

WELCOME TO HISTORIC CRAIL RANCH!

The grounds are open during daylight hours throughout the year. We invite you to walk throughout the historic property: read interpretive signs, peek in windows, relax in the native species gardens, and cross-country ski or snowshoe back in time. Scan the QR codes to view interior videos of the specific locations.

The buildings are open for guided tours with trained docents on weekends throughout the summer months. Through the efforts of a dedicated group of residents, in 1982, the Crail Ranch was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 1998, two decades after Boyne purchased the resort, the company deeded the historic property to the Big Sky community. It is now preserved as an historic property by the Historic Crail Ranch Conservators under the auspices of the Big Sky Community Organization.

Want to learn more about Big Sky's history? Visit:

- bsco.org



ABOVE: The upstairs bedrooms are viewable only on guided tours. On display there: period clothing and many quilts, one dating to the late 1800s, sewn by Sallie Creek Crail.

COVER PHOTOS:

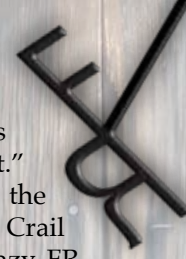
The Crails pose in front of the small cabin in 1906. Frank Crail, Sallie Creek Crail, daughter Lilian (on horse), and Abraham Creek, Sallie's father (sitting).

If you enjoyed the tour, come back and visit with a docent.

The kitchen was the main work area in the home.

CALLIN' THE BRANDS

According to celebrated author and Montana native, Ivan Doig, "Brands are the classical language of the West." Brands are on display throughout the museum. Registered in 1906, the Crail brand is "called" (or read as) the Lazy FR. We believe this is Frank's tongue-in-cheek comment on himself. He was anything but lazy! The Humes registered their brand in 1956 and embedded it in the cement on the south walkway under the porch. On display in the Small Cabin is the Buck's T-4 brand, registered in 1945 by Buck and Helen Knight, who founded the resort on US Route 191.



ENJOY THE GARDENS

After homesteaders claimed a piece of land, they planted a garden to ensure self-sufficiency in the wilderness. Historic Crail Ranch's vegetable gardens, tended by volunteers, are evidence that the land here can be productive, despite the rigors of the high-altitude's short growing season. In fact, Frank Crail developed a wheat strain called Crail Fife, recommended by the US Dept of Agriculture and awarded at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in 1904.

The native species flower demonstration gardens are the work of Grow Wild and are a community service encouraging

conservation and river-friendly landscaping.



04/2022 CW 1000 qty

Self-Guided Tour



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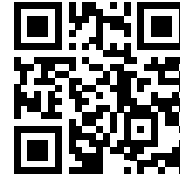
The Big Sky Community Organization: connecting people with recreational and enrichment opportunities.



WALK THROUGH
HISTORIC
BIG SKY

TAKE A WALK AROUND THE MAIN HOME. Homesteading documentation and original photographs tell us the family first built a one-story cabin in 1904, extended it with a kitchen in 1906, and raised a second story in 1910. At the time, a two-story house was a rarity in this community.

The “double dovetail” joint. This inlaid joint is a mark of true craftsmanship. The shape of the pins and tails strengthen the joint and hold the logs in place. Frank Crail used this joint at his first homestead in the Springhill section of Bozeman, where 5 buildings remain today, over 150 years later. Frank’s son Eugene, who trained as an architect and a carpenter, built many of the structures on the ranch and throughout the region. Note the hand-hewn marks on the logs. Frank Crail used a foot adze that he brought from the Crail Indiana farm. That original adze is on display in the small cabin.



PEEK IN THE WINDOWS. Various artifacts tell the story of everyday life on a homestead in the 1920s. Sallie’s teaching guitar from the 1870s is poised in the corner. A cabinet built by Frank displays many items original to the ranch. Paintings done by the artistic Crail children and donated period pieces make it “home.” The kitchen was the main work area in the home.

The upstairs bedrooms are viewable only on guided tours. On display there: period clothing and many quilts, one dating to the late 1800s and another dated at 1901, sewn by Sallie Creek Crail. The parlor houses two exhibits that must be viewed from inside the house. A 30-panel display captures the history of the Crail Ranch from the Homestead Era through its restoration as a museum. An 8-drawer horizontal flat file features the achievements of the Crail family women.



READ THE INTERPRETIVE SIGNS

Visitors envision the ranch and landscape before the resorts. The signs are positioned to align archival photographs with a specific geographic area. For example, when standing at the East View sign, look up and see the same Levinsky Ridge view captured in the vintage photos a century ago. Conservators have also installed informative signs on hiking trails that lead to the museum.

START AT THE SMALL CABIN. This cabin, built in the 1890s, was originally located about 70 yards south of its present location. It was moved in the 1950s after Jack and Elaine Hume purchased the ranch from the Crails. Mrs. Hume wanted a parlor room with a view of Lone Peak.

The ranch was purchased by Big Sky of Montana, Inc. in the late 1960s. Chet Huntley’s resort dramatically altered the landscape and the ranch, dismantling all but two of the ranch structures. The buildings were used throughout the 1970s and 80s as employee housing for Big Sky Resort. At that time the small cabin was nearly lost to a fire, evidence of which can be seen on some logs and boards around the door. On display inside is one of the charred logs.

WHAT’S INSIDE? For many years, the historic small cabin was used for storage. It is now a primary display area of the Crail Ranch Homestead Museum. On view are artifacts and photographs depicting the Crail Ranch as a working ranch, when livestock ranged over the meadows that are now the Big Sky Golf Course and Nordic Center. Exhibits reflect the homesteaders’ varied work: ranching, timbering, prospecting, and carpentry. Most artifacts are original to the ranch and the area, including ones from Bucks T-4, the B-K, and local residents’ private collections. Oversized ranching equipment can be seen in an outdoor display located near the Main Home.

