



Castlewood Canyon State Park  
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[www.parks.state.co](http://www.parks.state.co)



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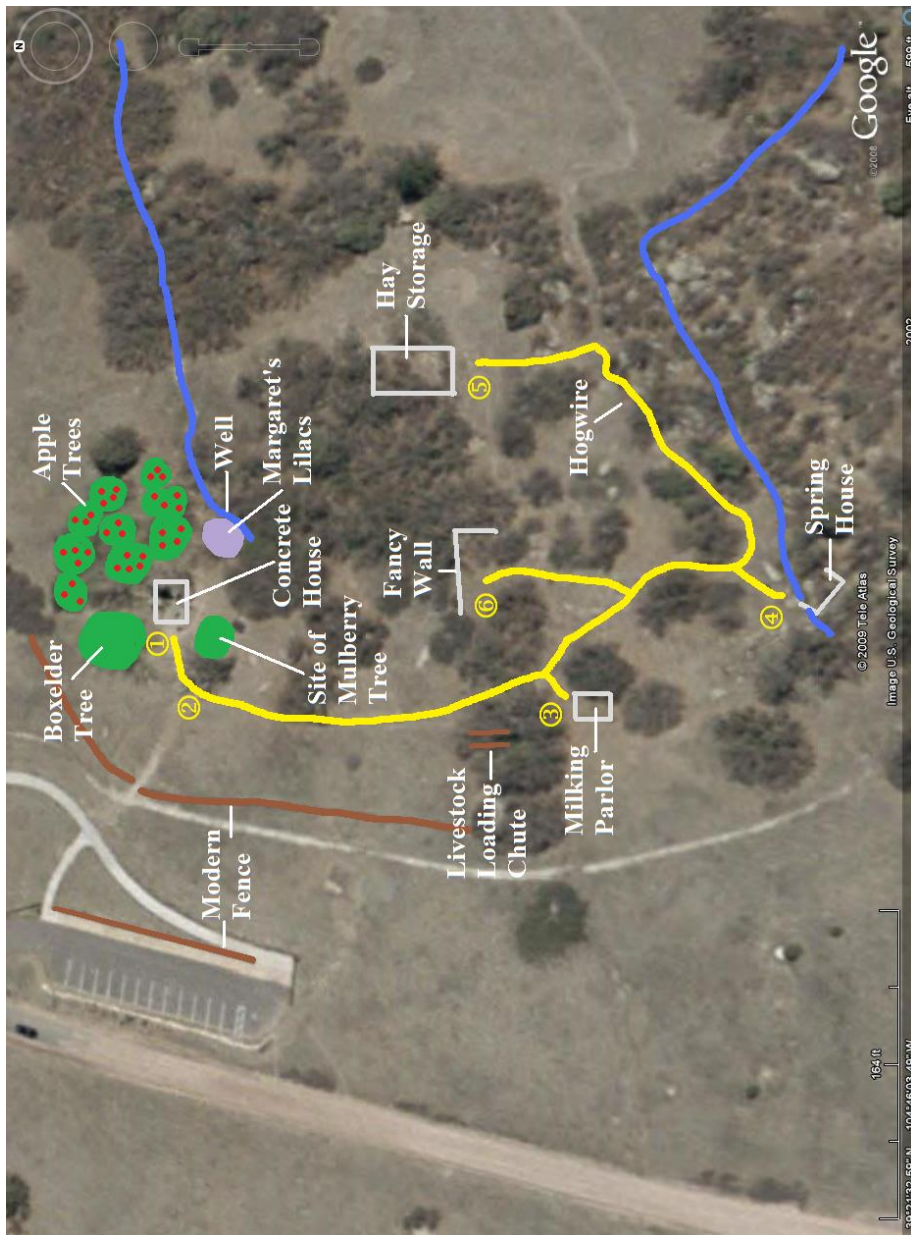


# Discover The Lucas Homestead At Castlewood Canyon State Park



Sketch by Bob Metzler, grandson of Patrick and Margaret Lucas

The Lucas Homestead is located on the west side of Castlewood Canyon State Park. To visit it, turn south on Castlewood Canyon Road which is 1/2-mile west of the intersection of Highways 83 and 86 in Franktown. Travel 2.1 miles to the Homestead Parking Lot on the east side of the road. The lot is 1/10-mile past the park entrance station.



## Acknowledgments

We are very grateful to Bob Metzler, grandson of Patrick and Margaret Lucas, and John Ames, who fished in Cherry Creek near the Lucas Homestead as a young boy, for sharing their memories with us and helping us recreate the story of this historic property.

We also wish to thank Castlewood Canyon State Park volunteers Susan Permut and Linda Pohle for their assistance with this booklet.

Ron Claussen, Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) Interpreter, ably directed the project.

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Brice Foland of Pioneer Sand & Gravel for their donation of trail material for the new segments of trail and trail maintenance.

Friends of Castlewood Canyon State Park for their generous financial support.

⑥ Now walk back toward the spring house until you see, on your right, one of the most remarkable, and mysterious, structures on the homestead—a concrete, six-foot-high, L-shaped wall embedded with beautiful rocks. We call it the “fancy wall.” Notice the bolts on the top of the wall. Those suggest something might have been nailed to the top to create a roof over the two-sided structure, creating a shelter. Milk cows are valuable property and dairy farmers today play music for their cows and paint their barns and milking parlors in pleasant colors. Do you think the Lucases built this wall to please their cows and give them a particularly fine shelter?

The tour of the Lucas homestead ends here, but, as you walk back to the concrete house, we invite you to imagine what life might have been like on the homestead over 100 years ago.

**Imagine...** It’s four a.m. at the start of a cold winter day in 1900. The fire in the only source of heat in the home had burned down overnight. Brrr! But the rooster is crowing and it’s time to get up. The first Lucas family members up restarted the fire in the kitchen stove. Lacking flashlights, Patrick and his sons, who were responsible for the outside chores, dressed warmly, grabbed kerosene barn lamps, and headed outside to feed the animals, milk the cows, store the milk in the spring house, gather eggs, and do countless other chores. Margaret and her daughters put on water for tea and had a hot, hearty breakfast ready when the boys returned from their early morning chores about 6 a.m.

Now that it’s light outside and everyone has their inner fires stoked by a hot breakfast, there’s still more work to do...perhaps dig out from a recent snowstorm, split wood, tend to the animals, carry milk to the Franktown creamery to sell. In the spring and summer there was even more work—cultivating, weeding, and irrigating the fields. So, do you think these were the good old days?

Patrick Lucas died in the concrete house in 1936 and Margaret moved to Denver in 1941. The concrete house was never lived in again. Fire swept the property in the late 1950s/early 1960s. The homestead acres were divided up over the years. In 1979, Colorado State Parks began purchasing the homestead from Lucas grandson Bob Metzler and his sister Rosemary, who wished to honor the memories of their grandparents. The final acres were purchased in 2002 by Friends of Castlewood Canyon State Park. For more information about this historic homestead, visit the Castlewood Canyon State Park Visitor Center and ask to look at the *Discover Book*, which contains detailed information about the park’s geology, history, flora, and fauna.

## Discover the Lucas Homestead: A Self-Guided Tour

Patrick and Margaret Lucas were born in Ireland, but met and married in Arizona in 1889. In 1894, they were among the area’s first homesteaders, settling 160 acres on this site in the park. By 1910, they had eight children, ranging in age from 3 to 18. Some evidence of the family’s presence is obvious, like the two-story concrete house before you. Other evidence is harder to find...and is still being found. Be sure to bring your imagination along on this approximately half-mile walk around the Lucas homestead and back in time. If you do happen to find an artifact, please leave it where you found it and notify park staff. Thank you for helping us protect the story of the Lucas Homestead in Castlewood Canyon State Park.

① We begin at the front of the concrete house. The Lucases built a wooden house near this site when they first homesteaded here in 1894. Four years later, in 1898, they built this concrete house. A concrete house was unusual in those days, so why did they choose concrete? Perhaps Patrick and Margaret were thinking of the stone and plastered concrete houses in their native Ireland. Patrick also spent time in Illinois where concrete houses were more common.

Look closely at the house for clues as to how the Lucases lived. Do you see any electrical wires or places to attach electrical wires to the outside? Do you see any signs of water pipes that indicated they had indoor plumbing? How many chimneys are there? Can you spot the place where the stovepipe from the wood-burning stove attached to the chimney? Note that there is only one stovepipe attaching point with no attachment point higher up on the wall. That probably means there was only one stove to heat the whole house and no source of heat upstairs. This was not unusual for ranch houses in those days.

See the wide ledge on the north and south sides of the interior walls at ground-floor level? Look for a smaller ledge higher up on the walls, above the windows. Floor joists were placed on these ledges. The bottom ledge supported the floor of the first floor and ceiling of the cellar. The top ledge supported the second floor and first floor ceiling.

Now look around the outside of the house. See the small bushes growing in a circular pattern to the right (south) side of the house? These are snowberries, which often grow in disturbed ground. Lucas grandson Bob Metzler remembers a large mulberry tree growing on this spot with tables and chairs arranged underneath it. It would have been a lovely spot for taking afternoon tea and meals and entertaining in warm months. The Lucases reportedly liked to entertain and did so often. Continue around the south side of the house. The curved concrete roof marks the entrance to the cellar. A concrete cellar would stay cool in summer and warmer in winter. What types of food do you think the Lucases would keep here?

Across from the southeast corner of the house, notice the larger bushes in the scrub oak. These are Margaret's beloved lilacs. Women typically planted lilacs around their new homes—perhaps as a reminder of the homes they left behind. Down the hill from the lilacs, a bit treacherous walking, is the well, still marked by a ceramic pipe in the ground. A stream begins here, probably the source of water for mixing concrete for the house and for drinking and cooking.

Now move around to the left (north) side of the house. The big tree is a box elder. The smaller trees down the hill from it are apple trees the Lucases planted over 100 years ago for fruit for apple pies, cobblers, perhaps cider. These are apple varieties you won't find in grocery stores today. These may have been purchased as young saplings from the Lambert Orchard Company in Sedalia, which was in business when the Lucases began homesteading. Despite their age, these trees continue to bear fruit in the fall. Patrick and Margaret would be pleased!

② Go back towards the parking lot and bear left at the trail junction to see some of the surviving outbuildings of the Lucas homestead. As you enter the trees and scrub oak a few yards down the trail, look for a wood structure in the scrub oak on your right. This was the Lucases' livestock loading chute. The height of the chute's sides provide a clue as to what kinds of animals the Lucases kept. So does the fence post with barbed wire on it just across the trail on your left. It's a kind of wire used for tall animals like cattle and horses. The Lucases would have had horses to pull their wagons. They would back the wagon up to the loading chute and drive cattle into the wagon.

Look for a large, iron ring, or "eye," sticking up in the grass about 20 feet in front of the loading chute. The Lucases probably tied their horses to this ring to prevent them from straying off to graze while cattle were being loaded in and out of the wagon.

③ Just past the chute, walk up the slight incline on your right. See the concrete "floor"? What do you notice about it? There are rectangular troughs in the floor and curved troughs on each side with some bolts and wood visible on one side. This was probably the milking parlor area of a large barn. Wooden stocks held the cows' heads while they were milked and as they fed on hay in the curved troughs, called mangers. There's dark, rich dirt in the rectangular troughs now, which suggests that they once held cow manure. It's important to keep a milking parlor clean and the troughs would have made it easy to "muck out" the parlor after each milking. The Lucas boys probably did the milking, being careful to watch out for swishing tails, especially in the winter when dirt frozen on the ends of those tails would make them dangerous!

Milk was poured through strainers into large cans for storage. Where would the Lucas boys take the full, perhaps 5- to 10-gallon cans to keep the milk fresh? To a refrigerator? Well, kind of, as you'll see in a minute.

Go back down to the lane and turn right, walking towards the next stop. On the way, look at all the weeds. When you have milk cows, it's extremely important to remove weeds so the cows don't eat them. Weeds can give milk a bad taste, and one weed that grows here, poison hemlock, is a very bad thing to have in milk.

④ Have you spotted the concrete walls on the right (south) side of the path a few yards down the trail? Don't go too far or you'll get your feet wet in water from a spring that begins about 20 feet up the hill and to the right of this structure. This building was the Lucases' spring house. It served as their refrigerator. A trough in the middle of the structure would direct water from the spring into the spring house and the milk jugs would be placed in the water each morning to keep the milk fresh. An outlet downhill allowed the water to flow out of the spring house, ensuring there was always clean, fresh water. A wooden roof covered the spring house and thick wooden walls filled with sawdust insulated it, protecting milk and food from heat and cold. Can you imagine how tasty a watermelon would be on a hot summer day when it came out of that cool water? The Lucases may have had more milk than they could use, so they loaded some milk cans on wagons to sell at a creamery that was then operating in Franktown.

⑤ Continue down the hill to the next building on our tour—a large (75 feet long and 36 feet wide) concrete structure. This building has some puzzling features. It looks big enough to be a barn, but there are no bolts sticking up from the low walls, suggesting that there was never a roof over it. What else could this be? Maybe it was a silage pit to sweeten hay before feeding it to the stock or to sweeten manure before spreading it on the fields? "Sweetening" means letting the hay or manure ripen and decompose before using it. Manure spread on the field too soon would burn crops. Lucas grandson Bob Metzler recalls this structure as a hay stacking yard, where he saw hay stacked high in haystacks that looked like giant loaves of bread!

Find the bedspring near the south wall of this structure. John Ames, who came to Castlewood Canyon to fish in the 1910s and 20s, told us that Patrick used to tie three old bedsprings together and stretch them across the road as a tollgate. He would charge 25 cents for cars to cross his property.

Behind you, next to the Homestead Trail, is some stout, square, non-barbed wire. This gives us a clue as to what other animals the Lucases raised. We call this "hog wire." Why do you think it's called that? Because it was used to fence hogs (pigs) in...and to keep them out of the crops and stored hay. The family raised pigs for food, including pork roasts, sausage, ham, and bacon. They may have sold some pigs to generate income for the family. We've found chicken wire on the homestead, too, north of the house. Guess what that would be used for?