



**A, D, & J. CRAGS RANCHE DISTRICT
6765 County Road 29, Hayden**

Leon H. and Mary Green left their home in Sterling, Colorado, in 1895 to homestead in western Colorado. They selected a site treed with evergreens and facing sandstone cliff outcroppings, in part because Mr. Green was interested in geology and considered the formations a potential oil exploration site. Over the next several years, Green constructed a house, barn, shop/blacksmith forge, a cellar, a buggy shed, and a chicken house using the available resources of evergreen timbers and rocks for foundations. He grubbed the brush from the bottomland to create hay meadows and potato, oat, wheat, and barley fields and raised cattle, horses, hogs, and chickens. Manually and with a team of horses, he dug the Hobson Ditch, completed in 1899, from the East Williams Fork River to irrigate his fields. Over the years, he also did survey work and geologic studies and supervised jobs established by the W. P. A. in the 1930s. He patented the name of the ranch in 1912. The house, situated next to the original road, became a stopping place for travelers and job-seekers, who were always provided a meal. Son William was born in 1897 and worked the ranch from an early age. He and his wife lived on the property their entire lives. Leon S., one of their three children, operated the ranch until the 1980s; their son and wife currently maintain the ranching operation. The buildings constructed a century ago are virtually unchanged today. The one-story ranch house of round,

stacked, log construction has two enclosed shed-roofed porches and gable ends. It was occupied until 1960, was used as a summer home between 1969 and 1971, and is currently occasionally used as a hunting cabin. The coalhouse is of similar construction. The cellar, built into a hillside, has hand-hewn stacked log interior retaining walls and an uncut, dry-stack stone façade. Log posts support the rock-and-turf roof. The 1910 chicken house is of frame and vertical board construction. The two-seater outhouse is of frame and horizontal board construction. The multi-purpose building consists of several buildings joined together during the early 1900s, parts of which were used as a granary, a blacksmith shop, a storage area, and a bunkhouse. The latter section of the building is log; the remainder is frame and board. The buggy shed is hewn logs and is currently used for equipment storage and calving. The property is indicative of high country ranching and farming in the Yampa Valley, reflects evolving activities and needs over time, and represents four generations of a family working the land. In 1995, the Centennial Ranch Program, sponsored by the Colorado Historical Society and the Colorado Department of Agriculture, presented a Centennial Ranch Award to the Crags Rancho. One criterion for this award is that the same family has continuously owned and worked a property for a minimum of 100 years.