

EXCERPTS FROM INTERVIEW WITH HARRY AND JOAN DRACKERT

December 1984

Harry had visited a friend in Carson City in the late 20's, and came to Nevada in 1930. Joan came out in 1946.

According to Joan, Harry had operated the Mt. Rose Lodge 3 years before coming to the Pyramid Lake Ranch in 1945. (Prior to Harry, John Marshal was the owner?operator) During this time, a Mrs. Kitzelman owned the ranch. Her oldest son, Alva (Beau) contested the ownership of the ranch at one time, but the case was thrown out of court. Harry & Joan ran the ranch from 1945 to 1956.

At some point in time a Mrs. Figueroa owned the Pyramid Ranch. She was ~~a~~ ^{the} former Leslie Curtis. Pat Pattridge was the business manager for Mrs. Figueroa.

Joan was at the Pyramid Lake Ranch 9 years, Harry was there 11 years.

Prior to going out to the Pyramid Lake Ranch, Joan had worked at the Donner Trail with Jack Fugitt. Mr. Fugitt sold the Donner Trail to a Mr. Kronish in 1955 and it is his daughter who now owns the Donner Trail Ranch and Dinner House.

After a brief stint at the River House owned by Mr. and Mrs. E. Frandsen (Bud) Loomis, Harry and Joan went on to a variety of other endeavors. In January of 1959, they went to the Donner Trail Guest Ranch and managed it for Mr. Kronish until 1970.

From 1971 to 1976 Harry and Joan managed the Silver Circle Guest Ranch on Holcomb Lane. They were also part owners with Warren Nelson. Prior to the ownership by the Drackerts and Nelson, the guest ranch had been owned by Mrs. Menzie. It was not run as a guest ranch, and it was called the Silver Saddle Ranch. Mrs. Menzie raised polled Herfords under the ranch name of the Silver Saddle.

Mrs. Menzie had an interesting past, and as Joan remembers it, she met Mrs. Menzie and her two daughters while they were staying at the Mount Rose Guest Lodge around 1946. (Joan and Lois ~~Reeves~~ were managing the Lodge.) ^{TRINERS} Mrs. Menzie was from Switzerland and had been living in the Philippines with Mr. Menzie and their 2 daughters and 1 son. They had been imprisoned by the Japanese during WWII, and Mr. Menzie died there. Their son remained in the islands, but Mrs. Menzie and Nena and Margo came to the United States. Nena met a dentist in San Francisco named Dr. Merchant whom she married after he got his divorce while staying at the Mt. Rose Lodge. They decided to stay in Reno, and Mrs. Menzie bought the ranch from Chuck and Betty Moore. (Joan thinks ^(the Moores) they may have run it as a guest ranch for a few month only.) Mrs. Menzie's daughter Margo married Ian Sterling and lived across the road from the ranch. After Mrs. Menzie died, there was family and legal pressure to sell the ranch and it is at this point that the Drackerts and Warren Nelson bought it and changed the name to Silver Circle. Ownership prior to the Moores is in question, and it is currently owned by the Gardners of UNR. Since it was not operating as a guest ranch in the 30's (we do not think it was) it probably does not fall within the scope of our research..

Joan has some delightful stories about some of their guests at the ranches.

One that she remembers was a Mrs. Stix from back east who came "for the cure"

stayed and married a wrangler, divorced him, went ^bback east to marry Mr. Stix, came back to the Pyramid Guest Ranch with her two children, and "took the cure" again. Mrs. Stix now resides in Carmel, but at one time owned the Quail Canyon Ranch after her final "cure". Her son, David, now resides in Fernley.

Harry remembers Lyle Prescott as manager of the Alamo Guest Ranch and also (he thinks) of the Mayberry Guest Ranch near Verdi. He also remembered Lyle's daughter who married Bert Goldwater's brother and now lives in Las Vegas.

As an attempt to diversify Nevada's economy, the "Divorce", Guest, Dude Ranch business had a more lasting effect than some, but lost its importance after other states loosed their requirements for divorce and their residency requirements. Fame followed some of the more scandalous divorces, and Reno made headlines. Those who were willing to be "dudes" spent their money by staying at the ranches, and generally, those with less money to spend stayed at the various "guest houses" in town. Joan Drackert sees it as a bygone era, and perhaps there is no chance for a revival of the Divorce Ranch business, but the interest in that part of Nevada's past is still strong. We are grateful to Joan and Harry Drackert for sharing with us their memories.

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Judy Taylor
(Mrs. Harry Taylor)