

Loney Ranch 1892

aka Dutton Ranch, Robinson Ranch, Baldrige Ranch and Elk Creek Ranch

School section: 36-10-66 (The Dutton Place; The Baldrige Place; Whispering Pines Ranch). One and a half miles east of Hwy 83 on Palmer Divide Rd. (Douglas/El Paso County Line Rd).

This ranch changed hands many times, and here you will learn a little about the history of those who lived here on the Divide and about the tragedies that caused it to be sold at Sheriff's sale, Public Auction, and repossession three different times. Despite the harsh winters, this high less-populated area between Denver and Colorado Springs held an attraction for the adventurous pioneers, and continues to do so today. The area is partially in Douglas County and Partially in El Paso County, but to those who live here, it is "The Divide".

In each twp, section 36 (640 acres) was designated as a school section and if sold by the government, the proceeds would go to the state. This ranch land was in the school section. It was first purchased from the state under a "Patent for school land" by William Loney in November, 1892 for \$7,880. Since we found records of he and his wife, Annie, buying and selling land in the area, as well as building a five room log cabin, we can surmise that they were both homesteaders and land speculators. William had friends, or relatives in New York (Mr & Mrs. G. Bruce Brown), who were named on the deed and bill of sale for dwellings on this property and may have been his backers. William Loney died around the turn of the century and his wife and four others (his children?) inherited his property and his debts. We found the records of a court case for money owed to Jennie Drake. This property was sold on December 31, 1901 at Sheriff's sale to pay the debt. Low and behold the purchaser at the Sheriff's sale was the judge in the Jennie Drake case! So the next owners were the honorable Judge Lewis W. Cunningham & Charles Cunningham (his brother?).

The Cunningham's sold the now six room house and 1500 acres to Charles and Olive Dutton on February 16, 1904. The Duttons lived on the ranch for 16 years. They were real ranchers and built a huge barn on the property. Unfortunately, in later years (c1960), it burned down. In 1913 there was a severe snow storm. The neighbors took about 30 cows and drove them to the nearest town, Monument, to break a trail for supplies. The Dutton daughters went to Spring Valley School, eight miles away. To get there, they had to ride horseback. A few years later, they donated their bunkhouse across the road in El Paso County as a school. Children from both counties shared this school. It stood there for many years, until Pine Grove School was moved in the early 21st century to Kilmer Elementary School on Walker Road just East of Hwy 83. It is restored and is presently used for some history classes. Olive Dutton was an artist. Paul Gregg, staff artist for the Denver Post and Bordman Robinson of the Fine Arts Center, would come and visit with Olive Dutton. At one point she painted Governor Olive H. Shoup's portrait, which hung in the Pioneer Museum in the 1960s. In 1914 during a severe thunderstorm Charles Dutton was struck by lightning which tore the soles from his shoes! He was never quite the same after that!

Byron Robinson bought the ranch on May 3, 1920. He came from Iowa. He must have loved the land, as he bought more land on the El Paso County side of the road. He lived here for fifteen years raising cattle. In early 1935, he either had a ranch accident or took sick (we could not verify which) and died quite suddenly. The bank came right after his funeral to say they were repossessing the ranch. The family, (there were young children) moved to the house & property across the county road and their mother taught in the little schoolhouse that had been the bunkhouse on their Douglas County ranch. Once again, tragedy caused the ranch to be sold at sheriff's sale. Interestingly enough, another involved person, Public Trustee J. D. Ackerman, bought the house and 1500 acres at public auction for \$18,000 on April 24, 1935.

W. E. & Myrtle Baldrige lived on the property and bought the buildings and 1200 acres from Ackerman on December 7, 1936. The Baldriges lived here for thirteen years, built and operated a sawmill and raised oats. In 1948, just before they left, electricity became available for houses in that area. It is said that the ranch owners helped with the installation of phone lines shortly before electricity came to the area.

From 1948 to 1956, the following people had short ownerships: Fred & Ava Daiss, Estel P. & Helen Schmeiser, J. O. Phillips, A.L. Pieper, Winford Griffin & H.K. Fosha, and Alvin & Ada Nordhausen.

C.T. McLaughlin of Shamrock Ranches bought the property on March 16, 1956. Sicle Windfrey, Mr. McLaughlin's foreman lived there about five years. Then another man lived there about a year. It was during this time that the barn burned down. The fire was started from a heat lamp that was keeping a little calf warm. Thirty cows died in the fire. He sold it to Ed Warren, who had a hired hand living there. However, the property was turned back to McLaughlin.

In June of 1965, Clete and Rita Ocken came from Iowa & purchased the house and 140 acres.

Much of this information came from "The History of my House" by Mary Ocken. Oct 1975. Written as a research project for Douglas County High School history class. Teacher: Mr. Bonacquista

Danna & Phyllis spent many hours at the County Assessor's Office and County Clerk & Recorder verifying information and found more details in legal documents.

