

You can take the girl out of Wyoming but not Wyoming out of the girl



**Editor's
commentary**

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If I had a dollar for every time someone asked me why I live where I live or labeled me as simple, I would be rich enough to explain and prove them otherwise in a number of ways; but, reserving space on a newspaper page will suffice to enlighten curious minds on why my heart belongs to Wyoming.

I grew up in Osage, Wyoming, a town established in the early 1900s when it was discovered to be an oil field gold-mine. Nowadays Osage, population 208, could be mistaken for a ghost town that rarely pops up on Google maps.

When I was born, my parents bought an old school house outside of Osage and moved my two older brothers and I onto four acres of sweet Wyoming prairie.

My neighbors lived miles away and one would need binoculars to see the other's home. As a child my parents would catch me in my underwear playing in the muddy driveway after a rainstorm. Pavement, concrete or gravel is a luxury rarely found on my stomping grounds.

I don't remember a time in my life where my father didn't house chickens or turkeys. Our porch was always filled with numerous cats and dogs due to my big brown eyes and my father's inability to say no to his baby girl.

By the time I was 8, I knew how to bait a fishing hook and drive

my parents champagne 1993 Mercury Sable on the vacant highways near my house.

When I was 12, my brothers bought me my first Remington .22 for Christmas, and I was taught how to shoot a pistol and handle them correctly and safely.

In high school, my friends and I would watch our boys play under Friday night lights and find ourselves either at the Loaf N Jug parking lot or at the lake out of town afterwards playing in the water and listening to music on a crooked, dismantled dock.

To some people this life might read as a simple, or the basis of country song, but to me it is anything but simple and it is a life that I am proud to be a part of.

I thought that many people would understand my values and have a mutual understanding of my lifestyle when I moved to Cheyenne because it wasn't like I moved across the country; I only moved across the state.

To my surprise, many people were astounded when I told them where I was from and proceeded

to either ask if my transition to living in Cheyenne was going all right or why I would stay in this state in the first place.

Seriously?

Let me just step off my horse and tell you about my transition and devotion to the Cowboy State.

I am not here to say that my way of life is more profound than those who live in the suburbs of Chicago. I am not here to judge where anyone comes from. Where a person chooses to live is completely their decision.

Nonetheless, I am here to say that even though a person has every right to believe what they want about Wyoming, that does not make it OK for them to look at me or the people that live here like we haven't been living in the real world.

You may not agree with Wyoming's politics or, as Jeff Foxworthy puts it, understand that we classify the four seasons in a year as: almost winter, winter, still winter and road construction.

As an outsider looking in I'm sure we seem like a stubborn red state where

THIS GOD-FORSAKEN LAND

<p><i>This "God-forsaken Land" they call it, As they gaze with pitying eye, "Nothing here but sand and sage brush, And a vast expanse of sky."</i></p> <p><i>"We don't know how you stand it," These city folks declare, "How do you make a living — Or do you live on air?"</i></p> <p><i>We could tell them of our ranches, Where great herds of cattle roam, Or of the flocks of woolies That claim Wyoming for their home.</i></p> <p><i>We could show 'em our oil wells, That pour fourth liquid gold, And in these places they call "barren," There's deep, rich veins of coal.</i></p> <p><i>They may not see our fertile valleys, With their fields of hay and grain, But nestling there among the hills, We have them — just the same.</i></p> <p><i>This "loneliness" they talk about, To us is God's own peace. There's so much beauty all around, Our thanks shall never cease.</i></p>	<p><i>Our streams are full of rainbow trout. We've antelope and elk and deer, We're a mile up nearer Heaven, And the air is pure and clear.</i></p> <p><i>Our sunsets glow with color, And in the pearly dawn of morn The pungent scent of sage drifts down On a breeze that's mountain-born.</i></p> <p><i>If they only lived here for a while Those folks would understand Why we only smile at them About this "God-forsaken Land."</i></p> <p><i>We don't know much of city life Or where they seek God there, But we do know in Wyoming That we find Him everywhere.</i></p> <p><i>So we'll leave to them the cities Where the living is so grand. And we'll stay in Wyoming In our God-Beloved Land.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Author: Juanita M. Leach</i></p>
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One in the same:

After finishing my article, this poem off a postcard popped up on my Facebook feed. A woman posted that it was printed by the Sanborn Souvenir Company in Denver, saying in her post, "I love my Wyoming."

everyone has gun holsters on their belts and is usually one of the last states to adopt modern legislation such as the legalization of marijuana or gay marriage.

The key word in that paragraph is outsiders, and not that being an outsider is bad, but having been born and raised in this great state I can say that it does take being a native or having the same values and ideals to appreciate all that Wyoming is and has to offer. Or the mindset that Wyoming is the way it is and that is how its citizen like it.

One does not know true self-therapy until they drive across the state by themselves. On a six- to eight-hour drive, a person will get quality one-on-one time with themselves and witness both the picturesque and dreadful boring scenery of Wyoming. I myself can vouch that driving for hours on desolate highways has taught patience and the ability to work out problems in my head on my own.

People from small towns in Wyoming are also some of the greatest penny pinchers known to modern man because we learn

to buy in bulk since the closest Sam's Club or Wal-Mart is at least an hour and a half away.

Small town communities can also show significant hospitality. They encompass a sense of togetherness and welcome anyone who wants to join the community. People are willing to lend a helping hand whether it be helping change a flat tire or offering jumper cables to help start a car in the bitter winter.

I traveled to cities like Chicago, St. Louis and Dallas and even across the Pacific Ocean to Okinawa,

Japan. Each was an experience that I will never forget and credit my parents, community and school for encouraging and funding me to go on these adventures.

Yet, while each city had its own quirks and characteristics, I can't help but remember feeling exhausted every day, giving me the impression that New York is not the only city that never sleeps. People were always in a hurry and never seemed to have time for small talk or even a small smile and wave.

It's not that I don't understand the hustle and bustle of the city life or lack mutual respect toward the people who do live in them, it's just the city life makes me appreciate and yearn for the serenity of Wyoming.

When you look up at the sky you see a clear blanket of stars, not skyscrapers or smog, and when you leave your window open at night you hear the sound of crickets instead of sirens.

I will get back on my horse now, but please before you are quick to judge my square state, its people, or its politics remember that us Wyomingites don't owe you an explanation because it is our home and if we wanted to live anywhere else we would.

And if you want one, nine times out of 10 the conversation will end with, "well if you don't like it, then leave."