx’s apostrophe to the home that inspired the story’s dramatic climax can be found in one of the story’s countless subtleties, “Childress, Texas.”

The house has also been the subject of other artistic endeavors.

See:

<http://ethanjackson.net/index.php/site/works/C12>

<http://www.ucrossfoundation.org/index1.html>

Important:

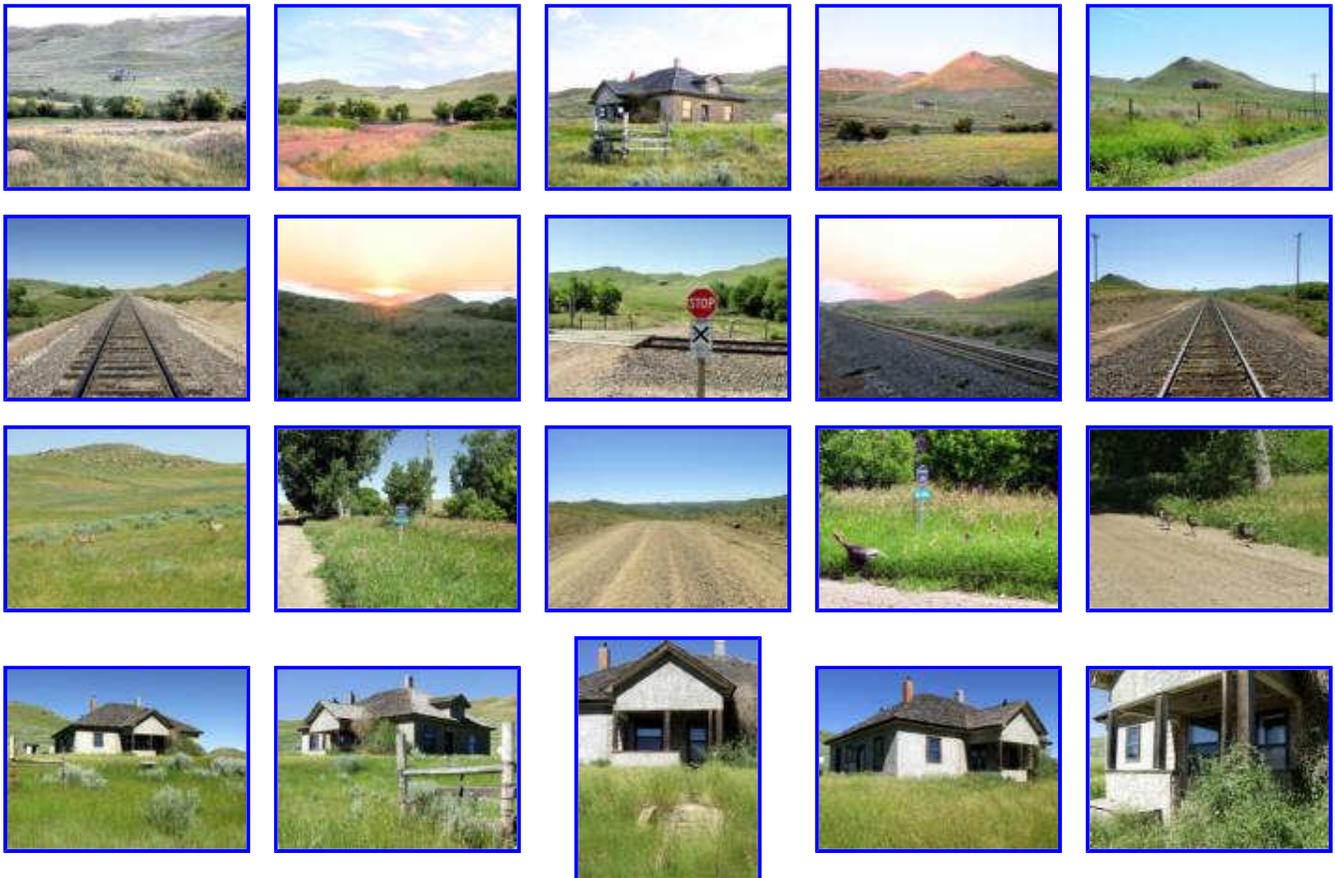
Rattlesnake activity is very common inside and around the building; take appropriate precautions. (One person we spoke with said he “killed three [rattlesnakes] during his last visit,” as if he was describing houseflies.) Wear boots and protective gear. Always obtain appropriate permission before entering private property. Those planning to enter old buildings should bring flashlights and be cautious of loose or missing floorboards and railings. Use caution; the driveway may require a four wheel drive / high-profile vehicle. The building has been the subject of pilferage and vandalism. Please leave all that you find intact out of respect for the history, both real and fictional, of this powerful place.

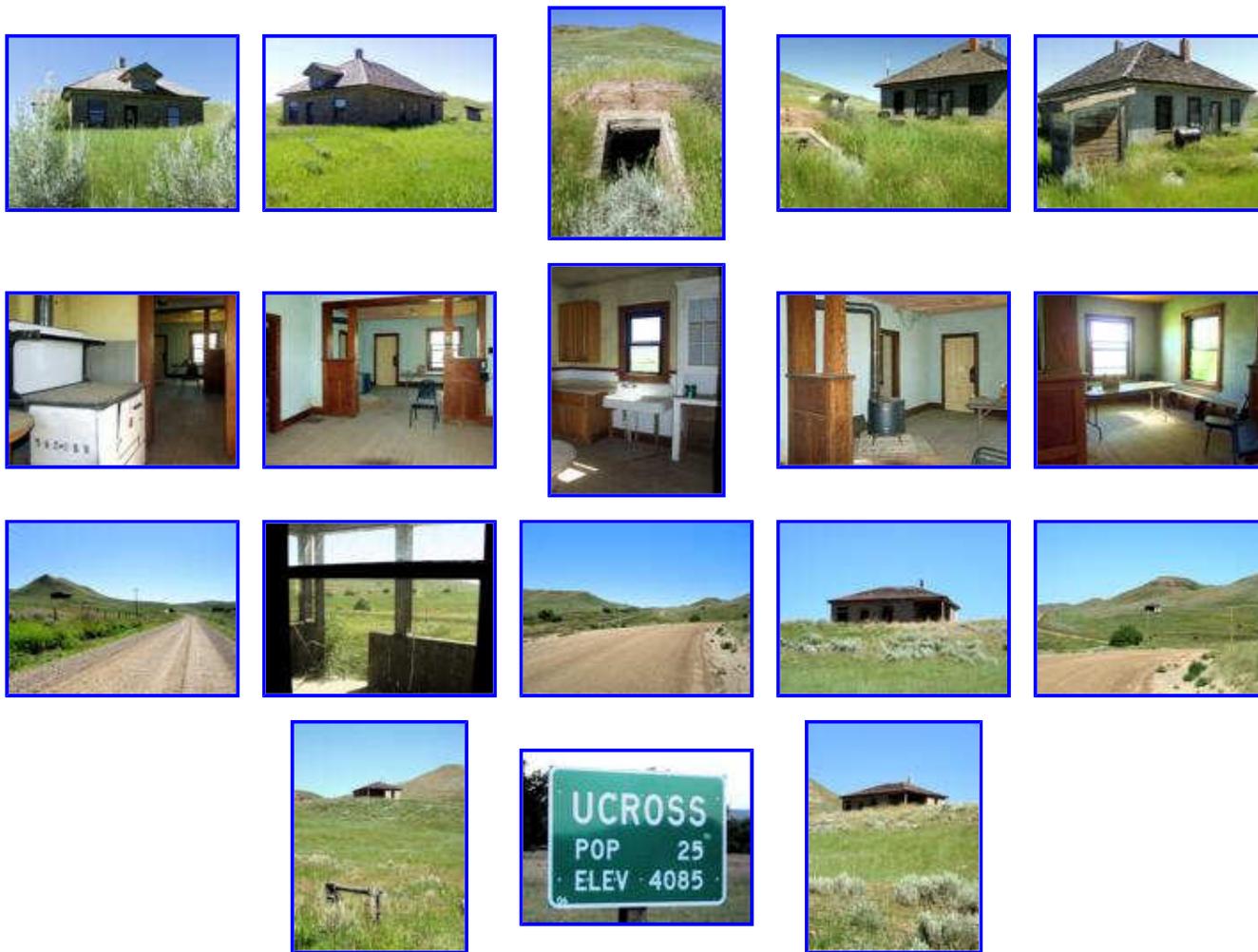
Quotation:

“We finished the day at a lonely ranch house outside Ucross called ‘the old Childress place.’” [1]

[1] *Brokeback Mountain - Story to Screenplay* by Annie Proulx, Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana (Scribner) ISBN-13: 978-0-7432-9416-4, page 135.

Pictures of surrounding area:





Revised 08 December 2010

The Mint Bar



Contributed photo



Contributed photo

Location: 151 N Main Street, Sheridan, WY

GPS: 44d 47m 56s -106d 57m 21s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

From I-90 take Exit 23, "Fifth Street / WY-336"

Turn West onto E 5th Street / US-87 / WY-336 / WYarno Road; go 1.0 mile.

Turn Left (S) onto N Main Street; go 0.6 mile.

151 N Main Street will be on the left. (The cross street is W Smith Street.)

Remarks:

High on every *Brokeback* pilgrim's list of Wyoming locations to experience first-hand is Sheridan's famed Mint Bar, the place where inspiration struck Annie Proulx. It is an exotic, lively, and evocative place which, thankfully, has stubbornly refused to bury its grand history.

The Mint Bar opened in 1907 and served as a saloon, community center, brothel, and casino for Sheridan area cowboys and ranchers. Although it "closed" during Prohibition, its business was unaffected.

The Mint Bar was last remodeled shortly after World War II, and they got it right! Inside you will find an 8-foot-4-inch rattlesnake hide (37 buttons), a stellar collection of animal taxidermy, a copy of Russell White Bear's map of the Custer Battle, and a set of Charles Belden western photos. So captivating, in fact, are the Belden photos that you will probably find yourself taking pictures of them (as we did!). The Mint's walls, lined in cedar and gnarled pine burl, are littered with fascinating western images and wildlife. Wall shingles bear hundreds of authentic local livestock brands. Hewn log booths shine with a high gloss, the product of decades of nightly polishing by leather and denim stretched taut over hard muscle.

Now a century old, the Mint has made a few concessions to modernity. No more chaps and Stetsons; most of the crowd at the Mint now wears caps and T-shirts. Yes, you can order whiskey ("a ditch") here, just try to forget that the guy next to you is sipping a rum and Coke. Beyond these annoyances, the ghostly vibe of the Mint's old west past is very palpable and utterly authentic.

Yes, of course you do; the pool table, which was very popular during our visit, is in the back.

See:

<http://www.wyomingtalesandtrails.com/sheridan2.html>

<http://ahc.uwyo.edu/onlinecollections/digital/belden/photo1-10.htm>

<http://ahc.uwyo.edu/onlinecollections/digital/belden/photo11-20.htm>

Important:

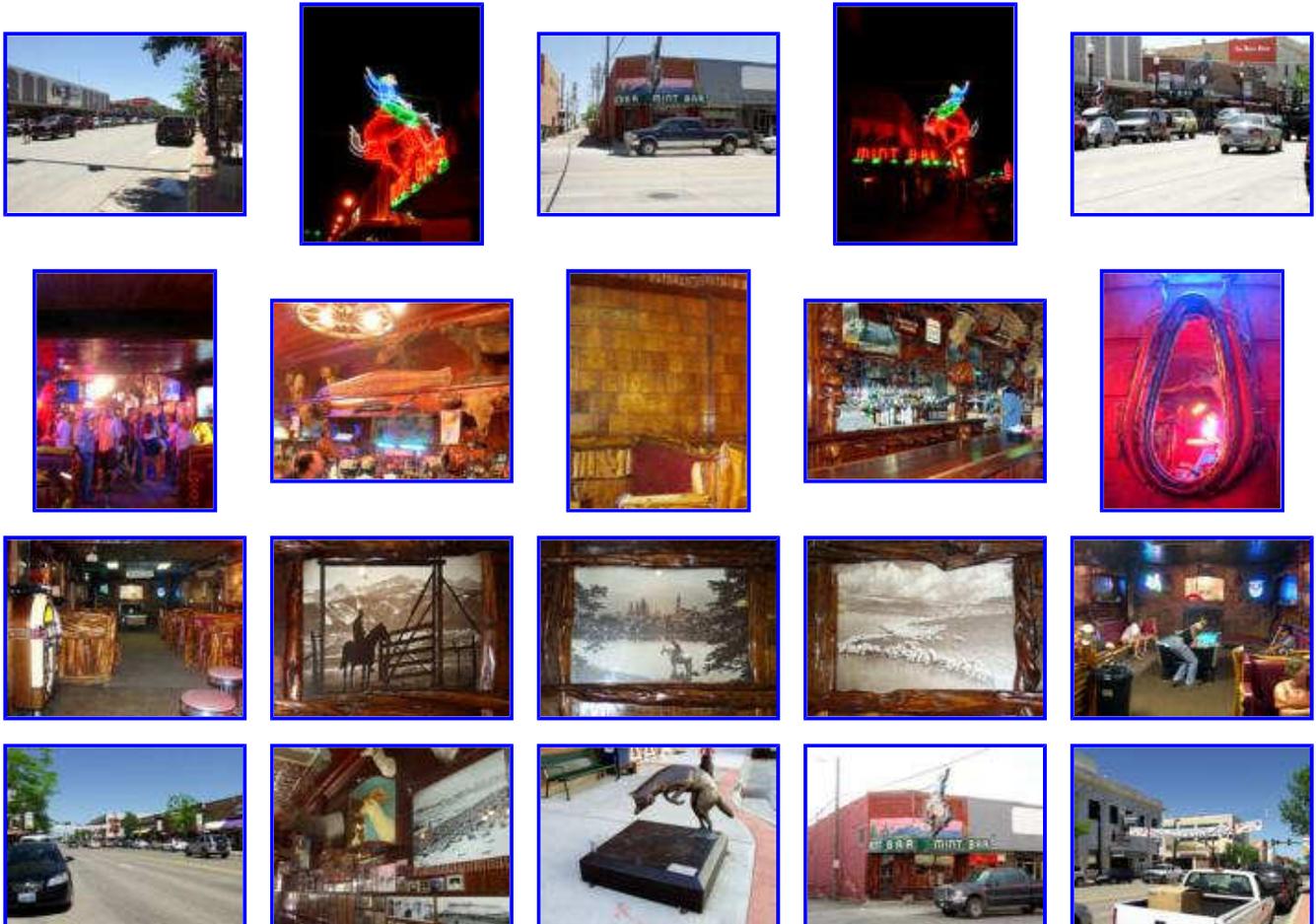
Obtain permission before photographing bar patrons.

Quotation:

“But the incident that actually made me start writing it was one night when I was in a bar in Sheridan, Wyoming—the Mint Bar. There was a ranch hand I used to see. This guy was back leaning against the wall by the pool tables. The bar was packed with good-looking women, and he wasn’t looking at them—he was watching the guys He was about sixty, and he watched them with a kind of subdued hunger that made me wonder if he was country gay.” [1]

[1] *NewWest*, November 23, 2005, Jenny Shank, “Proulx, McMurtry and Ossana Discuss Adapting *Brokeback Mountain*” <http://www.newwest.net/index.php/topic/article/4463/C76/L76>. See also *Brokeback Mountain - Story to Screenplay* by Annie Proulx, Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana (Scribner) ISBN-13: 978-0-7432-9416-4, page 129.

Pictures of surrounding area:



Sheridan Rodeo



Contributed photo



Contributed photo

Location: W 5th St and Burton St, Sheridan, WY

GPS: 44d 48m 23.2s -106d 58m 54.3s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

From I-90 take Exit 23, "Fifth Street / WY-336"

Turn West onto E 5th Street / US-87 / WY-336 / Wyarno Road.

Go 2.3 miles to the intersection of W 5th Street and Burton Street.

The entrance to the fairgrounds is on the left.

Remarks:

The 80th Annual Sheridan WYO Rodeo was in 2010. The 33rd was in 1963, the year Ennis and Jack met.

As the crow flies, Sheridan is less than 100 miles (160 km) from Lightning Flat. "Jack said his father had been a pretty well-known bullrider years back ..." [1] We can imagine that his father might have ridden in the Sheridan rodeo and that he would have been all too familiar with Sheridan's virtues and vices ... knowledge passed from father to son. We can also imagine that his influence was one of the reasons for Jack's infatuation with "the rodeo life." [2] For a ranch kid, growing up in the 1950's, and "crazy to be somewhere, anywhere else than Lightning Flat," [3] Sheridan would have been the destination of choice.

Sheridan is a modern, all be it small, American city. During rodeo week, however, it is possible to imagine, with a little effort, Sheridan as it must have been in 1963.

See:

<http://www.sheridanwyorodeo.com/>

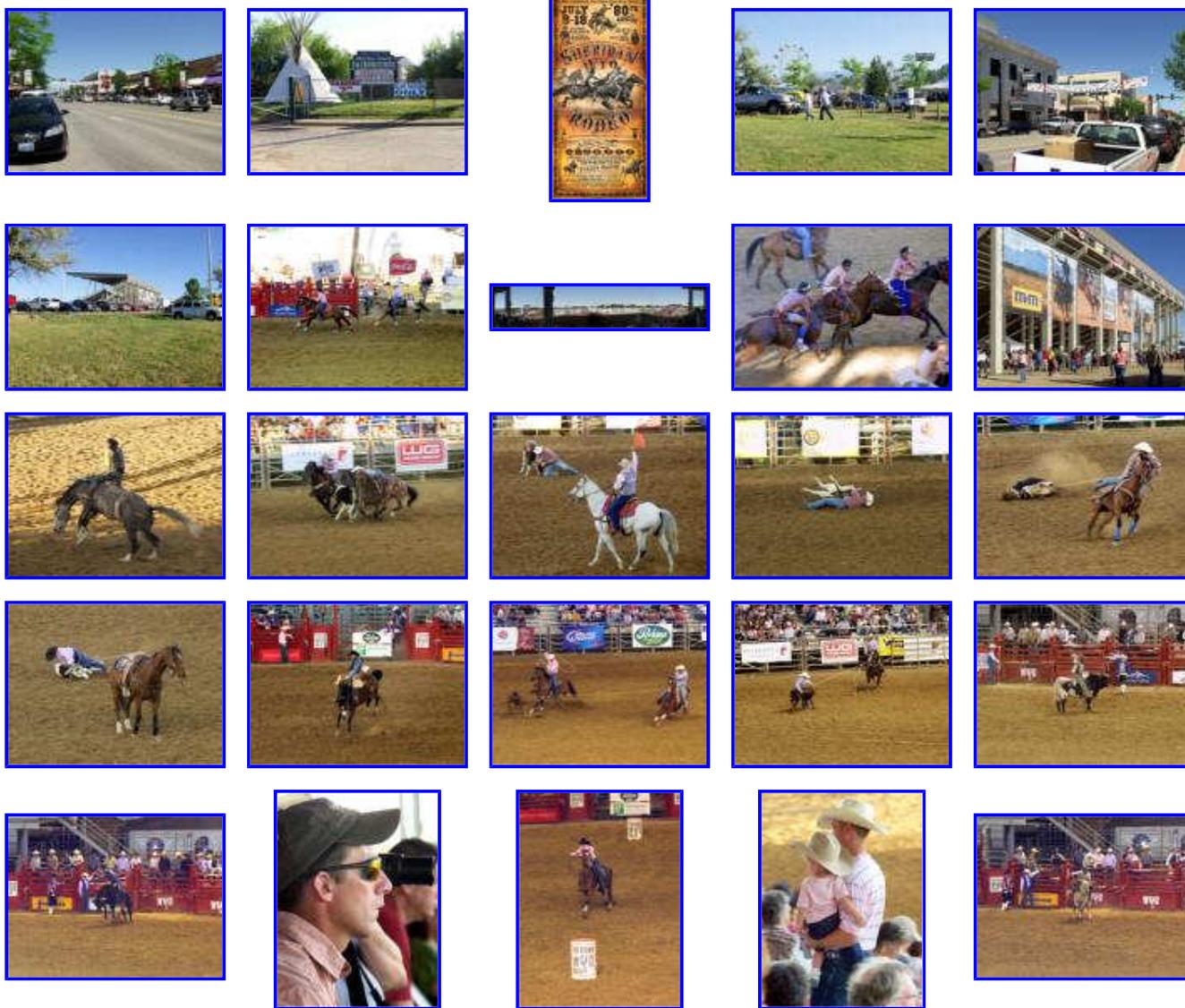
<http://www.sherfair.com/>

[1] *Brokeback Mountain - Story to Screenplay* by Annie Proulx, Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana (Scribner) ISBN-13: 978-0-7432-9416-4, page 5.

[2] *Ibid.*, page 3.

[3] *Ibid.*, page 3.

Pictures of surrounding area:



Revised 09 January 2011

Cemetery



Contributed photo



Contributed photo

Location: Rockypoint Road, 0.5 mile E of Rockypoint, WY

GPS: 44d 54m 55s -105d 5m 10s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

From Gillette, follow WY-59 north 26.6 miles to the “Rockypoint” sign (Heald Road). Turn Right (E) onto Heald Road and go 1.9 miles to the Rockypoint Road intersection. Turn Left (N) on Rockypoint Road and follow it 25 miles to the Rockypoint Cemetery. (Reference: 44d 54m 54s, 105d 5m 10s)

Remarks:

Annie Proulx never visited Rockypoint (or “Rocky Point,” as it seems to be called much of the time), but the small community cemetery here has captured the imagination of many pilgrims as they make their way to Lightning Flat. In use since the 1920s, it consists of approximately 90 graves. Not all of them are marked. Old maps show a church at this site.

Of special interest are several of the tombstones which incorporate “lamb” iconography, a symbolic tie between the labors and the faith of those at rest here.

The setting is an open one. From here, the horizon is essentially flat and empty in all directions, making it quite easy to appreciate the enduring phrase, “grieving plain.”

See:

<http://files.usgarchives.net/wy/campbell/cemetery/rckypnt.txt>

Important:

Fill your automobile tank with gas at Gillette. Bring water and a snack.

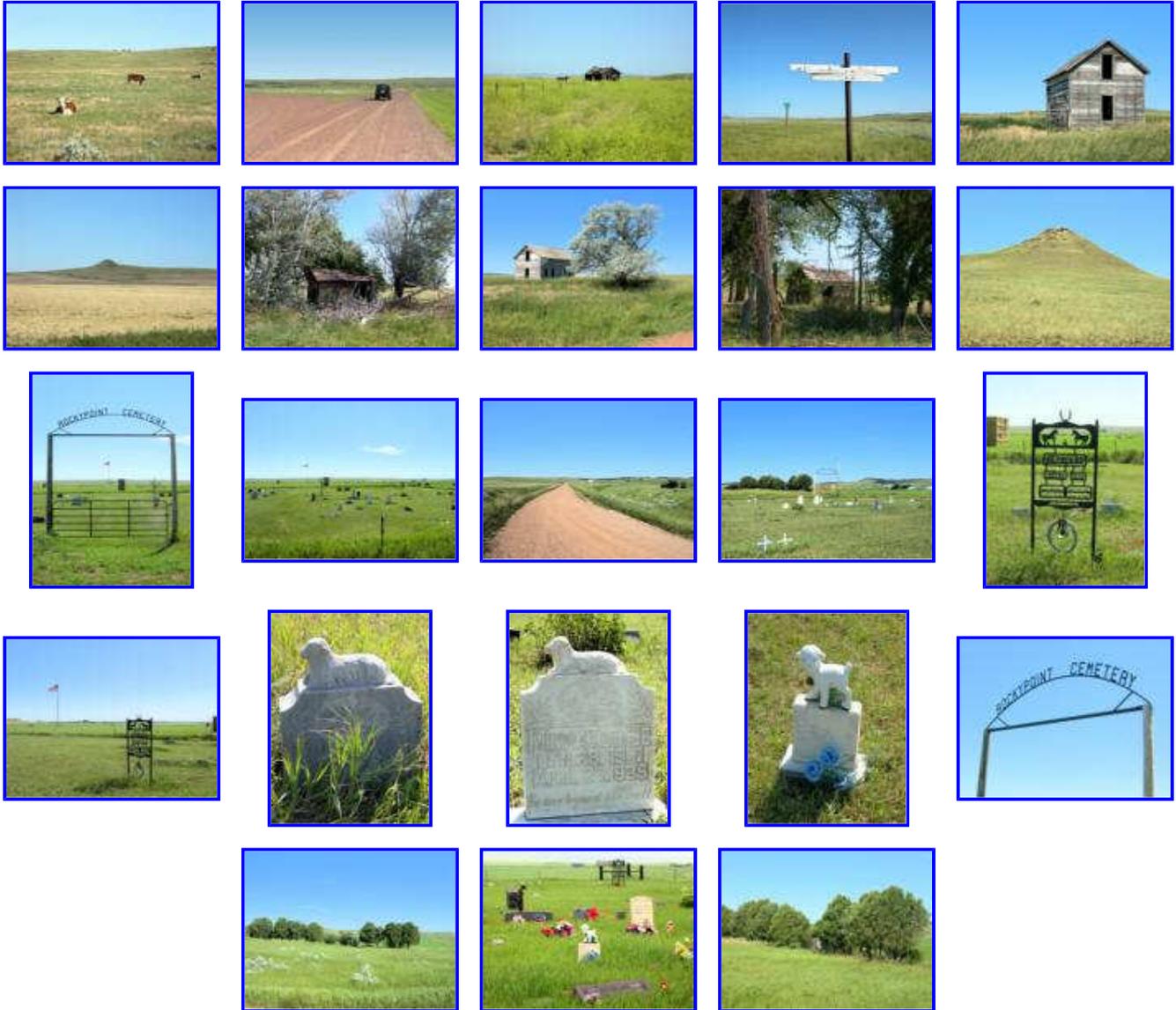
Quotation:

“Bumping down the washboard road Ennis passed the country cemetery fenced with sagging sheep wire, a tiny fenced square on the welling prairie, a few graves bright with plastic flowers, and didn’t

want to know Jack was going in there, to be buried on the grieving plain.” [1]

[1] *Brokeback Mountain - Story to Screenplay* by Annie Proulx, Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana (Scribner) ISBN-13: 978-0-7432-9416-4, page 27.

Pictures of surrounding area:

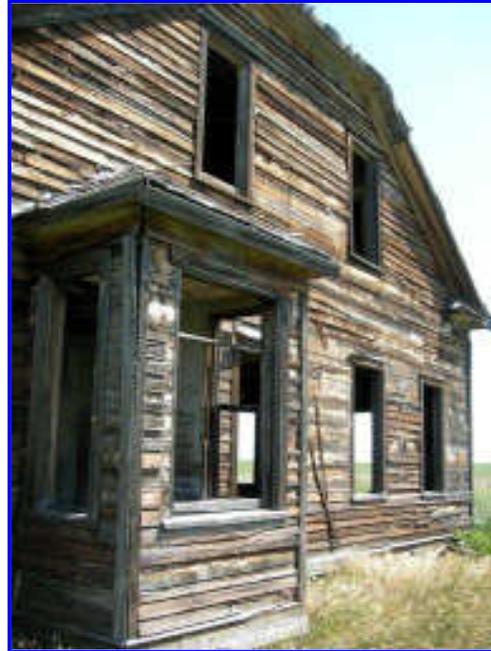


Revised 27 December 2010

The Old Scott Place



Contributed photo



Contributed photo

Location: Rockypoint and Ridge Road at the WY / MT line

GPS: 44d 59m 59s -105d 1m 0s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

From Gillette, follow WY-59 north 26.6 miles to the “Rockypoint” sign (Heald Road).

Turn Right (E) onto Heald Road; go 1.9 miles to the Rockypoint Road intersection.

Turn Left (N) on Rockypoint Road and follow it 25 miles to the Rockypoint Cemetery. (Reference: 44d 54m 54s, 105d 5m 10s)

Continue North on Rockypoint Road (becomes the Rockypoint and Ridge Road) 10.9 miles to “the old Scott place,” at the Wyoming / Montana state line. (Reference: 44d 59m 59s, 105d 1m 0s)

Remarks:

Annie Proulx placed Jack’s family home in Lightning Flat, an extinct community that in the 1920s occupied a sleepy spot on the Wyoming / Montana border, about two hours north of Gillette. Some claim that she visited this place and drew inspiration from it. But, as Jack would say, “truth is,” she never did. [1] As she crafted her brilliant story, Proulx was unaware of Lightning Flat’s lone remaining dwelling, “the old Scott place.” Even her fantastic imagination could not have envisioned that one day readers of her story would make pilgrimages to Lightning Flat, seeking to feel a precious bit of *Brokeback* here.

Lightning Flat was settled by homesteaders following World War I at the headwaters of the Gammon Prong of the Little Missouri River. Grace Scott secured a homestead patent for this land in 1923, one of many area parcels claimed by members of that family. By the late 1920s, the town had a dance hall, a general store, a grocery store, and a farm gas station. It also had a fourth-class post office and a weekly newspaper, “The Lightning Flat Flash.” [2]

Absent irrigation, the local land was poorly suited for grazing and, as such, was “dry farmed.” A series of severe droughts in the late 1920s, and episodes of invading locusts, wiped out most farmers in that area. Much of their land was sold back to the Federal government during the Great Depression. Lightning Flat’s last remaining business, the store, closed in 1936.

The old Scott place is a grand ruin by any measure. It is, by far, the largest structure of its vintage in the region. It is even bigger than the substantial building that Ang Lee chose, and Judy Becker expertly decorated, for use in the film, the former Esslinger house near Beiseker, AB. Those who have visited both places will immediately recognize that the Esslinger house, though itself a crumbling ruin, is in a decidedly better state of preservation than its much larger Wyoming counterpart.

Neither of these buildings is the Twist Ranch of Annie Proulx's story. She envisioned, and explicitly described, a much simpler, poorer house than the one found here. Her Twist Ranch was modeled upon "the old Childress place" near East Ulm, WY, an area almost as remote as Lightning Flat, located southwest of here, near Buffalo.

Much of the sublime experience of visiting this location derives from the hour of gravel road driving that is required to reach it. Just as Proulx wrote, your journey will be punctuated by occasional abandoned "blank-eyed" ranch houses, though none even approach the majestic old Scott place in their scale and poignancy.

We returned via the Montana road and were both astonished and pleased to spot a "rainbow" windsock on display some five miles north of here. (Reference: 45d 02m 42s -105d 1m 15s). As the "Gay Liberation" slogan of the 1980s proclaimed (admittedly dating ourselves to make a point here), "We are everywhere."

Important:

Fill your automobile tank with gas at Gillette. Bring water and a snack. Wear boots and protective gear. Always obtain appropriate permission before entering private property. Those planning to enter old buildings should bring flashlights and be cautious of loose or missing floorboards and railings. Use caution, driveway may require four wheel drive / high-profile vehicle. Snakes may be active inside and around the building; take appropriate precautions. The building has been the subject of pilferage and vandalism. Please leave all that you find intact out of respect for the history, both real and fictional, of this powerful place.

Quotation:

"The road to Lightning Flat went through desolate country past a dozen abandoned ranches distributed over the plain at eight- and ten-mile intervals, houses sitting blank-eyed in the weeds, corral fences down." [3]

[1] Conversation with E. Annie Proulx, Davidson College, Davidson, North Carolina, Shakestheground, September 14, 2006.

[2] Lightning Flat background information courtesy of Wyoming historian and author Geoff Dobson.

[3] *Brokeback Mountain - Story to Screenplay* by Annie Proulx, Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana (Scribner) ISBN-13: 978-0-7432-9416-4, page 24.

Pictures of surrounding area:





Revised 16 January 2011

Siesta Motel



Photo courtesy Peter Belmonte.



Photo courtesy Peter Belmonte.

Location: 255 Nolan Avenue, Kaycee, WY

GPS: 43d 42m 46s -106d 38m 21s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

From I-25 take WY Exit 254, "Kaycee" (approximately half way between Buffalo and Casper)

Turn East on WY-191 (Sussex Highway); go 0.1 mile.

Turn Right (S) on WY-196 (Nolan Avenue) and go 0.15 mile to 255 Nolan Avenue.

Remarks:

Wyoming has a Siesta Motel. You'll find it in the 200 person town of Kaycee. If amenities are not important to you, bring someone you love, an equestrian perhaps, to this rustic refuge and check it out.

Interestingly, this area has another connection to *Brokeback Mountain*. Kaycee is in the heart of Johnson County, site of the notorious Johnson County War, a bloody conflict between small and large scale ranchers (generally sheep ranchers and cattle barons). Still a bit resentful, locals refer to this as "The Cattlemen's Invasion of 1892."

In the 1890s, homesteader John Nolan established a ranch here on the Powder River. The brand he used was "KC." Two years later, powerful, moneyed "cattlemen" burned Nolan's house and murdered two men, as part of a plot to scare away small ranchers and obtain access to thousands of square miles of valuable unfenced grazing land.

This mainstay conflict of western lore is depicted in the worthwhile 2002 oater, *The Johnson County War*, now a staple of cable movie channels. That film's screenplay was also written by McMurtry and Ossana, it was made in Alberta (very near to where *Brokeback's* ill fated Hippie Scene was shot), and much of its production crew also worked on *Brokeback Mountain*. Ang Lee has said that what he saw in *The Johnson County War*, coupled with Ossana's recommendation, opened his mind to the possibility of shooting in Alberta as he planned his *Brokeback* production in late 2003.

See:

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0280264/fullcredits#cast>

Quotation:

“... Jack said, ‘Christ, it got a be all that time a yours ahorseback makes it so goddamn good. We got to talk about this.’” [1]

[1] *Brokeback Mountain - Story to Screenplay* by Annie Proulx, Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana (Scribner) ISBN-13: 978-0-7432-9416-4, page 12.

Pictures of surrounding area:



Owl Canyon Road, Colorado



Contributed photo



Contributed photo

Location: Dead Horse / Owl Canyon Road, Larimer County, CO

GPS: 40d 45m 19s -105d 8m 1s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

From I-25 take Colorado Exit 281, "Owl Canyon Road"

Go West on County Road 70 for 7.4 miles to "the curve" (where County Road 70 becomes County Road 21).

Remarks:

Annie Proulx's creativity is, in no small measure, a consequence of her unusual ability to harness everyday experiences and incorporate them brilliantly into modern fiction. She is passionate about this. She scans phone books and obituaries for unusual character names. She has been known to interview several experts on obscure topics such as knife sharpening to get the precise phrasing a sentence requires. Proulx keeps a collection of descriptions of the sky, written as nature granted her the opportunity, which she integrates into her writing. She listens in bank and grocery store lines, bars, and cafes, for colorful phrases and story ideas in the everyday conversations that surround her.

In this unlikely setting, a dirt road in northern Colorado, Proulx's overactive imagination was able to connect the expression "stud duck" with Jack's father, John Twist. Unable to apply her description to John Twist in the screenplay, McMurtry and Ossana did the next best thing and appended it to his bookend character, Jack's father-in-law, L.D. Newsome.

But, of course, the real fascination of making a leisurely drive down this lonely unpaved road is encountering "the curve" that, in Proulx's amazing mind, "took Ennis's parents." It comes up abruptly after more than seven miles of ruler-straight linear driving. Don't miss it.

A marker at "the curve" describes the historic 1860s Overland Stage Line which passed nearby.

After you have drawn all of the creative inspiration you can from this spot, by all means continue onward to scenic Owl Canyon. Look for its \$3,000 trailers on million-dollar lots and know that you are indeed in Annie Proulx country.

Important:

Use caution, the road contains a hazardous curve.

Quotation:

“I remember vividly that, driving on Owl Canyon Road in Colorado down over the state line one afternoon and thinking about Jack Twist’s father, the expression ‘stud duck,’ which I had heard somewhere, came to me as the right way to succinctly describe that hard little man, and a curve in the road became the curve that killed Ennis’s parents.” [1]

[1] *Brokeback Mountain - Story to Screenplay* by Annie Proulx, Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana (Scribner) ISBN-13: 978-0-7432-9416-4, page 132.

Pictures of surrounding area:



Revised 23 January 2011

Laramie Cement Plant



Contributed photo



Contributed photo

Location: 5 Sand Creek Road, Laramie, WY

GPS: 41d 15m 59s -105d 36m 3s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

From I-80 take WY Exit 313, “3rd Street / US-287 / Fort Collins”

Turn South onto S 3rd Street / US-287; go 0.7 mile.

Turn Right (W) onto Blackfoot Street; go 0.2 mile.

Turn Left (S) onto Fort Sanders / Old US-287; go 1.6 miles.

Turn Right (W) at Sand Creek Road. The Mountain Cement Company plant is just ahead, opposite the rail tracks.

Remarks:

The Laramie cement plant is something to behold. It is almost a mile long and incorporates an exotic assortment of geometric forms and hyper-technical elements assembled in a way that suggests, well, anything but *the kiss*. But, thankfully, genius prevailed!

Annie Proulx drove by this complex many times as she was writing *Brokeback Mountain*. Her home then was 30 miles away in the picturesque town of Centennial, where industrialization is unknown and unwanted.

See:

<http://www.mountaincement.com/>

Important:

Always obtain appropriate permission before entering private property.

Quotation:

“The scene for the kiss when Jack and Ennis reunite after four years occurred in its entirety as I drove past the Laramie cement plant—so much for scenery.” [1]

[1] *Brokeback Mountain - Story to Screenplay* by Annie Proulx, Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana (Scribner) ISBN-13: 978-0-7432-9416-4, page 132.

Pictures of surrounding area:



Revised 21 January 2011

Matthew Shepard Murder Site



Contributed photo



Contributed photo

Location: Pilot Peak and Snowy View Roads, Laramie, WY

GPS: 41d 17m 46s -105d 30m 54s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

After the tragedy, area street names were changed. Here is how to find the site using the current street names:

From I-80 take WY Exit 316, "Grand Avenue / US-30W"

Follow E Grand Avenue / US-30W approximately 0.5 mile.

Turn Right (E) at Pilot Peak Road and go 0.8 mile to the Snowy View Road intersection.

To find the murder site from the intersection, turn left on Snowy View Road and proceed approximately 0.1 mile. The murder occurred approximately 0.15 mile to the northwest of this point. (Reference: 41d 17 m 46s, -105d 30m 54s)

Remarks:

Her love for Wyoming notwithstanding, Annie Proulx does not shy away from discussing the murder of 21-year-old college student Matthew Shepard which occurred a year after her short story appeared in *The New Yorker*.

"Although there is generally a live-and-let-live attitude in the state, there are also bigots, mean people, haters, drug addicts, poachers, wife-beaters, kid-neglecters, embezzlers as in every other place in the world. Wyoming also has the highest suicide rate in the nation, especially among elderly, single men. The state is hardly perfect and we should not pretend it is some noble utopia. It is a complex place in its geography and its residents' psychologies, both tolerant and intolerant as all of us are." [1]

On October 6, 1998, Matthew Wayne Shepard met Aaron McKinney, 22, and Russell Henderson, 21, both of Laramie, in a local bar. Contemplating robbery, the two led Shepard to believe they were gay. Matthew followed McKinney and Henderson into their truck. Inside the truck, McKinney pulled out a gun and demanded Shepard's wallet, then hit him with the gun. They then drove here, Henderson behind the wheel, as Matthew begged for his life. McKinney struck him repeatedly as Henderson watched and laughed. The two tied Shepard's beaten body to a buck fence (since removed). They then robbed him of his wallet containing \$20, and shoes, continued to beat him, and

then left him to die.

For over 18 hours Shepard bled profusely in near-freezing temperatures until a cyclist happened to discover him the following day. A police officer who responded to the 911 call would later testify, "Though his face was caked in blood, his face was clean where streaks of tears had washed the blood away."

The 5-foot-2-inch, 102-pound Shepard never emerged from his coma and died five days later, the morning after America's celebration of National Coming Out Day.

McKinney and Henderson were charged with first-degree murder, which carried with it the possibility of the death penalty. They were also charged with kidnapping and aggravated robbery.

Henderson pleaded guilty and was sentenced to two life terms in prison with virtually no possibility for parole. Judge Jeffrey Donnell told Henderson, "Quite frankly the court does not believe you really feel a true sense of remorse for your role in this matter." Henderson's girlfriend Chastity Pasley, who had provided a false alibi and hidden Shepard's shoes, was sentenced to 15- to 24-months in prison.

During Aaron McKinney's trial, defense lawyers told the jury that their client was under the influence of drugs and alcohol at the time, that he had been sexually abused as a child, and that he lost self-control when Shepard made a pass at him. This last claim, which was explicitly refuted by Henderson's confession and other evidence, was characterized as the "gay panic" defense. Judge Baron Voigt told defense attorneys and the jury that there were no provisions in Wyoming law for a "gay panic" defense.

After 10 hours of deliberation, the McKinney jury returned a verdict of felony murder, kidnapping, and aggravated robbery, leaving open the possibility of either life in prison or the death penalty. But before the jury could hear McKinney's death penalty trial, he agreed to serve life in prison without parole and promised never to appeal his conviction, thereby avoiding the possibility of the death penalty.

McKinney's sentencing deal was an arrangement that Shepard's parents had consented to. "I will never get over Judy Shepard's capacity to forgive," Laramie prosecutor Cal Rerucha said. Rerucha also said he found it ironic that "the defense asked the Shepards to give some relief, some type of pity, to a person who had murdered their son."

From tragedy, shock, and widespread public anger came some measures of inspiration. A nationwide memorial service in Washington, D.C. was hosted by Ellen DeGeneres. Moisés Kaufman's award-winning *The Laramie Project* opened as a documentary-play that uses "interviews" with over 200 Laramie community members to tell the story of Matthew's murder. The play was eventually made into an HBO film. Melissa Etheridge recorded *Scarecrow*, a memorial song. Tom McCormack later wrote *Stigmata*, another moving work of remembrance. More recently, MTV presented *Anatomy of a Hate Crime*, a film about the tragedy. A published collection of poems, *Blood & Tears: Commemorative Poems for Matthew Shepard*, recalls the grief, pain, and rage caused by the brutal murder. Elton John wrote and recorded the memorial song *American Triangle* in 2001. It features a guest performance by Rufus Wainright.

The Matthew Shepard Act was legislation proposed in 2007 to expand the Federal hate-crime law to include crimes motivated by a victim's actual or perceived gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. Despite considerable popular support, the Bush Administration opposed it, and the Matthew Shepard Act failed to become law. In October 2009 President Barack Obama signed the bill into law.

How did the people of Laramie respond to the most significant event in the town's history? Many local officials and community leaders expressed outrage at the time of the tragedy but have stubbornly resisted efforts to erect a suitable memorial there. Residents of this neighborhood have been especially anxious to bury the past and even petitioned local government to change the street names in order to confuse pilgrims to the murder site.

See:

[Fireside Bar](#)

[Matthew Shepard Memorial Bench](#)

http://www.matthewshepard.org/site/PageServer?pagename=Matthews_Place_Home_Page

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matthew_Shepard

Important:

Always obtain appropriate permission before entering private property. This is not a place for children.

Quotation:

“By the time someone came along, he had drowned in his own blood.”

[1] Annie Proulx interview, *Planet Jackson Hole*, December 7, 2005, page 12,

http://www.planetjh.com/music_arts_culture/A_100138.aspx

Pictures of surrounding area:



Revised 05 November 2011

Matthew Shepard Memorial Bench



Photo courtesy Fritz Keppler.



Photo courtesy Fritz Keppler.

Location: Quealy Plaza, University of Wyoming campus, Laramie, WY

GPS: 41d 18m 47.7s -105d 34m 56.9s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

From I-80 westbound, take Exit 316, "Grand Ave / US-30 / I-80 Business."

Go 0.5 miles.

Merge onto E Grand Ave / US-30 and continue 3.1 miles.

Turn Right (N) at S 13th Street; go approximately 100 yards.

Quealy Plaza is in front of the Arts and Sciences building, to the left.

Remarks:

A decade after the horrific hate crime that took the life of Matthew Shepard, the University of Wyoming, where he was a student, dedicated a sidewalk bench in his honor. It bears a small plaque which all but ignores the person that he was and the reason that he died.

MATTHEW WAYNE SHEPARD
DECEMBER 1, 1976 - OCTOBER 12, 1998
BELOVED SON, BROTHER, AND FRIEND
HE CONTINUES TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE
PEACE BE WITH HIM AND ALL WHO SIT HERE

One blogger wrote, "We've got an awful lot of park benches . . . but could use more good people with tolerant hearts to sit in them."

See:

[Fireside Bar](#)

[Matthew Shepard Murder Site](#)

Quotation:

"We put a stone up."

Pictures of surrounding area:



Revised 05 November 2011

Fireside Bar



Photo courtesy Fritz Keppler.



Photo courtesy Fritz Keppler.

Location: 201 E Custer Street, Laramie, WY

GPS: 41d 18m 33.3s -105d 35m 40.9s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

From I-80 westbound take Exit 313, "3rd Street / US 287"

Go 0.6 mile.

Turn right (N) at S 3rd Street and proceed 0.7 mile.

Turn left (W) at E Custer; go approximately 100 yards.

Remarks:

Several changes in ownership and name have done little to obscure this Laramie bar's place in infamy. On October 6, 1998, Matthew Shepard met his murderers here. Immediately after the three left the Fireside, Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson began taunting, beating, and torturing Shepard before taking him to the lonely fence to which he was bound and left to die.

See:

[Matthew Shepard Murder Site](#)

[Matthew Shepard Memorial Bench](#)

Pictures of surrounding area:



Former Proulx Home



Contributed photo



Contributed photo

Location: 37 Kelly Creek Road, Centennial, WY

GPS: 41d 17m 20s -106d 9m 6s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

From I-80 take WY Exit 311, “WY-130 / WY-230 / Snowy Range Road.”

Turn West on WY-130; go 28.6 miles to Centennial.

Turn Left (S) on Weber Creek Road; go 0.7 mile.

Turn Right (W) on Kelley Creek Road and go 0.65 mile to 37 Kelley Creek Road.

Remarks:

British critic D. J. Taylor once wrote that Proulx “lashes character to environment like a hawser.” [1] Her friend Mark Jenkins has said that her characters are seemingly “pawns in the landscape.”

Renown for her ability to integrate story and place, Proulx has always chosen her writing environments with great care. To see and experience the place where much of *Brokeback Mountain* was written is to appreciate not just the story’s setting, but the story itself, in a new and powerful way.

Brokeback Mountain was “born” in a 3,500 square foot home which occupies an elevated two-acre parcel under imposing Centennial Ridge [2] in the Medicine Bow National Forest. This house was Proulx’s home between 1995 and 2006. A visitor wrote that “her home is like her books, like her; it opens out in unexpected directions, full of colorful stories.” [3] It is decorated in deep greens, blues, and browns with exposed log work. The house has an open kitchen and a wood stove.

The art? Eclectic, but you already knew that! Western landscapes by John Hull, a cowboy illustration from *Close Range*, hand-carved wooden snakes, a Serrano gagged priest [4], and a windmill fragment gathered as she researched *That Old Ace in the Hole* lined its walls. Proulx appreciates art and sometimes paints with watercolors, recording landscapes for reference while writing.

A bit unpolished in some respects, Centennial is a former mining town of approximately 200 people. Before the *Brokeback* phenomenon, and now that its creator has moved on, most everything in Centennial centers on the historic Mountain View Hotel, which dates to 1907.

Locals we spoke with (“had to ask about ten different people”) said that they were aware that Proulx was their neighbor, but that they rarely saw her. “She drove a truck,” said an obliging patron in the bar where we conducted our research. Proulx’s work habits are legendary—12- to 16-hour days are

the norm. Each word and phrase is carefully vetted for authenticity. Everything is written in longhand. No line, not even a word, is ever drafted casually.

Just west of Centennial are the imposing Medicine Bow Mountains, which are mentioned in the story. [5]

See:

<http://www.themountainviewhotel.com/webCam.html>

Important:

Always obtain appropriate permission before entering private property.

Quotation:

“For me, the story falls out of a place, its geology and climate, the flora, fauna, prevailing winds, the weather. I am not people-centric, and I’m appalled at what human beings have done to the planet. I think it would be quite marvelous if human beings disappeared—but in the meantime, while they’re here ... 100 years ago I would have written the great-fight-against-the-elements kind of books, whereas now the landscape has moved from being the great enemy to being the victim.” [3]

[1] *The Independent*, March 18, 1995, “Cornfields and the smell of woodsmoke,” D.J. Taylor,

http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4158/is_19950318/ai_n13971995

[2] http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4188/is_20060905/ai_n16706543

[3] *The Guardian*, December 11, 2004, “Home on the Range,” Aida Edemariam,

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2004/dec/11/featuresreviews.guardianreview13>

[4] [http://ncartmuseum.org/graphics/pics/exhibitions/blog/SerranoAHistoryofSex\(.jpg](http://ncartmuseum.org/graphics/pics/exhibitions/blog/SerranoAHistoryofSex(.jpg)

[5] “Years on years they worked their way through the high meadows and mountain drainages, horse-packing into the Big Horns, Medicine Bows ...” *Brokeback Mountain - Story to Screenplay* by Annie Proulx, Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana (Scribner) ISBN-13: 978-0-7432-9416-4, page 17.

Pictures of surrounding area:



Revised 07 June 2011

Proulx Hometown



Contributed photo



Contributed photo

Location: Saratoga, WY, 20.5 miles S of I-80 on WY-130

GPS: 41d 27m 17s -106d 48m 28s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

From I-80 take WY Exit 235, “WY-130E / US-287S / US-30E and Walcott / Medicine Bow National Forest / Saratoga”

Go South on WY-130 for 20.5 miles to Saratoga.

Remarks:

Annie Proulx has called Saratoga, Wyoming, her summertime hometown since 2006. Visitors here will instantly sense that the community has a decided artistic vibe, a touch of enlightened spirit absent from most other small Wyoming towns. Once a stopping point on the Cherokee Trail, later famed for its warm therapeutic mineral spring, today its principal attraction is its lovely landscape. Saratoga lies on the south bank of the North Platte River, at the base of imposing Sheep Rock.

Although it is not quite (yet) Taos, Jerome, or Aspen, Saratoga already has a few of the boutiques, galleries, and “tablecloth” restaurants that point in that inevitable direction. And so it goes. In addition to outdoor adventures, Kathy and Doug Campbell’s Wolf Hotel (1893), which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is eminently worthy of a visit while you are in town.

Unlike other Wyoming places where we made inquiry, here Annie Proulx is quite a celebrity. Locals know her books and stories, remember the times and places they have encountered her, and evidence conspicuous pride that their home is now her chosen home. In this spirit, the community constructed a Saratoga “Writers Park” on the south side of Bridge Street, just west of WY-130. A free-standing park sign prominently features this excerpt from “A Lonely Coast,” one of the Wyoming stories in *Close Range*, which, though written about Casper, could easily describe Saratoga: “You come down a grade and all at once the shining town lies below you, slung out like all western towns, and with the curved bulk of mountain behind it.”

See:

<http://www.wyomingtalesandtrails.com/nplatte.html>

<http://www.wolfhotel.com/>

Pictures of surrounding area:



Revised 07 June 2011

Bird Cloud



Photo by Wayne Thom.



Photo by Wayne Thom.

Location: 5 miles NW of Saratoga, WY
GPS: 41d 30m 40.6s -106d 51m 42.8s
Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Travel Directions:

From I-80 take WY Exit 235, “WY-130E / US-287S / US-30E and Walcott / Medicine Bow National Forest / Saratoga”

Go South on WY-130 for 20.5 miles to Saratoga.

Turn Right (west) onto West Bridge Avenue / Jack Creek Road; go 2.8 miles.

Turn Right onto Bolten Road; go 3.0 miles to the gate.

Remarks:

Built largely from *The Shipping News* profits, Proulx designed her current summertime home to be in harmony with its incomparable 640 acre (!) natural setting. Of the house, she has said it is “a library with a kitchen and some bedrooms attached.” A contemporary “green” structure, it is dominated by earth tones, lies low to the land, and fully exploits an unrivaled view of the North Platte River and Sheep Rock.

Bird Cloud, Proulx’s fascinating tribute to her home, replete with detours into her family’s history, the life and times of the region, and the challenges she faced in designing and constructing a very “special” home, is well worth reading. Seeing the site before reading *Bird Cloud* made us appreciate the book all the more.

The view from the huge windows of her home is not static. Thousands of birds find shelter in Sheep Rock’s natural depressions, making it a natural avian sanctuary. It is a setting which reminded one writer of this passage from *The Shipping News*: “Nothing but rock and sea, the tiny figures of humans and animals against them for a brief time.” [1]

See:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/05/books/05book.html>

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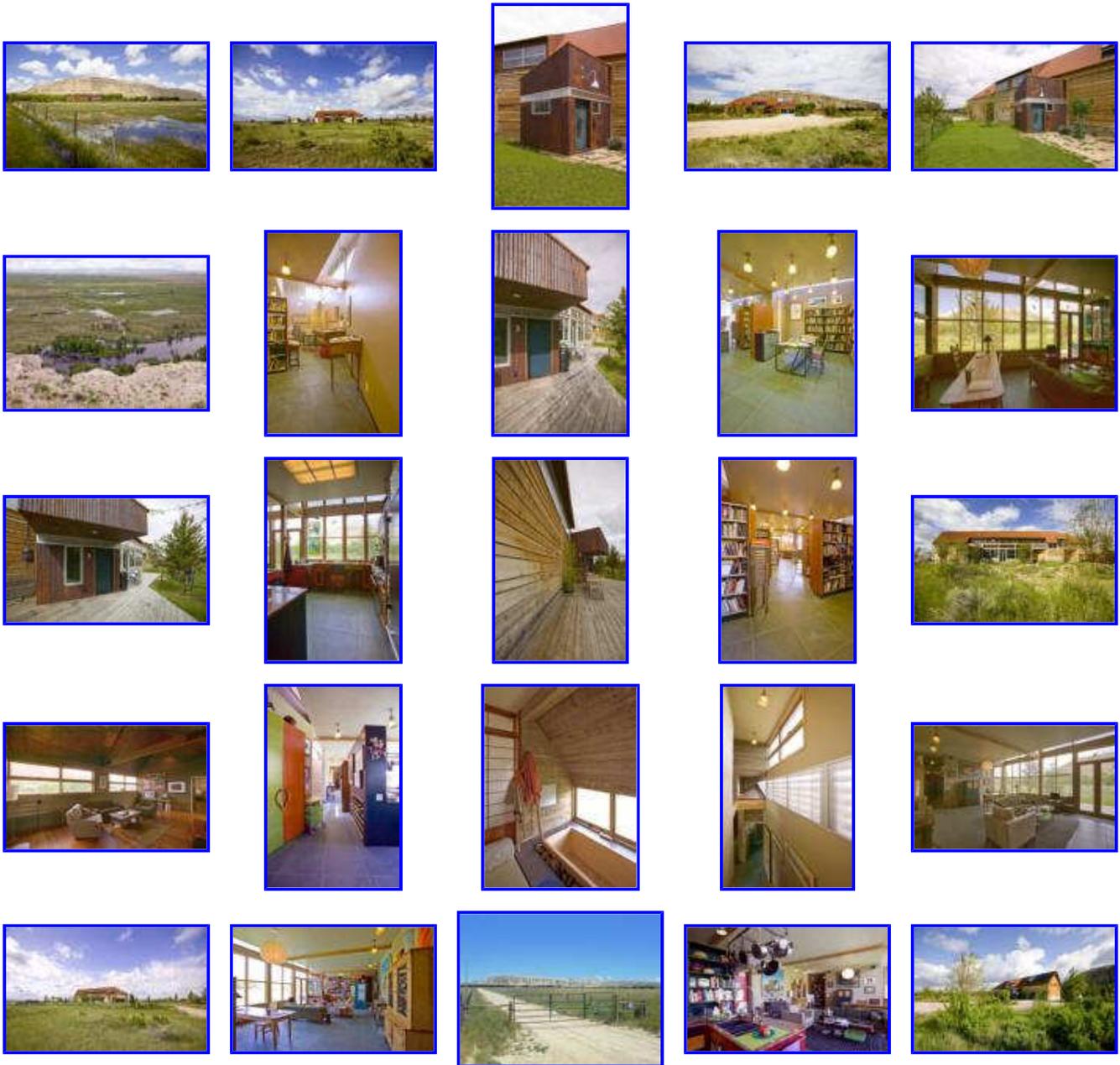
Quotation:

“The property was beautiful and unique, remote and powerful, and I fell for it, hard.” [2]

[1] *The Guardian*, December 11, 2004, "Home on the Range," Aida Edemariam, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2004/dec/11/featuresreviews.guardianreview13>

[2] *Bird Cloud* by Annie Proulx (Scribner) ISBN-9780743288804, page 47.

Pictures of surrounding area:



Revised 27 March 2012