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PAINTROCK BASIN EPISODE

During my years working as a game warden for the Wyoming Game and Fish Department I had my share of problems with vehicles. One episode which happened during October of 1964 caused me to walk some distance for assistance but as it turned out I was rewarded with getting acquainted with some very nice people.

On October 15, I went to Paintrock Creek area in an International Scout four wheel drive vehicle to check on hunting activity. This was the beginning of the elk hunting season so there were plenty of hunters around. I checked about 30 hunters and a few elk they had killed. It was dry conditions so hunting was difficult.

As I was traveling along a rather steep, narrow road which wound down a steep hillside to Paintrock Basin, a rear axle of the Scout twisted apart. That ended my vehicle transportation so I walked to and across Paintrock Basin and up Paintrock Creek to Hap Crane's outfitting camp. Art Williams was there and he brought me to Worland. He made a special trip of over 100 miles to assist me and would not accept any pay. He owned a cabin at Hyattville that he used during the summers.

Finding a new axle to buy took a few days and October 19, Colonel Noyes, the Greybull game warden and Dick Keeney, the Ten Sleep game warden and I went to where I had left the Scout. Try we did but we could not get the broken axle out of the housing. Colonel and I returned on the 20th to try again. This time we chained a log to the frame of the Scout so it supported the rear where the wheel was gone. We disconnected the rear drive shaft and using front wheel drive we moved the vehicle down the switchbacks to the Basin floor.

Paintrock Basin is partially covered with sagebrush and as we moved into the bottom, a young bobcat ran from us and tried to hide in some brush. Bobcats were classified as predatory animals and could legally be taken, so we decided to try to catch it. Colonel and I each took a gunny sack and the chase was on. It could easily outrun us but for some reason it seemed to not want to leave the immediate area. We were able to catch it and put it in a sack. About that time, Wayne Souder and Ken Miller drove up in a Jeep station wagon. They were nonresident hunters and mechanics as well. Art Williams had arranged with them to help us with replacing the axle in the Scout. Colonel was well acquainted with both Wayne and Ken and as they drove up to us, he shook the bobcat out of the sack into the back seat of their vehicle. Wayne and Ken were very fast and agile moving out of the Jeep.

Well, after a good laugh and some conversation, Wayne and Ken installed the new axle in a short time and Colonel and I went out separate ways. Wayne and Ken both moved to Wyoming a few years after the meeting. Wayne operated an outfitting business he bought from Hap Crane. Ken operated a Chevron service station at Greybull.