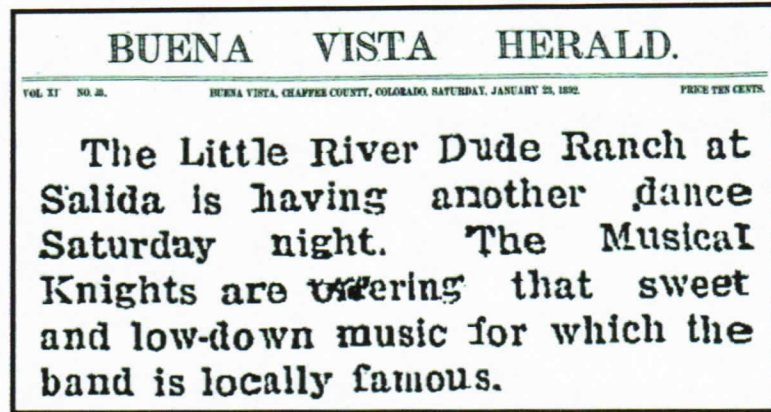


Woodland Park Area Dude and Guest Ranches

by Steve Plutt

In an effort to remember past Guest Ranches in the Woodland Park area, I have compiled a list with short profiles of the resorts that I know existed here.

First of all though, there is a difference between a "Dude Ranch" and a "Guest Ranch". Dude ranches are typically working ranches where guests participate in the everyday operation of a working cattle ranch, while guest ranches were not engaged in the cattle business but rather a recreational resort with many activities included such as tennis, swimming, golf etcetera.



All of the resorts in the Woodland Park area that I have listed in this profile were, by definition, actually Guest Ranches. Paradise Ranch owner Frank Snell for example, always instructed his employees to never, ever refer to the ranch as a "Dude Ranch" or guests as "Dudes". He insisted on "Guest Ranch" and "Guests". He felt that the word "dude" was an contemptuous description of his guests.

Brockhurst Dude Ranch
on Highway 24
Opposite Green Mountain Falls

Location: 15 miles West of Colorado Springs. Altitude: 8,000 ft. In Pikes Peak National Forest Reserve. Telephone, Telegraph and Daily Mail. Guests met by appointment in Colorado Springs no charge. Accommodations for twenty guests in modern log ranch lodge; four modern log cabins; and log dining lodge. Excellent food served family style. Inner-spring mattresses. Season: May 15th to September 15th.

Activities: Each guest has private saddle horse. Red Barn night spot—dancing. Heated swimming pool, tennis, 1/2 mile. Steak Roasts, pack trips (extra charge) with guide. Rates: \$12.00 per day, American Plan. \$75.00 per week including saddle horse.

Write—Wire—Phone 4-9289—Mr. and Mrs. H. W. Brockhurst

In Colorado and other states, the dude and guest ranch industry started in at least the 1890s when ranch owners began opening their "spreads" to traveling tourist as they passed by. They offered true western hospitality by allowing them to stop over, spend the night and fed them. Soon they allowed the tourist to hunt and fish on the ranch or just go for a horseback ride. At some point, the visitors started paying the ranchers for these things and a new industry was born.

In our Teller County/Woodland Park area, the Skelton Mountain resort was the first example of a guest ranch. Some accounts credit the Skelton as the first Dude Ranch in the State of Colorado

but that simply just isn't true as the Little River Dude Ranch in Salida goes back to at least 1892.

Besides the immediate Woodland Park area, there were guest ranches all over Teller County and down Ute Pass along with north of Teller in the Westcreek and Deckers area.

A few examples are the Brockhurst Dude Ranch and the Jo-Mac Ranch in Green Mountain Falls. In Chipita Park was the Chipita Park Camp. In Divide was the Golden Bell Dude Ranch and Rainbow Valley while further south in Gillette was the Lazy S guest ranch. In Florissant was the Blue Mountain Ranch and Sanborn Western Camp. Also in Florissant was the well-known and notorious Wildhorn Dude Ranch. North of Teller was the Shady Brook Ranch and the Saddle String Ranch.

Guest Ranches in the Woodland Park area were very popular in the 1950s, '60s and even into the '70s. But the culture in our area changed and the western life experienced on these resorts waned.

I thought that this primitive bio on these places might help preserve their place in Woodland Park history. ~Steve Plutt

Lazy S GUEST RANCH
at Gillette, Colo., near Cripple Creek

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Your Hosts, Helen and Cheddy Thompson