

TOPIC: Broadmoor Hotel

PERIOD: Mid 1880's - 1915

INFORMATION:

William J. Wilcox from Philadelphia came to the mountains in the mid eighties because of his tuberculosis. He operated the Broadmoor Dairy Farm at the foot of Cheyenne Mountain. Count James Pourtales of Silesia came to Colorado Springs in search of sound mortgages paying high interest rates. The two men became partners. Pourtales invested \$25,000, sold and bought cows, made scientific studies of their needs and also planted alfalfa. He also dammed Cheyenne Creek creating a lake which leaked away time and again during 1888 and 1889. They worked furiously but continued to pour more and more money into their project.

In 1890 Pourtales formed the Broadmoor Land and Investment Company and began platting the 2400 acre tract which is the Broadmoor today. He laid out and planned all the streets and avenues around the hotel. As a final and irresistible inducement to people to buy the lots, he promised to build a casino, a European palace of pleasure for dining, wining, dancing, and games. The casino was built on the east shore of his lake--exactly on top of the dam. Its grand opening was July 1, 1891. But Pourtales was now in debt.

The Panic of '93 was the final blow. Money could not be borrowed at any interest rate and Pourtales entire holdings went into the hands of a receiver. The casino did not close, but did not prosper greatly. On July 19, 1897 it was completely destroyed by fire. Within a year a less handsome structure was built. In 1909 trustees of the Stratton Estate bought the Broadmoor. It was leased to Harrison Ewing who conducted a girl's boarding and day school there from 1913-1915. It was next leased to Ellwood Bergy in May of 1915 who re-opened the hotel and cassino to accomodate 135 guests.

SOURCES: The Broadmoor Story, H.M. Geiger, copyright 1968.

CONCLUSION:

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES:

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