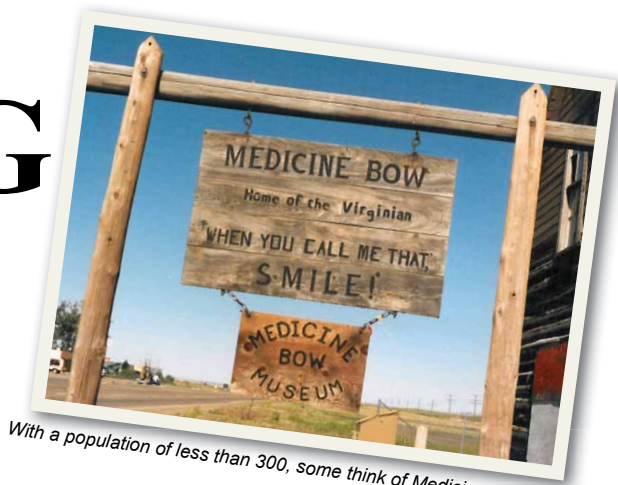


The Best PRAIRIE DOG SHOOTING Of My Life

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #42 —



With a population of less than 300, some think of Medicine Bow as just a wide spot in the road.

“Just take the two-track to the right, under the power lines, and follow it till you get to **The Reservoir**; there are lots of prairie dogs there.” Those were the words of the rancher, offering advice about the best prairie dog shooting on his ranch.

Medicine Bow, Wyoming was a hotspot for prairie dogs in the late 1980s. Gary Cole, from the old Petersen Publishing Company, stopped by just a few days before we were to leave for that year’s planned prairie dog trip to South Dakota. He suggested I try Medicine Bow, as that’s where Petersen entertained the outdoor writers. He told me where to stay, who to talk with and insisted there were tons of dogs. So, change of plan; we headed for Medicine Bow – thanks Gary!



The Virginian Hotel was completed in 1911 and put on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. Yes, you can still get a room there.

and a sun roof. One of my buddies saw us come up over a ridge and began referring to my pickup as the “War Wagon” – a name that became my CB handle on prairie dog trips from then on.

Anyway, I was looking for **The Reservoir** and had followed the rancher’s instructions but simply couldn’t find it – hadn’t gone far enough. After three or four miles and having driven completely out of prairie dogs, I stopped to glass out front. A long, long way out on the prairie was a tiny brown strip, with some ridges on it – it looked out of place in the green sagebrush. As I came to learn, this

was the back side of the dam of **The Reservoir** and the ridges were cattle trails.

“...this area of the ranch had never been shot”

It was about 10:00 in the morning when we arrived

and in my opinion, this area of the ranch had never been shot. The dogs were the thickest I have ever seen and apparently had never heard a gunshot -- before now. We laid into them for a couple of hours then invited the rest of our group to follow us back to **The Reservoir** after our lunch break -- for the last afternoon of shooting.

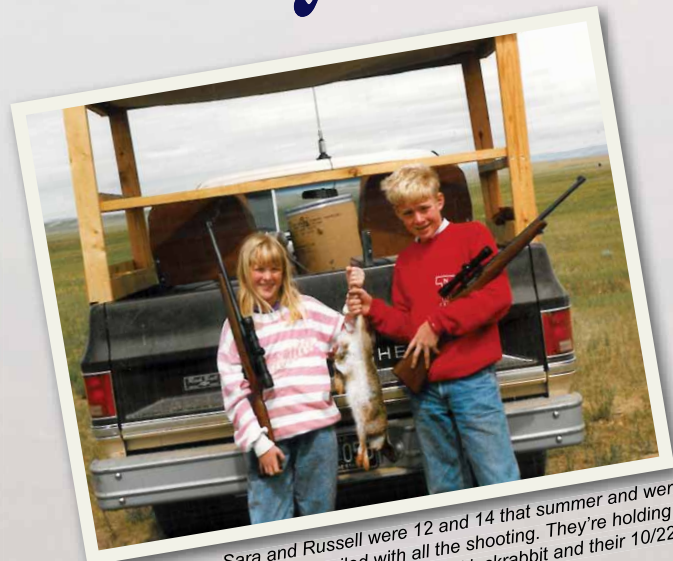
I made many more trips to Medicine Bow, after that, and never think or talk about prairie dog shooting without remembering **The Reservoir**. It was the very best!

The kids were both experienced enough to safely shoot .22s from the back of the pickup, so I rigged up a couple of swivel seats in the bed – with shooting rails



Larry Potterfield

Undisclosed ranch near
Medicine Bow, Wyoming
June 1988



Sara and Russell were 12 and 14 that summer and were a bit spoiled with all the shooting. They're holding a small jackrabbit and their 10/22s.