

Old Airport Site 31

My father, Edwin M. Cruickshank, began employment with the Department of Commerce Lighthouse Service on September 11, 1928. He was hired for the position as Caretaker and Weather Observer for Site No. 31. His salary was \$1,200.00 per annum beginning September 8, 1928, under the civil service regulations for the Lighthouse Service. (Attachment 1) He worked at this position until Site 32 (the "new airport") was completed approximately two years later.

The old airport was located northwest of Medicine Bow, my brother, Robert A. Cruickshank, said that the airport of Site 31 was built on a dry lake bed. There was one small building at this location, an office building, which had been built to fit underneath the tower. Robert said that a small Kohler light plant powered the building. That building was later given or sold to Edwin Cruickshank and it was used for a bunkhouse for my brothers while we still lived at the Kerr House, in Medicine Bow. In 1929 or 1930, a road going north towards Little Medicine,

Marshall, through Bates Hole and on to Casper, was built. This road went through Site 31, which made it necessary to move the airport one mile south of town.

The picture in Photo 1 of the "old airport" was taken during the time the "new airport" was being constructed probably in the late 1920's. I cannot identify the people in the photo, but I imagine one is Edwin Cruickshank with his helper Dave Wray. Note the Model T Ford, with a ladder on the driver's side of the car and the pinto horse.

The Site 31 field operated only after sunset. I do not have any records indicating the working hours or when the tower lights were turned on. The boundary lights were called "flooded lead acid cells". These were operating units that used acid contained in large rectangular glass jars and covered with tight fitting porcelain lids. Edwin Cruickshank would take them into Medicine Bow, to Dick Cooper's garage, to have them recharged when necessary, such as when they became dim. The jars were approximately



Photo 1: Picture at the "old airport" Site 31. c.a. 1929.