

WELCOME

Historic Crail Ranch Homestead Museum presents the history of the Big Sky area prior to the opening of the ski resorts in the 1970s. Through the lens of the Crail family, as well as others who lived here, visitors gain insight into our culture and economies and our community's relationship to the region and the nation beyond.

EARLY HISTORY

The first visitors to the area were Native American hunter-gatherers who used the area for at least 9,000 years, during their seasonal search for resources. Shoshone, Bannock, Nez Perce, Crow, and others trekked along the Gallatin Crest and camped along the Cut-tuh-o'gwa (Shoshone for "swift water") at the confluences of its many creeks and tributaries. Archaeologists believe that this land was used as a pass-through for bands of Indians who traveled between the warmer valleys to the east and west.

In 1806, Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery explored the three rivers that joined to form the Missouri. They renamed the easternmost of those rivers after Albert Gallatin, the Secretary of the Treasury, who managed the funding for the expedition.

Mountain men trapped fur-bearing animals along the river and its tributaries in the early 1800s. Later a few prospectors visited the canyon to search for valuable minerals. After the establishment of Yellowstone Park in 1872, and the arrival of the railroad in Bozeman in 1883, the narrow footpath along the Gallatin was widened, making the mountain terrain more accessible. By the 1880s, ranchers, seeking summer grazing, moved herds of sheep, cattle, and horses through the pass from the Madison Valley and up the Gallatin Canyon logging road. Under the provisions of the Homestead Act and the Land Revision Act, a few ranchers began staking out 160-acre homesteads and building cabins in what is now the Big Sky area. One of those homesteaders was Augustus Franklin Crail.

VISIT CRAIL RANCH

Crail Ranch Homestead Museum is open on the grounds of Historic Crail Ranch Saturday and Sunday during weekends throughout the summer months, 12 Noon to 3 pm. The grounds are open to self-guided walking tours at all times during daylight hours.

Historic Crail Ranch Conservators sponsor a few satellite exhibits throughout the community. See the Michener Cabin, located on the school district campus on US Highway 191 and a small winter sports display at the Montana Supply Company in Town Center.

Want to learn more about Big Sky's history? Visit:
- BSCO.ORG

The Crail Ranch Homestead Museum is a project of the non-profit Big Sky Community Organization. The Crail Ranch is operated by volunteers and is funded primarily through grants and tax-deductible donations, which may be made to:

Crail Ranch Homestead Museum
PO Box 161404
Big Sky, MT 59716
Email: bsco@bsco.org

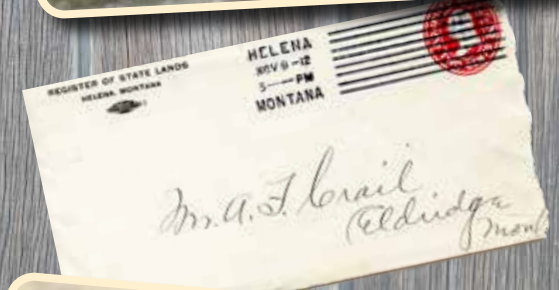
COVER PHOTOS:

The Crails pose in front of the small cabin in 1906. Frank Crail, Sallie Creek Crail, daughter Lilian (on horse), and Abraham Creek, Sallie's father (sitting).

Envelope from deed.

Grounds in 1969.

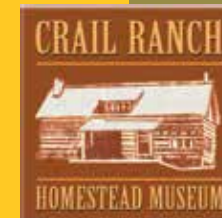
Step Back in Time



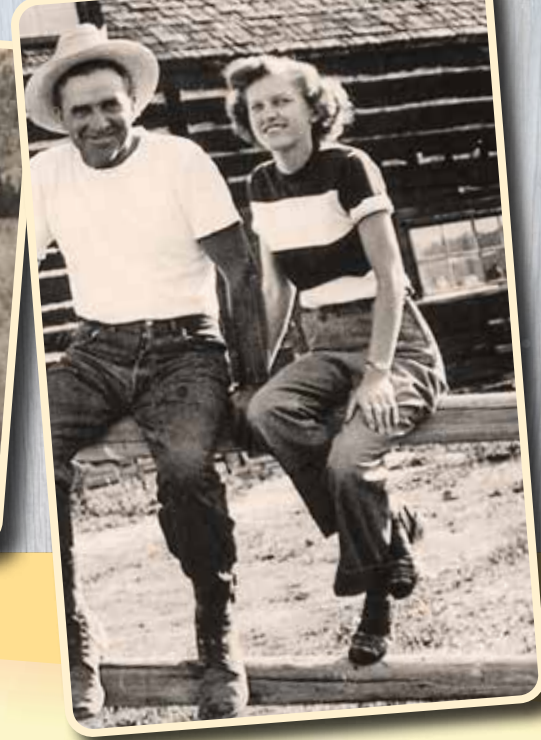
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The Big Sky Community Organization: connecting people with recreational and enrichment opportunities.



**HISTORY OF
THE BIG SKY
AREA**



THE CRAIL FAMILY

Born in Indiana in 1842, Augustus Franklin "Frank" Crail came to Montana shortly after the Civil War, seeking his fortune as a gold miner. In the 1870s, he started a homestead in the Springhill section of the Bridgers. Farming was not lucrative since there was no railroad to ship produce out of Bozeman. Crail became a freighter for a time in the late 1870s. After he returned to ranching, he married Sallie Creek in 1886, whose family had migrated to Bozeman from northwestern Missouri in 1883. They had three children – Eugene in 1887, Emmett in 1888, and Lilian in 1896. When Frank was elected as Clerk of the 9th District Court, the family moved to a large home on West Main Street in Bozeman just west of the old jail, (now the Gallatin History Museum). In December 1901, Crail decided to return to ranching, purchasing a 160-acre homestead in the Gallatin Basin for \$150 from Daniel Inabnit. Beginning in the spring of 1902, the Crail family began to spend summers in the small cabin that is still on the property. Within a few years, the Crail family built the larger main house on the very site where it sits today.

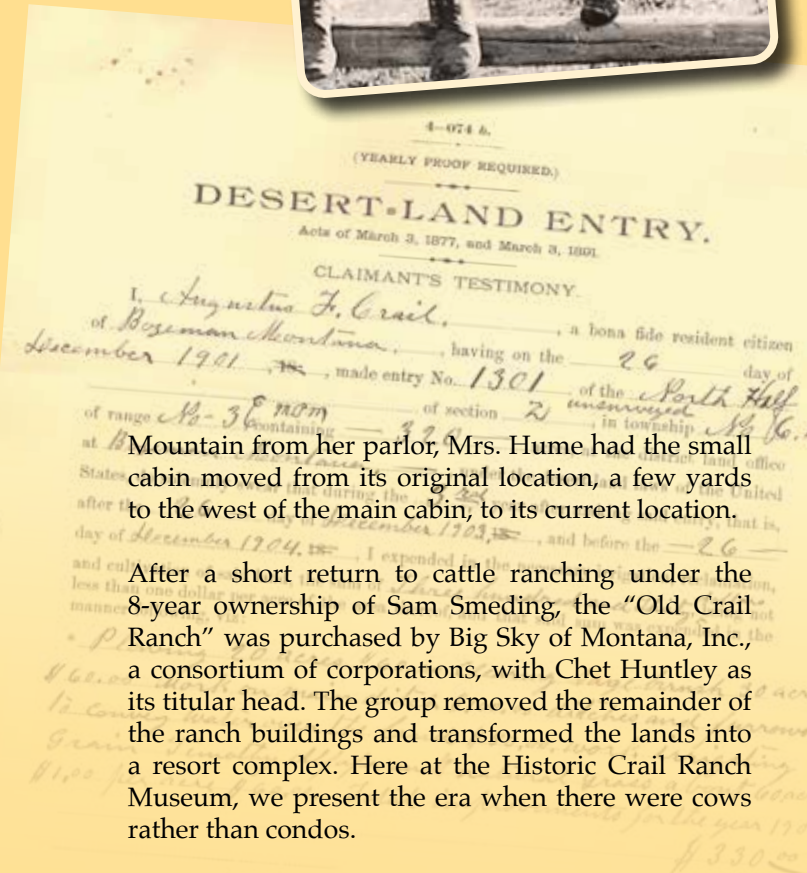
The Crail children attended Irving School in Bozeman. A former music teacher at a school for girls orphaned by the Civil War, Sallie augmented her children's education with music and art lessons. Each child grew to be artistic in a preferred media. After one year in a 9th grade preparatory program at Montana Agricultural College, Eugene studied architecture

through International Correspondence Schools in Scranton, PA. Lilian left public education after one year at the college level and served as a teacher in Ringling and then Logan. In 1918, she moved to Chicago where she studied at the Illinois Training School for Nursing. Once Emmett, the second son, turned 14 and had earned his common diploma from school in Bozeman, he moved year-round to the ranch until the family sold it in 1950.

THE LAND

Over the course of several decades, the persistent Crail family met the extensive regulatory challenges and annexed adjacent land parcels, turning their small homestead into a productive ranching operation with huge hay barns, a forge, a sawmill and other ranch buildings. In the late 1890s, many homesteaders in the Gallatin Canyon, capitalizing on the tourist traffic to Yellowstone National Park, supplemented their income by offering dude-ranching experiences. The Crail Ranch, however, operated solely as a working stock ranch.

A.F. Crail died in 1924. The Crail Family stayed with the ranch for another quarter century and then sold to Jack and Elaine Hume in 1950. The Humes annexed the B-K on the North Fork, introduced dude ranching, managed by the 320 Ranch, and dismantled some of the ranch buildings. Valuing the scenic view of Lone



Mountain from her parlor, Mrs. Hume had the small cabin moved from its original location, a few yards to the west of the main cabin, to its current location.

After a short return to cattle ranching under the 8-year ownership of Sam Smeding, the "Old Crail Ranch" was purchased by Big Sky of Montana, Inc., a consortium of corporations, with Chet Huntley as its titular head. The group removed the remainder of the ranch buildings and transformed the lands into a resort complex. Here at the Historic Crail Ranch Museum, we present the era when there were cows rather than condos.

Photos, L. to R.: Frank and Sallie Crail and children; unidentified woman; Emmett Crail; Jack and Elaine Hume 1953. Background: Land Deed.