

HIGHLAND HAVEN – A HISTORY

Skirting the Eastern edge of downtown Evergreen, at the crook of a sharp curve in Bear Creek across from Sheep Head's Rock, sits what old-timers say is the first cabin ever built in Bear Creek Canyon. The historic Dailey Cabin, which today anchors the Highland Haven Creekside Inn, was named for its original owner, John L. Dailey, Sr., a printer from Ohio who co-founded the *Rocky Mountain News*. According to two of his children, John Jr. and Grace, their father built the one-room, hand-hewn log cabin in 1887.

The Daileys owned the cabin for nearly 70 years, during which time many members of the extended family enjoyed the rustic cabin and its natural surroundings. One of John Sr.'s daughters, Anna Emily, discovered a rare spurless columbine flower near the cabin around 1890. The flower, a variation of the official Colorado state flower, was not seen again until the 1970s in nearby Indian Hills. Juanita Dailey, granddaughter of John Sr.'s brother William, was known to live in the cabin with her mother, Mabel, as late as 1954.

Other summer cabins were soon built near the Dailey Cabin, including one owned by E.B. Field, president of Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Company. Around 1925, Field sold his cabin to the Beecher family, who enjoyed the retreat until it was sold in the early 1950s.

At some point during the 1950s, the Dailey and Beecher properties were combined, the cabins were added on to, and a no-frills summer-only motel called the Highland Haven was born. Over the next decade or so, the motel welcomed travelers during the summer months, and was used to house the area's teachers during the school year.

It remained a motel when current owners Gail Riley and Tom Statzell and their partners bought the property in 1979. When Riley and Statzell assumed sole ownership in 1987, they began to transform the motel into the luxurious, year-round bed and breakfast inn it is today.

In 1996 they took on the Dailey Cabin, restoring it and recreating a 19th-century ambience with updated comforts. Statzell removed the low ceiling and the cheap paneling covering the walls, exposing 30-foot expanses of log. He built or restored all of the cabin's woodwork, including the beautiful hardwood furniture, while Riley decorated in the Mission and Arts & Crafts styles. Today the Dailey Cabin is the site of the inn's delicious breakfasts, a space where guests relax and read, and the ideal spot for business and social functions.

Throughout the years and the changes, one thing has remained consistent about this distinctive property among the tall pine trees along Bear Creek: It has always been a haven for resting, rejuvenating, and communing with nature.