

# **TRAVEL WYOMING'S HISTORIC BOZEMAN TRAIL**



**HISTORIC SITES \* MUSEUMS \* ART**

**AMERICAN INDIAN HISTORY \* WILDLIFE**

**ARCHAEOLOGY \* WESTERN CULTURE**



## A Brief Overview of the Historic Bozeman Trail

The historic Bozeman Trail was used by Native Americans and wildlife long before 1863 when John Bozeman and John Jacobs identified a shortcut for emigrants traveling from the North Platte River, Wyoming to Montana's gold-fields.

About 3,500 emigrants traveled the Bozeman Trail from 1863-1866 through the Powder River Country – the heart of the Northern Plains Indians last and best hunting grounds. A clash of cultures and epic events followed.

The newly promoted Bozeman Trail triggered the military to build three forts along the Trail to protect emigrants and other travelers to the gold fields. Forts Reno and Phil Kearny were built in now Johnson County, WY, and Fort C.F. Smith in what is now the Crow Reservation, MT. Native Americans recognized these forts as a pathway to destroy their way of life and were determined to protect their homeland and their hunting grounds.

After many battles and untold lives lost, the route was closed to emigrants during part of 1865 and again late in 1866. This historic Trail continued as a military route until the 1868 abandonment of the three Forts: Reno, Phil Kearny and C.F. Smith. Deciding factors were the Fetterman Fight on Dec. 21, 1866, the completion of Union Pacific Railroad in 1868, and the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868. Heavy military and civilian use of the Bozeman Trail resumed in the early 1870s with the discovery of gold in the Black Hills. Leading to another consequence – the Battle of the Little Bighorn.

The most significant conflicts along the Bozeman Trail occurred in Johnson and Sheridan Counties, WY.

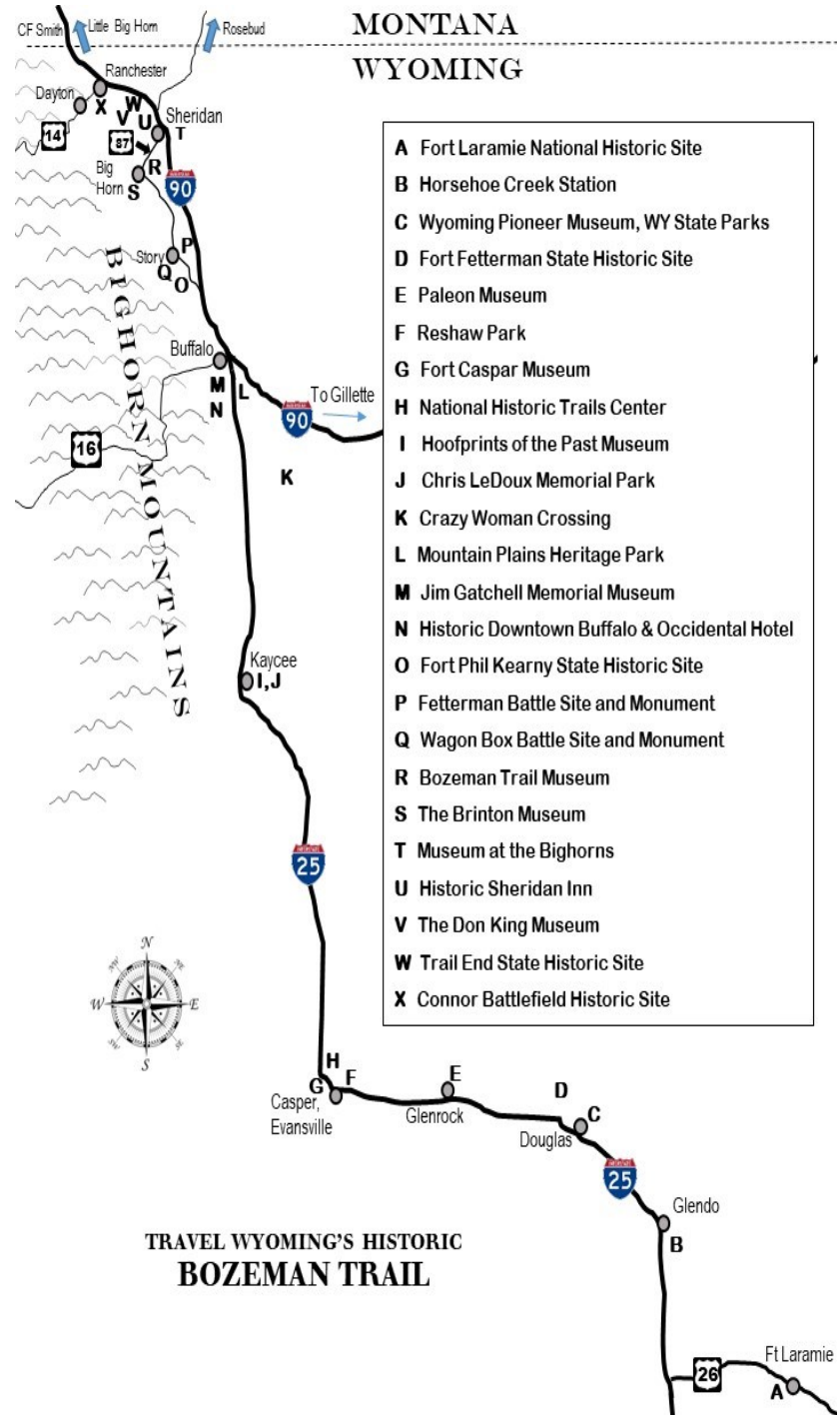
“Travel Wyoming’s Historic Bozeman Trail” guides visitors along the Trail in Wyoming.

The Trail then continues to Virginia City, Montana.

For more on the Bozeman Trail in Montana, please visit:

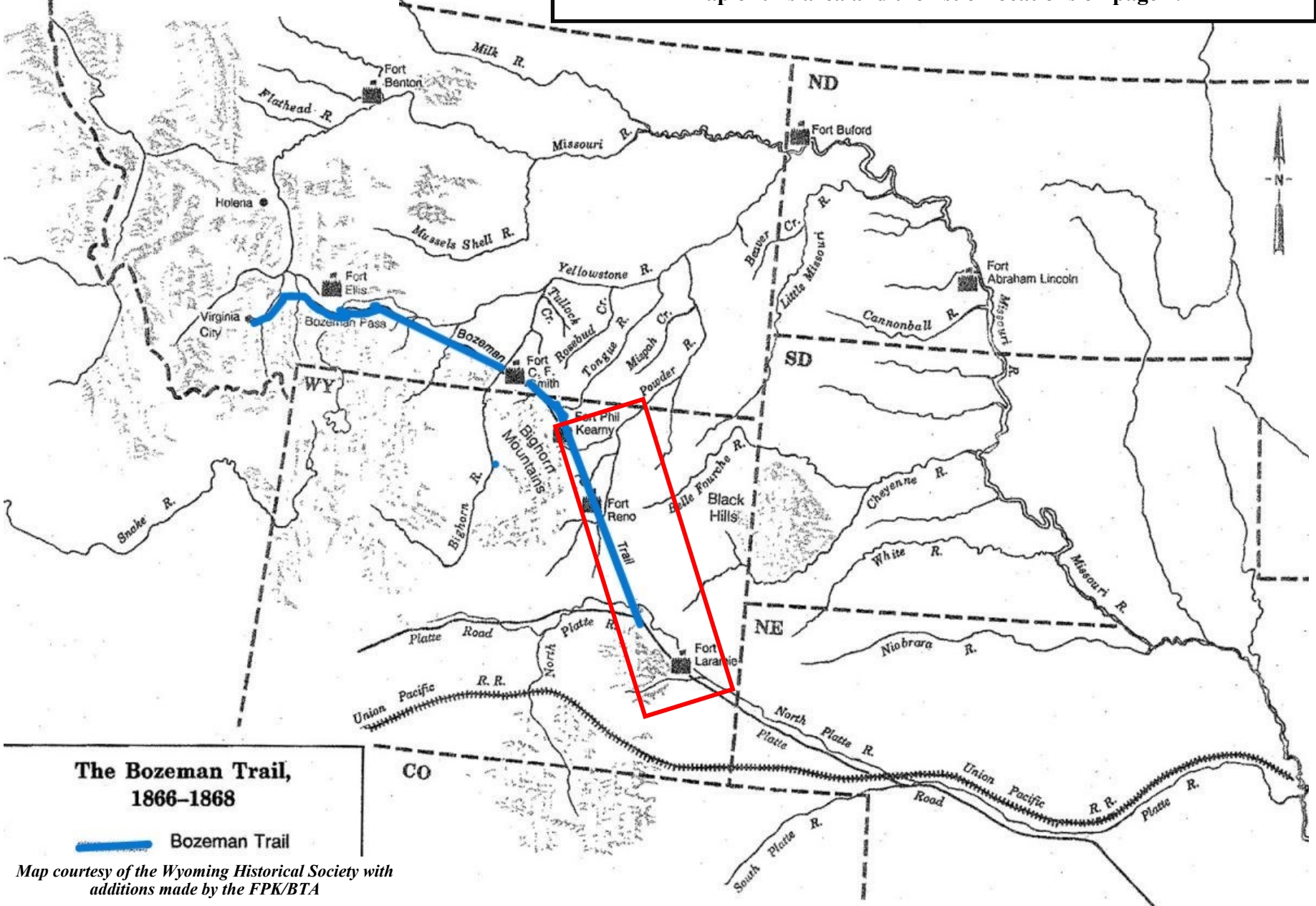
Our Montana at [www.ourmontana.org](http://www.ourmontana.org)

Cover image is of Red Cloud



For info on the Bozeman Trail in Montana, please see [www.ourmontana.org](http://www.ourmontana.org)

The red box shows the “Travel Wyoming’s Historic Bozeman Trail” focus. Many significant military events occurred in this region. For the detailed map of this area and the list of locations on page 2.



**The Bozeman Trail,  
1866-1868**

Bozeman Trail

Map courtesy of the Wyoming Historical Society with additions made by the FPK/BTA

## Highways Through History Along Wyoming's Bozeman Trail Corridor I-25 and I-90

### GOSHEN COUNTY

**A: Fort Laramie National Historic Site:** Thousands of emigrants, traders, miners and military members bound for Oregon, California, the Salt Lake Valley, Powder River Country, and Montana gold fields stopped at this fort between 1834-1890. Fort Laramie hosted several treaty negotiations with Northern Plains tribes, including the controversial Treaty of 1868. The park grounds are open from dawn until dusk every day of the year. Some historic buildings may be closed in winter. About 30 miles off I-25. 965 Gray Rocks Road, Fort Laramie. 307-837-2221 x3002; [www.nps.gov/foia/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/foia/index.htm)

### PLATTE COUNTY

#### **GLENDO**

**B: Horseshoe Creek Station:** "During the 1850s and 1860s, wagon freighters fed and watered mules and oxen, exchanged tired stagecoach horses for fresh ones." In December 1866 John "Portugee" Phillips stopped at Horseshoe Creek Station during his legendary 235-mile ride from Fort Phil Kearny to Fort Laramie after the Fetterman Fight. Signage only, no services. 2.5 miles off I-25 - Exit 111

### CONVERSE COUNTY

#### **DOUGLAS**

**C: Wyoming Pioneer Museum, WY State Parks:** Located on the Wyoming State Fairground in Douglas, this museum houses large collections of western history memorabilia and Indian artifacts. Open year round with limited winter hours. WY State Fairgrounds, 400 W. Center St., Douglas. 307-358-9288, [www.wyomingpioneerassociation.com/about-us/](http://www.wyomingpioneerassociation.com/about-us/)

**D: Fort Fetterman State Historic Site:** "Established on a bluff above the North Platte River where the Bozeman Trail left the old Oregon Trail route to head north for the Montana gold fields. Fort Fetterman was used frequently as a staging location for U.S. Army expeditions during the Indian Wars. The museum's exhibits, restored buildings, and trails provide a glimpse into Army operations at this remote outpost and into the boom and bust of the post-military town of Fetterman", named for Capt. William J. Fetterman. Open seasonally. 752 State Hwy 93, Douglas. 307-358-2864

### **GLENROCK**

**E: Paleon Museum:** The Glenrock Paleon Museum and Dr. Robert T. Bakker Education Center was founded in November 1994 after the discovery of Stephanie, a Triceratops, by the curator Sean Smith at a site north of Glenrock (along the Bozeman Trail corridor). The museum houses dinosaur bones found in Wyoming from the Jurassic and Cretaceous Eras. Seasonal hours. 506 W. Birch Street, Glenrock. 307-436-2667

### NATRONA COUNTY

#### **EVANSVILLE**

**F: Reshaw Park:** For more than a decade in the mid-1800s, Reshaw's (Richard's) Bridge just east of Casper, was the most important crossing of the North Platte River. "In 1864 Richard's Bridge was the departure point for the four large trains that opened the Bozeman Trail." Located next to the North Platte River, a replica of the bridge is on display in the park. This park is open year-round during daylight. About 3 miles off I-25 on Platte Park Road, Evansville.

#### **CASPER**

**G: Fort Caspar Museum:** This reconstructed 1865 military post feature "exhibits on prehistoric peoples, Plains Indians, ranching, the energy industry, and the City of Casper as well as the western emigrant trails and frontier army". Seasonal hours for museum. Grounds open year-round. 4001 Fort Caspar Rd, Casper. [www.fortcasparwyoming.com](http://www.fortcasparwyoming.com)

**H: National Historic Trails Center:** This interpretive center is operated by the Bureau of Land Management, and tells the "stories of American Indians, early explorers, and the Oregon, Mormon, California, and Pony Express trails. Interactive exhibits, including simulated covered wagon and stagecoach rides, life-size displays, and interpretive panels are found throughout the Center's seven galleries". Open year round, closed federal holidays. 1501 North Poplar Street, Casper. 307-261-7700

**Tate Geological and Werner Wildlife Museums**  
of Casper College (not on Guide map) promote learning and provide educational resources to the community, researchers, and visitors. About 3+ miles off of I-25 in Casper for more info please see [www.caspercollege.edu/tate-geological-museum/](http://www.caspercollege.edu/tate-geological-museum/)

## JOHNSON COUNTY

### **KAYCEE**

**I: Hoofprints of the Past Museum:** Located in the Western heritage-rich small town of Kaycee, in the heart of Powder River Country, Hoofprints of the Past Museum is must-see. The museum fulfills its mission to “preserve the unique local cultural heritage of Kaycee and the surrounding countryside. That heritage includes Native Americans, the Bozeman Trail, Trappers, Traders, and Pioneers, Fort Reno, German Missionaries settlement, and the Portuguese Houses site, conflicts with natives such as the Dull Knife Battle, the Cattle Boom, Cattle Barons and Frewen Castle, the Johnson County War, the Outlaw Era, the Hole in the Wall Gang, Butch Cassidy, Sundance Kid, Kid Curry, and other local outlaws”. Just a few blocks off I-25, open year-round, seasonal winter hours. Offers guided tours. 344 Nolan Avenue, Kaycee. 307-738-2381 [www.hoofprintsofthepast.org](http://www.hoofprintsofthepast.org)

**J: Chris LeDoux Memorial Park:** This park and monument honor the late singer-songwriter and hall of fame rodeo champion (who was a Western history buff) with a one and half-time life-size bronze by Western history sculptor D. Michael Thomas. This park, too, is located just off I-25, across from Hoofprints of the Past Museum. The park is open year-round during daytime only.

*Note: 27 miles E/NE of Kaycee is Fort Reno, signage only, National Register of Historic Places, land owned by State of Wyoming. No services at this location. Gravel roads.*

### **SOUTH of BUFFALO (Johnson County)**

**K: Crazy Woman Crossing:** The high hills surrounding the Crazy Woman crossing offered excellent opportunities for observation or attack from warriors on Bozeman Trail travelers, which became common occurrences during 1866-1868. Signage and views of untouched landscape. South of Buffalo, approx. 14 miles Trabling Road east to Buffalo Sussex Road. No services going to or at this location. Gravel roads.

### **BUFFALO**

**L: Mountain Plains Heritage Park:** The park’s trail crosses the Bozeman Trail and offers interpretive signs depicting life on the western plains and railroad history. At the park’s high point, you can visualize a portion of the Bozeman Trail. 2 miles off I-25 on Stockyard Road.

**M: Jim Gatchell Memorial Museum:** With over 40,000 artifacts this museum houses historically significant collections on Johnson County and regional history. Focusing on Bozeman Trail and Johnson County Cattle War, and Basque, Native American, Frontier and other local cultural artifacts and exhibits, and outstanding temporary exhibits. Accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. Winner of the 2023 National Medal for Museum and Library Service. 100 Fort St., Buffalo. 307-684-9331 Open year-round with seasonal hours. A few minutes off I-25 [www.jimgatchell.com](http://www.jimgatchell.com)

**N: Historic Downtown Buffalo and Occidental Hotel:** Quaint parks, shops, and historic buildings, including the Occidental Hotel, where Owen Wister’s Virginian finally “got his man”. Others visitors were Buffalo Bill Cody, Teddy Roosevelt, Butch Cassidy, Sundance Kid, and Calamity Jane, who drove freight wagons on the Bozeman Trail. Through town see D. Michael Thomas bronze statues including “After the Dust Settles” of two war horses. A mile off I-25

### **NORTH of BUFFALO (Johnson County)**

**O: Fort Phil Kearny State Historic Site:** 1,000+ acres of spectacular views much like in July of 1866 when Colonel Carrington and the 18<sup>th</sup> Infantry arrived to construct forts along the Bozeman Trail– in the heart Northern Plains Indians last best hunting grounds. After two years of “Red Cloud’s War”, the Fort was abandoned in 1868. The Fort Phil Kearny Interpretive Center is open daily in summer, with seasonal hours. A National Historic Landmark. The grounds are open year-round sunrise to sunset. About 3 miles off of I-90, exit 44. 307-684-7629. 528 Wagon Box Road, Banner. [www.fortphilkearny.com](http://www.fortphilkearny.com)

## SHERIDAN COUNTY

**P: Fetterman Battle Site:** Before Custer there was Fetterman. On Dec. 21, 1866 Capt. Wm. Fetterman, rode with 80 men out of Fort Phil Kearny and over Lodge Trail Ridge to fight Indians. None of the 81 men survived. The Fetterman State and National Historic Site is much like it was 155+ years ago, with a walking trail including a mile on the Bozeman Trail. Open sunrise to sunset. 3.3 miles from Fort Phil Kearny. Off of I-90 Exit 44. [www.fortphilkearny.com](http://www.fortphilkearny.com)

## STORY

**Q: Wagon Box Battle Site and Monument:** On August 2, 1867, 32 men fought off hundreds of Indians during an attack on the wood trains. Most soldiers survived using recently obtained Springfield breech loading rifles, more efficient than previously used muzzle loading rifles. This location is a State and National Historic Site, and borders the Bighorn National Forest foothills. This site is much like it was 155+ years ago looking in most directions. About 4 miles from Fort Phil Kearny. 333 Wagon Box Road, Story. [www.fortphilkearny.com](http://www.fortphilkearny.com)

## BIG HORN

**R: Bozeman Trail Museum:** “Built in 1879 by the Rock Creek Stage Line, the Blacksmith Shop, now home to the Bozeman Trail Museum; originally satisfied the needs of the nearby Bozeman Trail, connecting south-eastern Wyoming to Virginia City, Montana. The collection includes Indian artifacts, dentistry tools, photos of our area, pioneer clothing, books, blacksmith tools, and many other artifacts from pioneer families”. About 10 miles south of Sheridan, this museum is open 11 – 4 on weekends– June, July & Aug. or by appointment. 335 South Johnson St., Big Horn. 307-751-4908 or 307-751-5741. [www.bighorncity.org](http://www.bighorncity.org)

### **S: The Brinton Museum**

Art – History - Nature Trails – Architecture: “The Museum’s 24,000-square-foot houses one of the most significant and extensive Western and American Indian Art collections in the Rocky Mountain West”. The architecture of the Museum’s rammed earth wall is the largest in North America. 239 Brinton Road, Big Horn 307-672-3173. Open daily in summer, with seasonal hours. [www.thebrintonmuseum.org](http://www.thebrintonmuseum.org)

## SHERIDAN

**T: The Museum at the Bighorns:** “The museum’s collections currently contain more than 30,000 items including photographs, three dimensional objects, and archival materials. The collections feature a range and variety of materials that celebrate western culture, commemorating events, people, and landscapes spanning from the early nineteenth century through to contemporary times..” 850 Sibley Circle, Sheridan. 307-675-1150 Open daily in summer, with seasonal hours. [www.museumbighorns.org](http://www.museumbighorns.org)

**U: Historic Sheridan Inn:** “The Inn’s most well-known occupant is Col. William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody. He took up residence of the Inn from 1894 to 1902. During that time, Cody would use the front lawn to hold auditions for his ‘Wild West’ show. The show depicted life of the ‘old west’ featuring Native American culture and reenactments of frontier events such as a Pony Express Relay Race and most famously, the Battle of the Little Big Horn. The show featured many well-known individuals including Annie Oakley and Sitting Bull.” A National Historic Landmark. 56 Broadway Street, Sheridan. 307-674-2178 [www.sheridaninn.com](http://www.sheridaninn.com)

**V: The Don King Museum:** Located off the King’s Rope Shop. “The museum houses over three decades of the King family’s dedication to collecting Western and cowboy memorabilia from all over the world. In addition to the hundreds of saddles that line the walls, the Don King Museum also showcases perfectly preserved wagons, coaches, Indian artifacts, guns, Western tack and original artwork”. Open year-round Mon-Sat. 184 N. Main St., Sheridan 307-672-2702 [www.kingssaddlery.com/museum](http://www.kingssaddlery.com/museum)

**W: Trail End State Historic Site:** From its authentically furnished rooms (not for rent) to its finely manicured lawns, Trail End State Historic Site offers an elegantly different aspect of Wyoming’s colorful ranching history. Built in the Flemish Revival style in 1913, Trail End was the home of John Benjamin Kendrick. A cattle rancher who started out as a Texas cowboy, Kendrick became Governor of Wyoming and a U.S. Senator. 400 Clarendon Ave., Sheridan. 307-674-4589. [www.trailend.org](http://www.trailend.org)

## RANCHESTER

**X: Connor Battlefield Historic Site:** On August 29<sup>th</sup>, 1865, over 300 soldiers and Indian scouts led by General Patrick Connor, during his Powder River Indian Expedition’s mission, attacked Black Bear’s Arapaho village located nearby this site. This State site offers signage, seasonal camping and picnic areas. County Road 67, Ranchester. Less than 2 miles off I-90. [www.wyoparks.org](http://www.wyoparks.org)

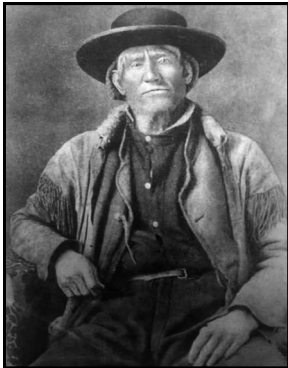


**Red Cloud**

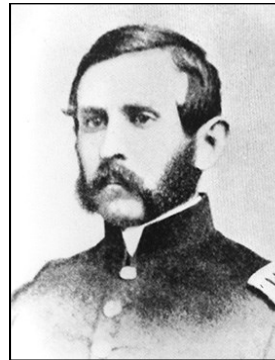
**A few of the  
Bozeman Trail's  
Historical Figures**



**Little Wolf and Dull Knife**

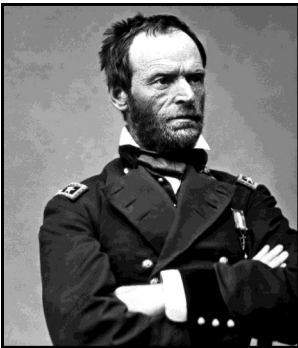


**Jim Bridger**

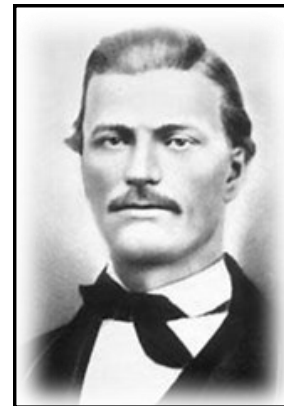


**William Fetterman**

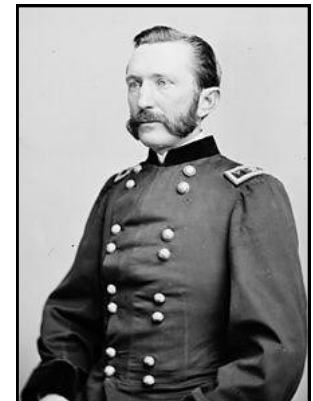
**William Sherman**



**Henry Carrington**



**John Bozeman**



**Patrick Connor**



## **Bighorn National Forest**

Along the western edge of the Bozeman Trail corridor is the Bighorn National Forest, with it's magnificent views following along Johnson and Sheridan Counties.

“The Bighorn National Forest offers a little for everyone with breathtaking scenery, a diversity of recreation experiences, nearly 192,000 acres of wilderness, and over 1,200 miles of trail for visitors to explore.” US Forest Service

Residents and visitors alike connect to the Bighorn National Forest's beauty and wildlife. This Forest also holds sacred, cultural and spiritual significances for regional American Indian tribes.

The Bighorn National Forest borders most of western Johnson and Sheridan Counties, and continues into Montana.

For more info on the Bighorn National Forest please visit:  
[www.fs.usda.gov/bighorn](http://www.fs.usda.gov/bighorn)





Over 280 miles of the historic **BOZEMAN TRAIL** are along Wyoming's I-25 and I-90 corridors

Established in 1985, the Fort Phil Kearny/Bozeman Trail Association is a 501(c)(3) non-profit all volunteer organization, dedicated to the preservation, development, education, and promotion of the historic sites at Fort Phil Kearny, its related sites, and along the Bozeman Trail. Become a member and join us with our mission. You will also receive two issues annually of *Lookout*, our print newsletter magazine, and receive a 10% discount in our bookstore.

For more information on the Association, Bozeman Trail, Fort Phil Kearny, and related sites please visit:  
[www.fortphilkearny.com](http://www.fortphilkearny.com).

**Fort Phil Kearny/Bozeman Trail Association and  
Fort Phil Kearny State Historic Site**  
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