eration and success.

**Literature Cited**


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**Bath-Vyveey Ranch—Saratoga, Wyoming**

D. Morris Blaylock

The foundation for today's Bath-Vyveey Ranch near Saratoga, Wyoming, was started by Mr. and Mrs. James Heather in 1886. The Heathers' land consisted of two 640-acre homestead allotments, and a 160-acre improvement claim. Mr. Clinton and Charlotte Brown bought the Heather land about 1910, which they combined with their two 640-acre allotments.

The Browns developed the 160-acre Forest Service improvement claim and it became the South Spring Creek Reservoir about 1912. The reservoir is located

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The author is a retired range conservationist and now a rancher-farmer and has visited the Vyveys occasionally since 1950.
at the headwaters of the South Spring Creek below Falcon Peak on the continental divide. With the water rights from the reservoir, Heather Creek and Calf Creek gave the Browns a water right to 809 acre feet of irrigation water.

Before Mr. Brown started developing the land, most of the land was a sage brush type with very few trees. Some of the claims were called desert claims. There were buffalo wallows among the sage brush. Some of these can still be found today, but the buffalo are long gone. The ranch still has mule deer, antelope, fox, wolf, coyote, mink, beaver, bald eagles, hawks, sage grouse, badger, skunk and many other small animals and birds too numerous to mention. Elk, bear, and mountain lion occasionally visit the ranch. The numbers increased for awhile but appear to be declining at present. Five ponds have been stocked with fish.

Most North Platte Valley and surrounding area pioneers were very interested in the development and conservation of the land, water, wildlife. Mr. Brown was very much a pioneer in the development of water storage and irrigation ditches for improving the production of grasses for livestock use.

About 1940, Mr. and Mrs. Henry K. Bath bought the Browns’ ranch. He also bought the Jack Ferguson land...
(640 acres) 160 acres from the Forest Service, and 640 acres from a Mr. Hardin. In 1961, the Baths formed a partnership with Mr. René Vyvey and wife Betty. The partnership was that the Baths would furnish the land, buildings, and 50% of the cost of the cattle and the Vyveys would furnish 50% of the cost of cattle, the machinery, saddle horses, and labor. Mr. Bath would furnish 50% of haying expense over $500. Mr. Vyvey would pay the first $500 haying expense and 50% over the first $500. The profits would be split 50--50.

René Vyvey grew up on a ranch east of Encampment, Wyoming. His father, Charles, was known for his raising and handling of horses. He had learned to handle horses while growing up in Belgium. Belgium draft horses were his pride and joy. René learned to handle horses and cattle while growing up. He was active in 4-H work. He learned to be a cow-hand, cowboy, mechanic, fence builder and whatever it took to get the job done. He liked to play the guitar and sing. He enjoyed work or play, it didn’t matter whether it was night or day.

The Vyveys have worked very hard to improve the quality and production of the irrigated pastures and hay production and the native range. The ranch was improved to carry about 400 animal units as a cow-calf operation with surplus hay for sale.

Without water and the proper use of the land and water, the vegetation would undoubtably revert back to sage brush.

In 1988, René Vyvey passed on the grass-roots management of the ranch to his son, Ray Vyvey. The heritage of the Saratoga, Wyoming community has been enhanced. What more can a person do to serve his community, country, God and Man than to develop and improve the use of the water and land?