

George R. Mitchell...1900-1980

George R. Mitchell, Platte County pioneer rancher, died Wednesday, July 30, at the Platte County Memorial Hospital following several months of illness.

Mitchell was born to George and Jeanne Moir Mitchell Aug. 31, 1900, on the HR Ranch on the North Laramie River. This ranch was to be his home for nearly 80 years.

The senior George Mitchell came from Scotland, arriving in Casper in 1881, where he served as the first mayor of Casper in 1890 and was one of the commissioners who named Natrona County. He purchased the HR Ranch and the HR Connected brand from Heck Reel in 1889. Mr. Reel had homesteaded the property. The HR brand has been in continuous use on this ranch by the Mitchell family since that time.

He attended school in Glendale, Ca., and also attended school in Scotland for one year. Each spring he would return to the ranch where the care and development of livestock were always of paramount interest. He raised both quality cattle and fine quarter horses, winning many points at quarter horse shows in reining and cutting contests.

Mitchell was married to the former Gladys T. Patton, daughter of David and Leah Patton, also pioneer Platte County ranchers, on November 23, 1924. To this union were born two children, Barbara Mitchell Roff and Robert Mitchell, both of Wheatland. Robert, with the assistance of his wife and five children, continues to operate the HR Ranch.

Mitchell served a term in the 35th Wyoming legislature and served twelve years as a Platte County Commissioner. He was a member of the Wyoming Stockgrowers Association, a charter member of the Laramie Peak Stockgrowers Association, a member of the American Quarter Horse Association and of the executive committee of the National Cutting Horse Association.

Mitchell learned the rudiments of ranching well and his long years of association with that industry made him one of its very colorful and outstanding members. He had a "tell it like it is" approach to life. His often simple statements made a lasting impression on his family and community for his remarks always had the ring of complete honesty, both in regard to himself and to his neighbors.

Stockmen recognized his ability in handling horses and his physical agility and alertness made him the envy of those who worked stock around him. Whenever Mitchell had a horse on the end of a rope, both observers and the horse knew the horse was caught. His sister recalled that while George was supposed to be attending school in Glendale, he would slip off to ride as an extra and a stuntman for the Tom Mix picture industry. Perhaps it was this additional training that enabled him to work around snakey horses and spooky cattle with a minimum of injury to himself. This skill built confidence in the other cowboys, too. A lifetime fellow rancher once remarked, "We all felt just a little better whenever George was there."

Funeral services were held Monday, Aug. 4, at 10:30 a.m. at the United Methodist Church with the Rev. Syd Hoadley and Legrande Page officiating. Pallbearers included Wade Mitchell, Lane Mitchell, Jock Mitchell, Miles Mitchell, Tracey Swanson and Scott Jones.

Survivors include his wife, Gladys; a daughter, Mrs. James Roff; a son, Robert, six grandchildren; and two great grandchildren; all of Wheatland. He is also survived by a sister, Mrs. Margaret Wilson of Glendo, and several nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by two sisters. Mrs. Ruth Fancher and Mrs. Jeannie Wilson.

Friends who wish may contribute to a Memorial Fund