

***“I’ve lived here most of my life,
and I’m sure I’m gonna stay!”***



I’m not like the younger girls. I’m not ashamed to tell my age. (95 years old)

Josephine Yoast

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Our story tells of the life of Josephine Yoast. Josephine is a sweet 95 year old lady who lives 20 miles South of Hayden. Going to our first interview we had trouble finding Josephine's home. After finding her home, and three interviews later, we found that she was a very special person who had many old time tales to tell. Here is our story and hers.



"I've been here a long time, but I never got around very much. My dad and mother came out to this country and took up a ranch down on Fish Creek in 1887. I lived there for about three years, then it was sold. We then went over to Trout Creek. My dad took up a homestead and that is where I lived till I got married.

"There was my dad and mother, a sister and two brothers. (A little brother two years old, a sister about eight and I was six.) That's when we came to Routt County, in 1887. Dad took a claim of 160 acres on Fish Creek next to Jack Ralston. The next thing was a house, a little log one 12x12, and a shed for the two cows and two calves. We also had three horses and a colt. We had four hens and one rooster. We had started with six hens, but by the time we come to Oak Creek the box with the chickens fixed on the back by the end gate became kinda broke and some of them fell out. The road was rough, so things got shook up pretty bad.

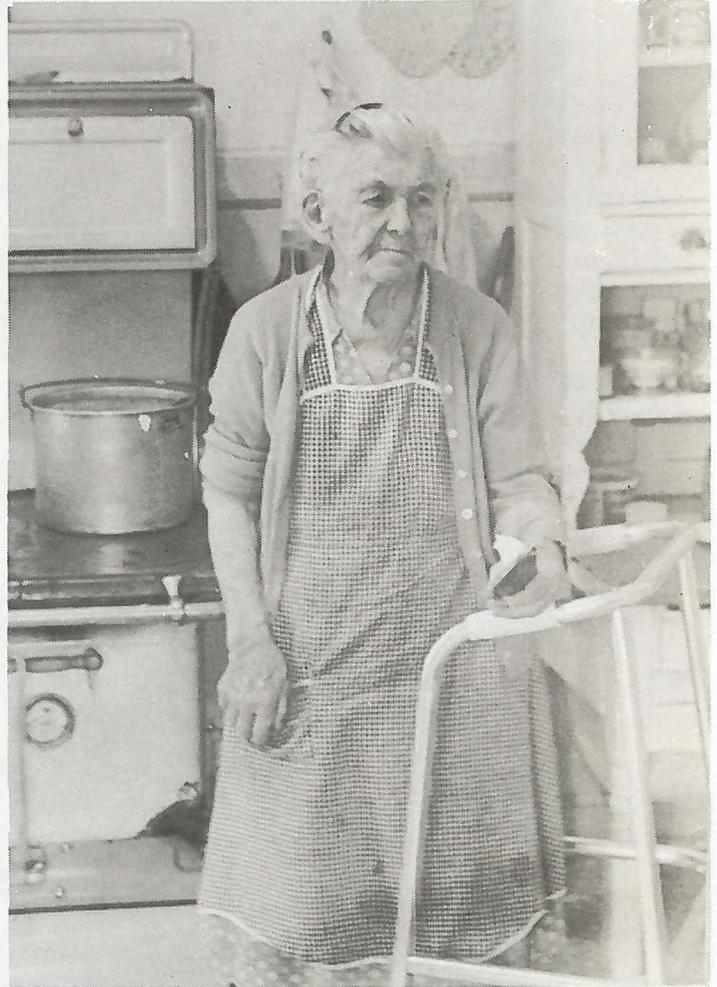
"One of my brothers took up a homestead below us. The boys had to get out and work. My sister was older than me and went to work in Hayden for Bob Williams. My sister was thirteen at the time; she worked for Mr. Williams till she got married. I married in 1907 when I was twenty-six years old; my husband, Marion, was twenty-eight. I met my husband in 1888 when he came to homestead with his family a year after we moved in; he continued to live his life out in this area. He used to be a cow puncher down in the lower country (by Craig and Maybell) till he turned about twenty-five and decided to take up a homestead. He worked that land till we got married and continued to do so till he passed away six years ago. And I've lived here since.

"We grew up together. He worked in the lower country by Craig and Maybell on the cattle ranches. We got married in a little ranch house that my sister lived on between Steamboat and Hayden. My mother and father were the witnesses, and we ate dinner and came to this ranch (where she now lives) about 9:00 and that is where we stayed. We went on our honeymoon when my son went into the service in 1941, in California. Bakersfield was where he was stationed.

Josephine's homestead started out covering about 160 acres, but now it's entirety is about 1300 acres.

"We have lived here all our life and these buildings we built out of logs. Marion done about everything. His brother lived on the same ranch but in a different building with his family. He passed away in that flu epidemic in 1920. You just had to live on a homestead for five years and improve it so much a year so you could keep it. You had to build a house on it and live in it.

"I have one son who lives on the ranch. He and his wife had seven children, and one still lives with them. He is twenty-three and stays home and helps on the ranch.



You had to make it on a homestead or starve to death.

"We did not have many chores to do because we didn't have much to do. We just had one cow to milk and a couple of horses to feed and a couple of chickens. But after I got married and got on this ranch we had lots of chores because we had everything — pigs, chickens, horses, cows, and all of that. I never did much chores except tend to my chickens and feed the pigs, but, of course, I had to take care of my kids. It seemed like I got a lot of work done, but we didn't go anywhere, and of course that meant every

"It has been a pretty good country, we have enjoyed our life here on the ranch an awful lot and our children did, too. They all became ranchers except the one that works in the oil field. You can't get a ranch now. You would have to be a millionaire to buy a ranch. Ranches used to go for a couple of thousand. Now, they go for five hundred an acre. When we got our ranch all we had to do was live on it and work it and pay down twenty or thirty dollars. (They filed claim on the place then had to live on it for about five years and do a certain amount of work on it. You have to have a house and most of the time they wanted you to have running water, but there were some dry homesteads, too). Then when you proved up it didn't cost much. That was a cheap way of getting land, that old homestead law. Oh, but there's no more homesteads. There's no more land. The way people got homesteads is they looked around for a meadow with a creek on it. You had to make it on a homestead or starve to death. We never starved. We bought two milk cows, therefore, we always had plenty of milk and butter. Mom brought six chickens and a team of saddle horses and a colt. Dad went to the coal mines back at Louisville, not too far from Boulder, Colorado, and made a little cash during the winter. Then in the spring he would come back, and we would have a little cash for clothes and grub. My poor mother would have to stay here in the winter with the snow four foot deep, and she'd never been in snow.

"But, us kids thought it was fun. We didn't know that mom and dad worried their heads off. We didn't even have to go to school and that was fun! Oh, it was a pretty good life, so I can't complain.

"In 1900 my parents sold a ranch they owned for one thousand dollars. Now they're tearing it all to pieces, now that Energy Coal Mine oh my, they're tearing that country up. That Energy just takes them hills and levels them off. A person couldn't imagine how they're tearing them up. They claim they're going to fix 'em up nice and level it all off and sow grass and brush and plant trees. Then fence it and make an elk reserve. That will be nicer then. But, not like nature had it. You know isn't it pretty when you look at nature? It's nice. Nature has got it all nice. The trees get yellow in the fall, and in the spring everything gets nice and green, wants to live and in the fall everything wants to die and get ready for winter.

"I guess it was awful lonesome. But we didn't know anything else. We would have these country dances and have parties at the schoolhouse, once in a while. I would ride a horse twenty miles to go to the dances, and it was very well worth it. We used to go to town once a month, if we was lucky. We used to buy enough grub to do for nearly all winter. The worst trouble was when the men ran out of tobacco, then there was trouble.



There's no more land

"My parents always managed to have plenty of flour. Plenty of milk, butter and eggs. We never did get much deer. My dad couldn't shoot; he wasn't a hunter. One time I remember he got an elk and then when my brother got older he would bring in a deer once in a while. I hear a lot of these oldtimers telling of how they killed a deer out of their back door and out the window. We never did live where the deer came that close. I've seen more deer in these later years than when we first came to this country. I think it was because those Injuns had that big fire; all the aspens was burnt and the fire scared all the deer away. (a lot of deer were killed by market hunters for the miners up at the Hahn's Peak mine at the turn of the century.) But I've seen nice deer this year. They say there's more deer this year than there's been for a while.

"I've had a lot of fish; we could catch fish when we lived on Fish Creek and Trout Creek. When you caught fish, you would stick them in a flour bag. I never was a good fisherman. I caught a few, but my, those trout out of the creek are good. I don't like the frozen ones. Whenever they stocked the creeks, everybody fished them out, and those lake fish, some people liked lake fish better than creek fish but not the ones who knew better. We never suffered and nobody else did. We done pretty well.

"School was better than now. We didn't play baseball and basketball and all of that. We didn't have nothing as far as that goes, we just had reading and arithmetic and spelling. When we had our first school there were no books except for the people who brought them. But, I will say that them college and high school kids that I've seen so far, they can't write very good. But, they learn lots of things that we didn't. Oh, we tried after a year or so to learn a little history.

"We had to walk to school three miles, and then we got a saddle horse and rode three miles. We had it in the summer. Couldn't have it in the winter because the roads were too bad. They didn't plow them up, just what the people did when they went some place with the sled. It left a track, and, of course, the more people that went the better were the roads. Otherwise they didn't plow them for a long time. It hasn't been too many years since they plowed them out all the time. So, we think we're right in town now 'cause we can go any time we want. Now, we generally had nine months of schooling and we got some pretty nice teachers. Some children, if their parents could afford it, after they went to eighth grade they took them to Hayden and boarded them out, to go to high school, but not very many people could afford it, but they generally found a little old house about two or three children would batch and go to school. We had two boys, Gilbert and Milton, so my husband built a log cabin for them and they went down there and went to high school. Milton went two years and Gilbert went one, and he didn't go no more. He said he wouldn't go to high school. It done them good to go to school. But then dear old Ferry Carpenter, he's the one that fought for the schoolhouse, that high school they had in Hayden. It was a nice school, I went to nearly all of the graduations.

"We didn't have school for years except at town, (Steamboat, Hayden, and Yampa.) and so the children on the outside did not have no school, but finally they got a schoolhouse. Different families worked around and got a schoolhouse. Some only had two or three children to go to school, but they managed to get a schoolhouse. It isn't standing anymore. But, there was just me, my brother and a boy by the name of Guy Witstrum. We were the only ones who went to that school for about a year or two. Every now and then we would get a new student, but finally there was about a dozen in about ten years, pretty near. See there was no people. And most of them was old bachelors. A lot of families had children, but all of them was too small.

"They had good teachers, and now they tore that nice schoolhouse down. You know what I call the school now, I call them sheepsheds. Then Carpenter was so nice and got them that hospital. That was Godsent. There wasn't a place

you could send a sick person unless you had a friend. My children was born in this house, all five of them."

"Before she had her first child, a woman who just had a couple of babies told Josephine, "You better get you a bottle of Fletcher's Castoria. That's what you got to get."

"That's all those kids of mine ever got. These kids nowadays are allergic to this or allergic to that. Didn't cost as much to get sick back in those days. A doctor would come out here for twenty-five dollars, and now it costs eight hundred dollars in a hospital. Always had a doctor come out when I had a baby. There was usually a midwife. They were all healthy.

Steamboat was a little old, oh dear, I remember when we used to go to Steamboat there was some little ol' store there and one doctor. Poor ol' doctors. Them days, that Doctor Curnahad, he was over at Steamboat. The doctors went to the sick people, not the sick people to the doctor. He would get on his horse or snowshoes, and go twenty, thirty miles to see a patient. I got typhoid fever when we lived on Trout Creek. He came out here three times. I must of been pretty good because I lived through it and he didn't expect I would. But I did.



*Marion and Josephine Yoast
celebrate their 50th wedding
anniversary, September, 1957.*

*Marion in 1903, showing off
his prize belt after riding
Pin Ears.*



*Josephine's home has been
continually lived in since she was
married and took up a homestead
in 1907.*



*People didn't have Kodaks then, a tourist took this picture of Josephine
(next to water buckets), her sister Clara and her father.*

We had our rodeos in Brooklyn. Our grandstand was up on the side of the hill, sitting on sagebrush or under the oak brush. During the bucking events, I was always afraid someone might get hurt, but I liked the horse races. I still do. Lots of people said that Pin Ears never was rode, but my husband was a good rider and that summer he rode him. He broke 75 to 100 head of horses for the Cary Ranch and he was in pretty good shape. My husband said he guessed he needed that \$125 awful bad, but he claimed that he rode lots tougher horses than that. In those days they rode them till they finished and not for no eight seconds.

"We raised a few cattle for a while and we raised grain. But, finally we got sheep. I still have twenty head of cattle, can't let loose. I don't know why I have them, but I do. A stranger came in with about 300 head of sheep. I'll tell you it wasn't too safe, but nobody bothered us. There has been sheep in this country ever since. The sheep is the best eating, yet. One time we lost our sheep during the Depression by a mistake. There was about 300 head. Marion paid nineteen

dollars a head. The sheep price went down to nothing and he had to get rid of them. My husband said that the bank cheated him too.

"Coyotes was terrible and is yet. The government helped for awhile, them some of these other people started feeling sorry for the coyotes because they got sick before they died, when poisoned. Now you can't poison, 'cept on your own property and, of course, the coyotes come in from the other land. Coyotes kill not because they are hungry, but because they like to kill. Coyotes were the major problem. Now the coons are a big problem. They eat a lot of chickens. They are pretty sneaky.

It has been pretty good country, we have enjoyed our life on the ranch an awful lot & our children did, too.

"Content" is what counts. If you're not content, I don't care, if you have ever so much money, if you're not content you're not happy. We was all happy, that was the best part. So, I've been in Colorado just about all my life, and I'm sure I'm gonna stay.



It has been a pretty good country, we have enjoyed our life here on the ranch.