

## **Johnson County Jim Gatchell Memorial Museum**



## **National Register of Historic Places Walking and Driving Tour**

**The Johnson County Jim Gatchell Memorial Museum presents this driving tour for your enjoyment.**

**Johnson County contains 25 National Register of Historic Places sites. This tour will be divided into three areas: Buffalo, southern Johnson County, and northern Johnson County. Learn why these sites are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.**

*Be advised that when you are driving the southern and northern Johnson County sections, you are traveling in rural areas. There are no services except in Buffalo, Sheridan, and Kaycee—be sure to pack a lunch and plenty of liquids. Begin at the Johnson County Jim Gatchell Memorial Museum, located at 100 Fort Street, Buffalo, Wyoming.*

## **BUFFALO HISTORICAL SITES**



### **Carnegie Public Library (Johnson County Jim Gatchell Memorial Museum)**

Built in 1909, this Andrew Carnegie Library was the original location of the Johnson County Library. Andrew Carnegie, a Gilded Age industrialist, believed that education had the power to lift people out of poverty. By the time he died in 1919, Carnegie had donated over \$56 million to build 2,509 libraries.

Costing \$12,500, the building is “Neoclassical” in style, with levels of contrasting color native stone, a porch with two slender Norman-style columns, and an apse on the north side. When the library moved to its current location in the 1980s, the Johnson County Jim Gatchell Memorial Museum acquired the old library building and connected its two buildings with a link in 2006.

*Walk to the corner of Main Street and Fort Street where the Johnson County Courthouse is located.*



### **Johnson County Courthouse**

The Johnson County Courthouse, a “good example of Italianate style of architecture,” was built in 1884 as a two-story building with a hip roof and stilted arch windows. Bricks were made from clay soil obtained from a location just south of George Washington Park. At one time the courthouse had a cupola (bell tower), a long hitching post, jail, and a bandstand. It was the sixth county courthouse to be built in Wyoming and one of the few that is still being utilized as originally designed.

Remodeling has occurred after WWII, in 1973, 1986, 1994, 2012, and 2020.

***The Buffalo Main Street Historic District is on the east and west side of Main Street, between Fort Street and Angus Street. For more information, be sure to pick up the Main Street Walking Tour brochure.***



## **Buffalo Main Street Historic District**

The Buffalo Main Street Historic District extends one and a half blocks and covers mainly the buildings on the west side of Main Street, with the exception of two buildings on the northeast corner of Fetterman Street and the Occidental Hotel.

This district includes 18 buildings, of which 12 are historically significant, dating from 1900 – 1932. They are associated with commercial and economical recovery from natural disasters, political battles of the 1880s and 1890s, homesteading, cattle ranching, and agricultural and mineral development at the turn of the century. For more information consult the museum’s Main Street Walking Tour brochure.

***Walk south on Main Street past Clear Creek until you come to St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, located at 178 S. Main Street.***



## **St. Luke’s Episcopal Church**

Even though St. Luke’s Episcopal Church was built in 1889, the Episcopalians held their first services in Buffalo in 1883. Made from local red bricks and built in the “Gothic Revival” style, the church has a flat, pointed, exposed arched framework around the narthex (church entrance hall), with chamfered (shallow angled cut) edges,

a bull’s eye window, a steeple surmounted by the Celtic cross, and 11 stained glass windows. The interior of the church typifies the plans of small Episcopal churches throughout the country. By 1982, a rectory, restrooms, a vesting room, and vestment storage were added to the church. Sunday school rooms and a Food Pantry have been added recently.

***The Buffalo Post Office is located at the corner of Main Street and Bennett Street, across from St. Luke’s Episcopal Church.***



## **Buffalo Post Office**

By 1880 Buffalo's population was large enough for President Hayes to authorize the establishment of a postal service. The post office began in the Conrad Building on Main Street and moved twice before the post office was established at its current location. Petitioning for a federal post office building in Buffalo first began in 1911. Finally constructed in 1927, it is one of the few post offices constructed nationwide by the federal

government during the 1920s and was part of the first wave of post offices completed under the Public Building Act of 1926. The architecture is an example of a combined post office and federal office building in the Neo-Classical style. Palladian windows are located on both sides of the front door. In 1967 a loading dock and an extra 24 feet were added on the east side.

***Head east on Bennett Street. The Union Congregational Church is located on the corner of Bennett Street and Lobban Avenue at 122 E. Bennett Street.***



## **Union Congregational Church**

The Union Congregational Church held services at a schoolhouse until Thomas Hutton and S. Sherrill built the church in 1886. It was the first church building in Buffalo, and one of the first two churches established in northern Wyoming Territory. The plain, gable-roofed, rectangular frame structure of Union Congregational Church was enlarged in 1911 – 1912 to include a

basement and a belfry tower. Stained glass windows were installed the following year. Two rooms were added on the north side in 1938 and 1958. Over the years the church has been used for social gatherings, dramatic productions, concerts, etc.

***From the Union Congregational Church, walk west on Bennett Street back to Main Street. Head north on Main Street, past Fort Street, to the Holland House, 312 N. Main Street.***



## Holland House

William Henry Harrison Holland, a rancher and politician, built the Holland House in 1883. Juliet Hart, who gave the land to Holland, stipulated that he had to spend at least \$2,500 on the house. A good example of “late Victorian Vernacular,” the first two-story house in Buffalo was made from local handmade bricks but contained windows, hardware, and walnut stair railing from eastern states. The house has been extensively

remodeled and is still owned by the Holland family.

*From the Holland House, continue walking north past W. Hart Street until you reach Blue Gables Motel, 662 N Main Street.*



## Blue Gables Motel

This location was originally a campground for Native Americans visiting Buffalo. Carl Kube established Blue Gables Court in 1938 and later sold it to Harold Platt in 1947. By the time new owners purchased Blue Gables Motel in 1971, Platt had added two multi-unit buildings, four cabins, a swimming pool, and an office to the

original five cabins. Its location along US-16 and use of free-standing log cabins with a western design to make it attractive to tourists, allowed Blue Gables Motel to become a popular roadside accommodation during the height of the post-WWII travel boom.

*Walk along the west side of Main Street. Walk south to Fort Street, turn right, and walk one block to the corner of Fort Street and Adams Avenue.*



## First United Methodist Church

Dr. Daniel R. Radar established the Methodist Episcopal Church on October 20, 1890. The cornerstone of the church was laid on August 17, 1898. A frame structure, the church contains a main room, a lecture room, and a tower painted white with pointed arches, trefoils, and quatrefoils (flower symbols with three or four petals). The church, with fine acoustics, sight lines, flexibility, and focus on the pulpit, typifies many western Methodist churches. Stained glass windows were installed in 1916, a social center was added in 1917, an educational building

in 1959, and a connecting cloister added in 1993. In 1939 the church's name was changed to the First United Methodist Church.

***Continue walking west on Fort Street until you reach Burritt Street. Head south on Burritt Street until you reach George Washington Park. Follow the walking trail on your right, which follows Clear Creek, until you reach the EDL Peloux Bridge.***



## **EDL Peloux Bridge**

While the bridge in the NRHP database is listed as “Peloux” the bridge was most likely named after the Pelloux family. When the EDL Peloux Bridge was built by Canton Bridge Co. of Canton, Ohio, it was erected in 1912 over Clear Creek so the Pelloux, Watt, Kumor, and Belus children could get to school. The bridge spans 75 feet and the

roadway width is 13 feet, 6 inches. The bridge is classified as a single-span, steel pin-connected five paneled Pratt Pony Truss. The EDL Peloux Bridge is one of the earlier and better-preserved examples of this type of bridge. It was moved from its location at Kumor Road to its present location in 1986.

***The Veteran's Home of Wyoming is located 2.5 miles from the Johnson County Jim Gatchell Memorial Museum. From the EDL Peloux Bridge, walk east to Burritt Street, turn left, and walk north to Fort Street. Turn right and walk back to the Johnson County Jim Gatchell Memorial Museum. Access your vehicle, turn left onto Fort Street, and drive 2.5 miles to the Veterans' Home of Wyoming.***



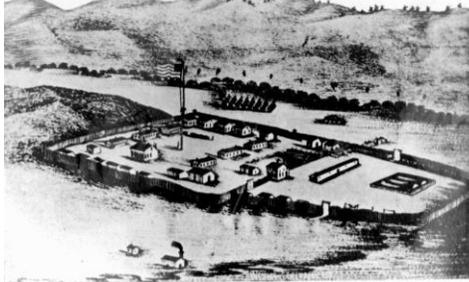
## **Fort McKinney**

Originally known as Cantonment Reno, Fort McKinney was established on the Bozeman Trail in 1876, eight years after the trail was abandoned. Two years later, the fort moved from its location along the Dry Fork of the Powder River to its current location. Numerous civilian contractors

supported the fort during its 18 years of service, leading to the development of Buffalo. The fort contained 30 buildings and a military garrison of 250 – 300 cavalry and infantry, who were responsible for keeping the peace within the Native American tribes and between the Native Americans and the settlers. After the fort closed in 1894, the site became the Soldiers' and Sailors' Home of Wyoming (Veterans' Home of Wyoming).

## **NORTHERN JOHNSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SITES**

*From the Veterans' Home of Wyoming, drive back to Buffalo on US-16E. Turn left onto Main Street. Drive about 2 miles and merge onto I-90W toward Sheridan. Take exit 44 Piney Creek Road, merge, and continue left on Lower Piney Creek Road/US-87N for about 2.5 miles. (Piney Creek Road turns into WY-193/Story Road.) Turn left at Kearny Lane and after 0.4 miles, take the first right onto Wagon Box Road. Your destination will be on the left.*



## **Fort Phil Kearny**

Fort Phil Kearny was established in 1866. It was the site of the most significant and dramatic campaigns in the West during that time. Located on a low knoll between the Big and Little Piney Creeks, the fort was built to provide military protection for the travelers on the Bozeman Trail. Nearby are the sites of the Fetterman and the Wagon Box Fights. To learn more details about the

fort, visit the Johnson County Jim Gatchell Memorial Museum and the Fort Phil Kearny Interpretive Center. This is a state historic site with an admission fee.

*From Fort Phil Kearny, travel back to I-90E/I-25S. After 11.6 miles, keep right and continue on US-87S/I-25S. Continue on I-25S and take exit 291-Trabing Road/Buffalo Sussex Cutoff. Turn left onto Trabing Road/Buffalo Sussex Cutoff Road continue to follow Buffalo Sussex Cutoff Road and drive 13.9 miles. Turn left and your destination, Crazy Woman Crossing and Battlefield/Trabing Road will be on the right after 0.3 miles.*

## **SOUTHERN JOHNSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SITES**



### **Crazy Woman Crossing and Battlefield/Trabing Store**

Crazy Woman Crossing, located on a flat terraced bottom above the creek, was a desirable camping spot for Bozeman Trail travelers. Lakota and Cheyenne Indians, who opposed the creation of the Bozeman Trail, ambushed a wagon train led by Lieutenants Wand, Daniels, and Templeton, on July 20, 1866. Daniels was killed, but Templeton and Wand were able to organize the train and repel attacks until another wagon train arrived.

In 1877, August Trabing opened the first store in Johnson County near Crazy Woman Crossing. It served as a trading post and roadhouse to supply forts, railroads, and travelers on the Bozeman Trail. It also included a post office, Wells Fargo office, telegraph station, blacksmith shop, barns, and cabins. After several robberies and the relocation of Fort McKinney, Trabing leased and then sold the store at Crazy Woman and built a new Trabing Store in Buffalo in 1878 where First Northern Bank of Wyoming is today. The Trabing Store ceased to exist in 1882 when it was sold to John H. Conrad and became the Conrad Store.

***From Crazy Woman Battlefield, drive back to Buffalo Sussex Road Cutoff. Turn left and drive 8.4 miles before turning left. Drive 2.0 miles before turning right and driving 1.5 miles to reach 9 Mile Road. Turn right and drive 16.5 miles before turning left onto Lower Sussex Road. Drive 2.3 miles and the marker for Fort Reno will be on the left.***



## **Fort Reno**

Fort Reno was established in 1865 and briefly called Fort Connor after its founder, Brigadier General Patrick E. Connor. The fort was located near Dry Fork Crossing on the Powder River to ensure that the southern section of the Bozeman Trail remained open, protecting travelers from

Native American tribes. Fort Reno never came under direct attack and never gained widespread publicity like Fort Phil Kearny. Abandoned in 1868 with the signing of the Fort Laramie Treaty, the fort was burned by Native Americans.

***Drive west on Lower Sussex Road from Fort Reno for 4 miles. (Pass 9 Mile Road on your right). The signs for Cantonment Reno will be on your left.***



## **Cantonment Reno**

Cantonment Reno was established on the west bank of Powder River about three miles from Fort Reno. Established as a supply depot during Brigadier General George Crook's 1876 campaign to force Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho tribes from their last great hunting grounds, Cantonment Reno was renamed McKinney in 1877 to honor Lieutenant John A.

McKinney who died at the Dull Knife Battle the year before. In existence only from 1876 – 1878, the fort was abandoned due to poor soil, water, and grass, as well as a lack of trees for lumber. No structures remain. It was relocated near present-day Buffalo as Fort McKinney.

***Head south on Lower Sussex Road. Turn right onto State Hwy 1002/WY-192W/Sussex Road. Drive 17.9 miles and continue on WY-191N. Turn left to merge onto I-25S/US-87S towards Casper. Drive 7.8 miles and take exit 246 and turn left onto Powder River Road/WY-196S. The AJX Bridge will be on the left after about 0.5 miles.***



## **AJX Bridge over South Fork of Powder River**

The AJX Bridge over South Fork of Powder River, built by Omaha Steel Works, is one of three in Johnson County that represent bridge building and transportation trends in Wyoming. This bridge was built in 1932 as a steel truss bridge that could be easily dismantled and moved. The AJX Bridge was built in 1931 – 1932 and measures 306 feet, 10 inches in span, with a roadway width of 20 feet. It possesses a cantilevered three-span and abutments retained with sweptback wings. This Pratt truss bridge is Wyoming's only large cantilever bridge.

*From the bridge, drive west on WY-196N. Turn right and merge onto I-25N. Take exit 29B for I-25 BUS/US-87 BUS N/S Main Street. Turn left onto Fort Street and turn left into the museum parking lot.*

### **Private National Register Sites in Johnson County:**

- 1. Beaver Creek Ranch**
- 2. Powder River Station/Powder River Crossing**
- 3. Dull Knife Battlefield**
- 4. Sussex Post Office and Store**
- 5. EDZ Irigaray Bridge**
- 6. Trail Ruts of the Bozeman Trail at Lake DeSmet**
- 7. Wold Bison Jump**
- 8. HF Bar Ranch (if you wish to tour, please call 307-684-2487).**
- 9. TA Ranch (if you wish to visit, please call 307-684-5833).**
- 10. Spear-O-Wigwam Ranch (may be open for renting, check online for more details).**

*Images courtesy of the Johnson County Jim Gatchell Memorial Museum, [wyoshpo.state.wy.us/NationalRegister.com](http://wyoshpo.state.wy.us/NationalRegister.com), the Local History Department at the Johnson County Library, [images.google.com](http://images.google.com), Dennis Boggs, Alliance for Historic Wyoming, and Jennifer Romanoski.*

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# JOHNSON COUNTY WYOMING

