

Hampton Barn Arapahoe National Wildlife Refuge – North Central Colorado

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Please Note: The interior of the Case Barn is closed to the public and access to the barn may be restricted due to weather or other conditions. Please contact the Refuge Headquarters before visiting the area (970-723-8202).



The area that is now Walden, Colorado was first settled in 1880 by miners, who were followed by ranchers. In 1889 Walden was established where the roads from Laramie, Wyoming to Teller City, Colorado and Albany, Wyoming to Granby, Colorado crossed. This location was picked because the founders wanted to start a trading center that served ranchers settling in the area and the miners in Teller city. The land was originally known as "Point of Rocks" but a new name was desired for the settlement. It was named Sagebrush for a time but was renamed Walden, after Marcus Aurelius Walden. On December 2, 1890 Walden was incorporated and received a post office.

The land is sagebrush uplands that required strenuous work to convert to farmland and required irrigation. The Hampton family members were not only ranchers, they also ran the Hampton Dairy and sold dairy products to Walden residents. The dairy was originally located in town but was moved to the ranch once the Hampton Barn was built.

In 1898 Homer Hampton moved to North Park and worked for Swift and Company for a short time and then went to work for Barney Mallon. Homer Hampton married Mamie and the two lived in Walden while he worked for the Ames Mercantile Store. In 1916 he bought what is now the Hampton Ranch from W. James Caudle who homesteaded it in 1911. Originally the Hamptons called the ranch "Poverty Flats"¹ but with hard work the ranch became successful.

The Hampton Barn was one of the original buildings on the Hampton Ranch. Homer Hampton and Albert Asflag built the barn between 1918 and 1920 with logs purchased from Homer Follett and sons. The logs were transported from Foxpark, Wyoming to a location below the property by flat car.

Because the train had to pick up the flat car the next day on its way back from Coalmont, the logs had to be unloaded during the night. Wagons pulled by horses were used to transport the logs from the railroad tracks to the ranch.

Originally the Hampton Barn had four stalls on the east side for eight milk cows, stairs to the loft and three horse stalls on the west side. Additions were constructed on the east and west sides of the barn in later years. The extra space allowed the cattle stock to expand to twenty milk cows. The wind break constructed adjacent to the west wing was constructed in the 1940s. The Hampton Dairy produced milk, butter and cottage cheese which were delivered to customers by family members. Depending on the weather, the products were transported by wagon or sled. In 1942, automatic milking machines were added. The dairy was operational from 1925 to about 1948.

After the dairy closed, the Hampton Cattle Company continued to use the barn, mainly for storage and as a tack room but during the winter it was used for harnessing horses. The Federal government purchased the ranch in the early 1970s at which point the ranch ceased operations. The government allowed neighboring ranches to rent the land for grazing and when the barn was surveyed in 1991 a grazing permittee was using the ranch for storage. When the barn was reviewed in 1998, it was no longer in use and parts of the building were starting to deteriorate.

Though the Hampton Barn is the only extant building, at one point it was one of many buildings that comprised the Hampton Ranch. According to the 1966 assessor's report there were two residences still in existence. One was constructed in 1916 and had seven rooms and a basement; another was constructed 1938 and had five rooms and no basement. Other buildings that were constructed on the Hampton Ranch and are not extant include: a garage and chicken house, two shops, a bunk house, a Quonset, three open sheds, a calving shed and a granary.

Currently the Hampton Barn is mainly unused. An electric fence, adjacent to the barn, is powered by a solar panel on the roof. An electric wire runs along the south side of the barn to keep large animals out, while other wires run north along the fence adjacent to the barn. Visitors to the Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge can drive to the barn along a dirt road those branches off State Highway 125. Signs posted on the exterior barn doors declare it closed to the public, so people are allowed to walk around the exterior, but not enter the barn.

1 Gresham, Hazel. *History of North Park*. 1st ed. Steamboat Springs, CO: The Steamboat Pilot, 1975. 160-165.