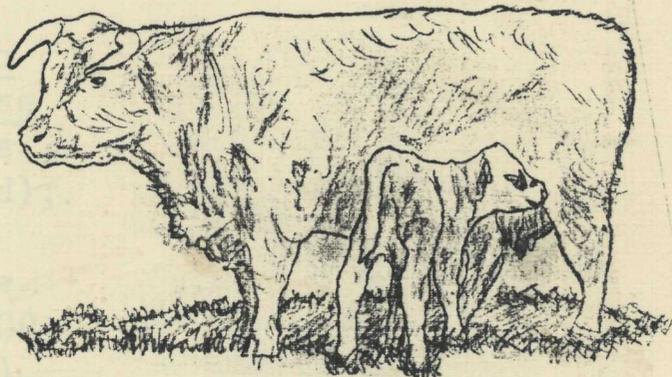
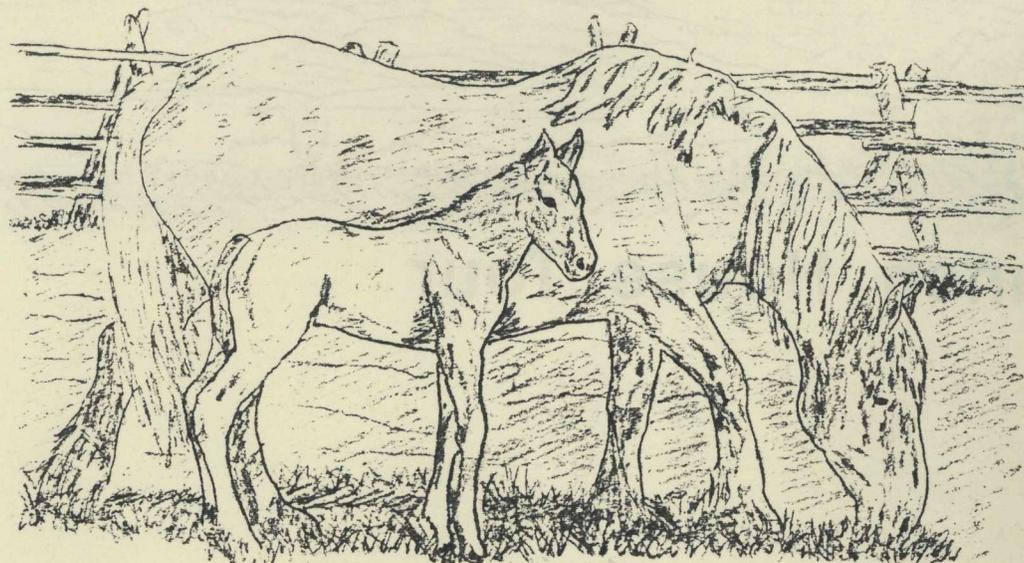


# Grant-Kohrs Ranch



## Ranch House Tour

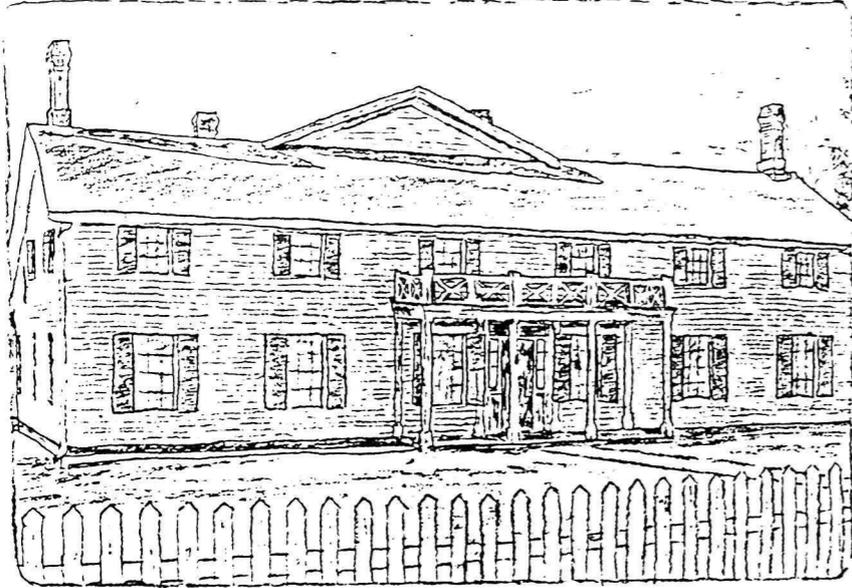




Welcome to Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site. This ranch commemorates the Frontier Cattle Era and its influence on American History while preserving this particular ranch.

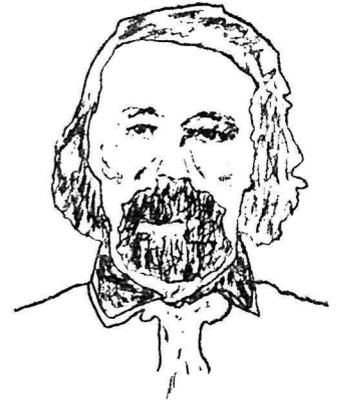
Virtually all the furnishings in the house were possessions of the Kohrs. As you tour the house, help us preserve it for other visitors: Please stay on the carpet runner (some of the carpet is nearly 100 years old!); please do not touch the furniture (your hands will leave a film of oil and acid); please do not lean on the walls (some of the wallpaper is nearly 100 years old and fragile). Thanks for your help!

## PORCH



WE INVITE YOU TO STEP  
BACK IN TIME TO ABOUT  
1895 AS WE IMAGINE A  
VISIT TO THE KOHRS ON  
A SUNDAY AFTERNOON:

We arrive at the ranch  
around noon. As I ad-  
mire the house, I re-  
call it was built in 1862  
for Johnny Grant, a  
French-Canadian trader  
and trapper, as his trad-  
ing post and home. The  
rest of the history  
quickly flashes through  
my mind: In 1866,  
Grant sold the entire  
ranch to Conrad Kohrs for  
\$19,200. Kohrs, a German  
immigrant who originally  
came to Montana seeking  
gold in the early 1860's,  
was a butcher at the time  
he bought the ranch.



After buying Grant's ranch, Kohrs, his half-brother and partner John Bielenberg, and several other ranch workers lived in the ranch house. It was so unclean, it was called "the boars' nest."



Augusta changed that when she married Kohrs two years later in 1868. Although John continued to live here, the other hands were banished to the bunkhouse. Then Augusta had a big cleaning job ahead of her besides making candles and soap, cooking, gardening, milking cows, and eventually raising children. Augusta converted the bug-infested house into an elaborate Victorian-style home where they raised three children.

But enough of that. Here comes Augusta now to greet us!



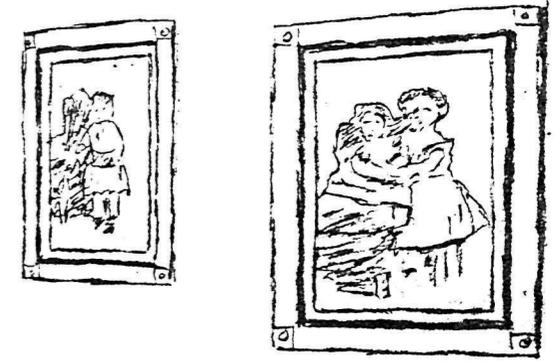
## PARLOR - MUSIC ROOM

We follow her inside to the parlor. She wants to show us the family's finest items. The parlor is used as a display room and is the only room in the house where young children are banned. Augusta is proud of the footstool which displays her needlework. After all, she earned a First Premium at the 1870 Territorial Fair with this beautiful piece of work. The legs are of cattle horn!

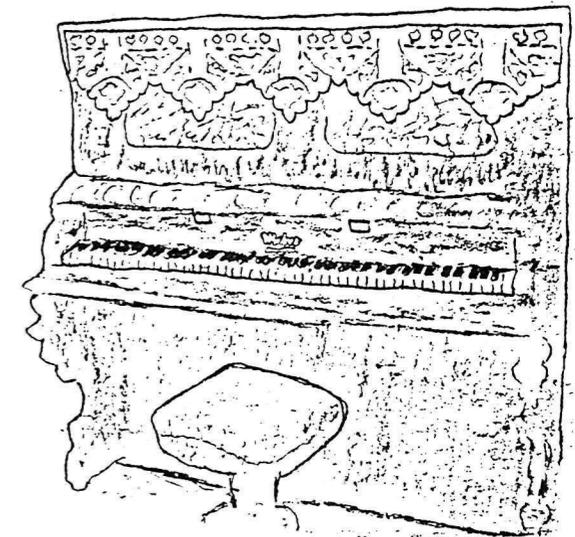


I notice the rug laid in 1890. Although it is about five years old, it looks new. The workmanship in sewing the 27-inch widths of the all-wool rug together is beautiful. It is hard to tell where the strips were sewn together.

Pictures of the Kohrs' three children hang on the west wall. Since the boys wear dresses until school age, Willie's picture shows him in a dress. The pictures are drawings done from photographs. Katherine is seated next to Anna.



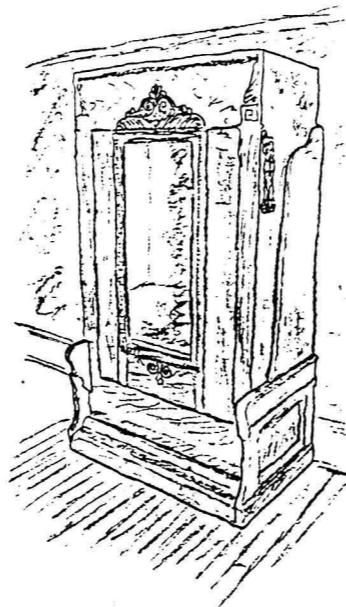
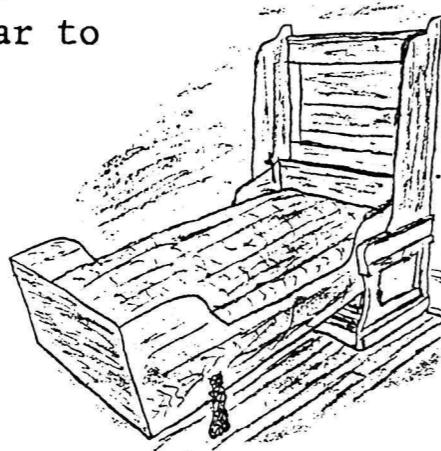
I turn around to admire the piano. Realizing Augusta is from a musical German family, it is not surprising that the children studied piano with their governess, Miss King.



## SITTING ROOM

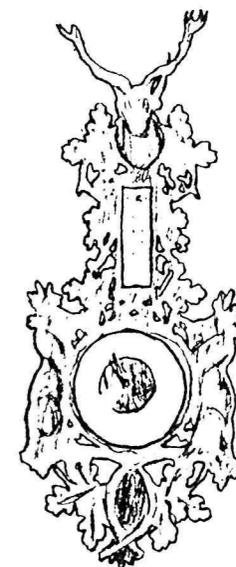
Augusta wants us to join her in the sitting room since this is where family life takes place. I can remember when the children were young and studied in this room while Augusta did needlework. I can also remember the Kohrs entertaining friends here and the great card parties that took place.

As we follow her into the sitting room, we walk by John Bielenberg's bedroom which is neat and tidy. The oak folding bed is convenient and similar to later Murphy beds.



Katherine and Anna are reading in the sitting room and Conrad is there in "deep thought." He rises to greet us. I look around the room because this is the first time I have seen it since the brick addition was added in 1890. I notice the gas and electric lights that were added at that time and also the registers for central heating! The Kohrs are certainly advanced, but then we are in the home of a wealthy rancher.

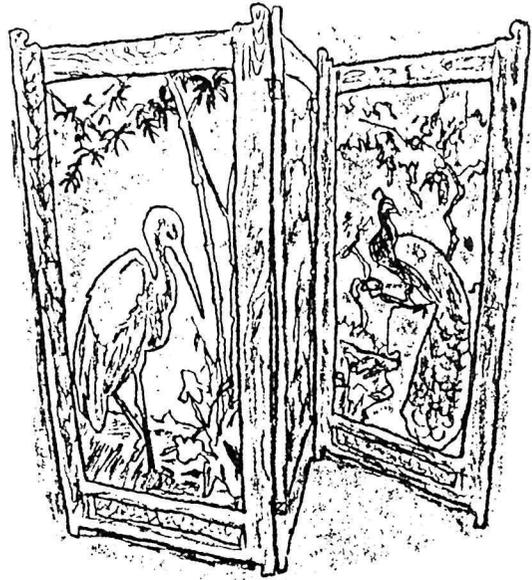
I notice Con glancing at the ornately carved German barometer, trying to determine tomorrow's weather. Since ranching is an outdoor living, he depends on that barometer. The cattle must be taken care of 12 months a year, no matter what the weather.



Augusta asks us to sit down and relax after our trip, but we want to see the rest of the house.

## DINING ROOM

I glance in the dining room quickly - the oak banquet table has 18 leaves but today is only big enough for eight people. I have always loved the rug under the table: it is from Persia and is hand-knotted.

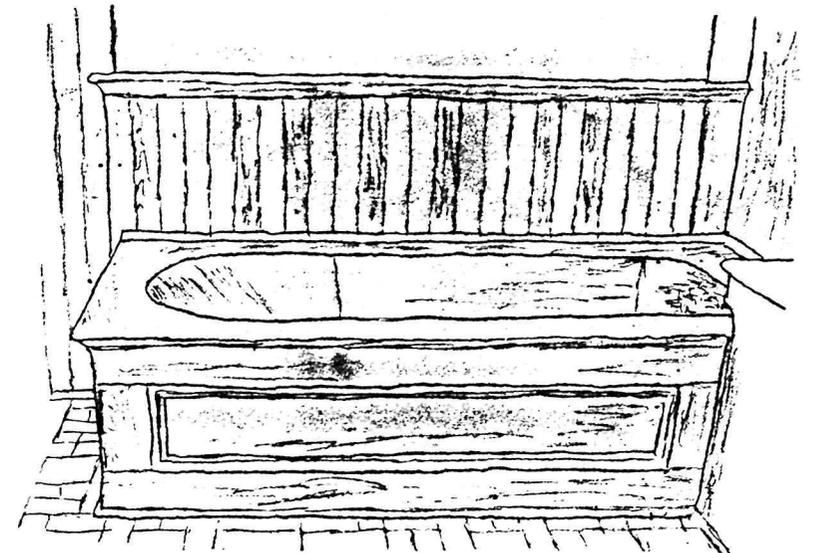


The tile area in the bay window is usually filled with plants and flowers. The flowers look so pretty near the screen that separates the serving area from the dining area. There are more plants and flowers in the flower room off the south side of the sitting room. Visitors always admire the hand-painting on the screen. I think it is a beautiful room.

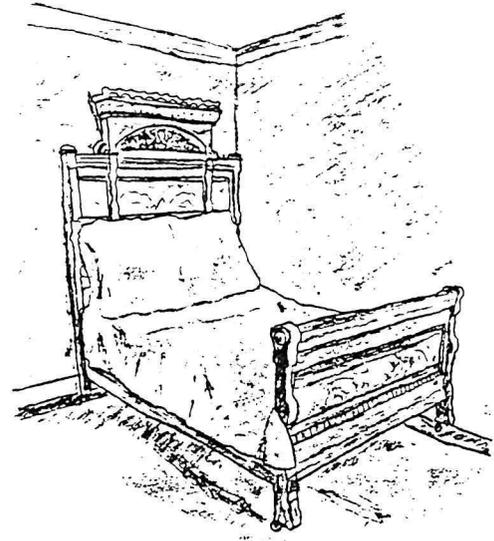


## BATHROOM

Augusta leads us into the bathroom. She is proud of the indoor plumbing that was also added in 1890. The zinc-lined bathtub looks so cold! She tells us the water is stored in the attic in a lead-lined wooden tank. The mirror on the wall is hung so high, but then Con is 6'3" and Augusta nearly 6 feet tall. The average height of a man nowadays is 5'8".



## MASTER BEDROOM



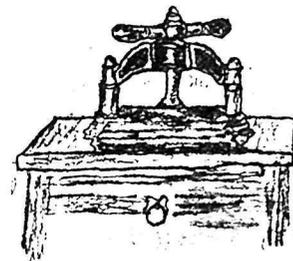
We walk through a small bedroom into the master bedroom. Augusta wants us to see her handiwork on the pillow shams. It is beautiful. I do not know where she finds the time to do all the work in this house and still do needlework like this!

## OFFICE

We wander into Con's office - definitely a business setting. The Moore's Cabinet Desk holds many business files and reminds me of Conrad's diversification in business - ranching, butcher shops, gold mining interests, water rights, and real estate. And he is in the Montana State Legislature. His diversification and partnerships are the reason for his success. Anyway, the writing surface on this desk slides in and the cabinet swings shut and can be locked when Con is away from the ranch. Remember his telling us about the gold scale on the desk? Sensitive enough to detect the addition of a pencil mark to a scrap of paper.

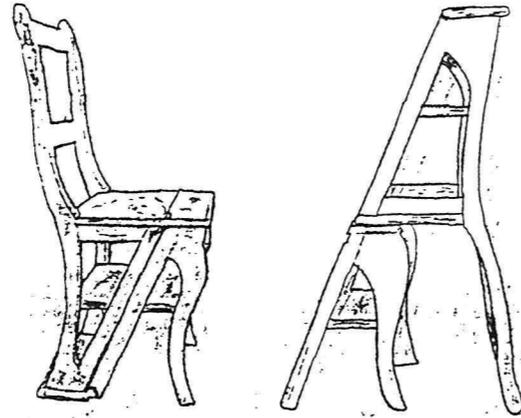


The letterpress on the corner table always fascinates everyone. Copies of letters handwritten in ink are made onto dampened tissue paper in this press. So Con and John keep copies of almost all their business and personal letters. The hand-painted Anglo-Japanese trellis pattern on the ceiling adds to the mystique of the room. Maybe that shows Augusta's influence. After all, she loves oriental things and even collects oriental rugs like the one in the dining room.

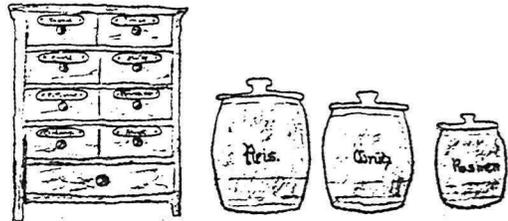


## KITCHEN

Augusta asks if we would like to come back to the kitchen with her while she checks on a pie in the oven. When we get back to the cozy room, she explains that the heat from the stove is circulated upstairs to help warm the bathroom.



I notice the printing on the spice cabinet is in German as are the canister labels. But then everyone in the family speaks German and English.

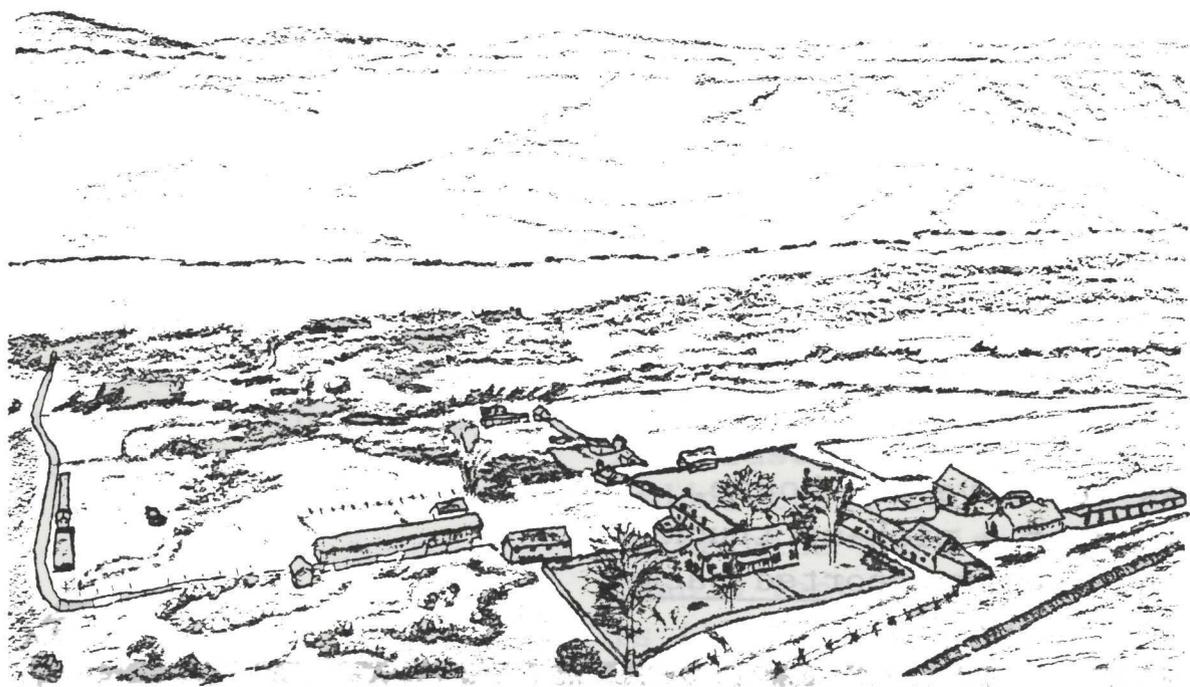


I am fascinated by the ladder chair for Wilhelmine who is less than 5 feet tall. She is the only person who now helps Augusta with this huge house. Until 1890, Augusta did almost all the housekeeping and cooking.

EXIT

As we leave the house, we spot a pick-up truck and are transported back to the 1990's.





We are at the end of our tour and want to thank you for visiting Grant-Kohrs Ranch. Please take time to visit the red barn out back which houses the wagons, sleighs, and farm equipment, much of it used on the ranch. Also, bunkhouse row may interest you. It is to the north of the house. Parts of this building were built before 1862 but it was added to and then modernized in 1930. The tack room is near the bunkhouse. Listed in your brochure are other buildings to see, and as a working ranch, look for cattle, horses, and maybe even a rancher!

For Your Safety -  
Watch your step in walking around the ranch -- do not enter corrals or pastures or approach livestock. Report accidents or hazards to a ranger.

ENJOY YOUR VISIT!

Superintendent  
Grant-Kohrs Ranch NHS  
P.O. Box 790  
Deer Lodge, MT 59722  
(406) 846-2070

National Historic Site  
Deer Lodge, Montana

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