

CARLSON RANCH

Owners:

Godaloch(k?)

Joe Askew

Called the "Old Whittaker Place"

S.C. Boyle @1948-1955

George C. "Sonny" Carlson, Jr. 1955

Now subdivided.

Location:

4243 County Road 41, where the Scott Murdoch house is, by Trail Mountain.

General Ranch Information:

* Sonny was born in Denver, but later was raised and lived in Lakewood. Beginning about 1950, Sonny as a teen, worked for his father George, Sr. and Uncle Henry Carlson, who secured a timber sale on Forest Service land near the ranch. In 1955, Sonny and his dad purchased the ranch, but he didn't live there at first. For about the first 3 – 4 years, he would commute on weekends up to the ranch. He had Jack Oneill on the ranch to irrigate and watch a few head of cows. Sonny would also come up into fall during haying, and sometimes during the winter.



* There was an old sod roof, log house on the property. It was the first building as you came into the valley, with a driveway going down to the house just after a cattle guard. The property also had a tack room and barn. The Carlsons lived in the sod roofed house while they built their ranch house. The sod roof leaked, and at one point Sonny asked his dad George, Sr. to check with Denver Wood Products about acquiring a sheet of yellow plastic with which they covered the leaky roof; they tacked the edges with wood lathe and put cinder blocks on the top to keep it down.

* Sonny worked with his dad and uncle in a sawmill operation on land owned by his dad. Sonny and his buddies helped build roads through the woods. Logs were at first hauled to a mill down on Hwy. 34, across from Hazel Mosley's. They moved it to a place on leased land close to the main ranch. (Sonny's dad George, Sr. helped Sonny's uncle Henry Carlson build Timberlane Lodge on Hwy. 34, now Betty's Restaurant.)

* Sonny and wife Marcia moved to the ranch permanently in 1959. They built up a herd of about 30 head of cattle, but summered cattle for "eastern Colorado people" and some local cattle. They usually summered 30-40, but once had 250 cattle of their own.

* Sonny worked out as a carpenter to supplement the income. He eventually ended up, in about 1963 or 1964, as carpenter foreman on the Little King Ranch off Hwy. 125. He worked there and maintained the buildings as well, until John King sold the ranch and part of the new owner's family died in a plane crash.

* Sonny Carlson put in Ski Trail Mountain, which ran from 1964–1968, mostly so his sons Randy and Ronnie could learn to ski. It was a small ski area by most standards on the hillside just to the right of County Rd 41 and just past the original Carlson ranch house. It was open weekends only, with some night skiing, and cost \$1.00 for kids, \$2.00 for adults. At first there was one tractor-driven tow rope. He later opened the area up to the east and installed a lift driven by a converted old Ford truck power sweep. Both tows were operated from sheds and with attendants, where they could be stopped if need-be. He also had sno-cat touring. Yvonne Knox remembers skiing there. Sonny shut the ski area down when the insurance costs increased to a point that prohibited continuing, and attendance dropped off. Eventually, Sonny sold the ski area, and Mighty-Mite cable lifts were installed by the new owner, who hired Sonny to run the area. However, the new owner also soon sold due to insurance costs and low attendance because a lot of local people went to snowmobiles. The little building at the edge of the trees off Hwy. 41 was the warming house for the ski area.



Ski Area Planned

Sonny and Marcia Carlson head for the ski slope they are operating for the first time this winter near their ranch, house 7 miles south of Grand Lake, Colo. A 400-foot rope service a practice hill, and children use a 1,500-foot toboggan run opposite the ski hill. In the background is warming hut-snack bar constructed by Carlson, who operates a winter construction business. He plans intermediate and expert slopes next year and an eventual ski lodge.

