

## THE CHIPITA PARK COMPANY & THE CHIPITA LODGE

*Excerpts, as written, from the last Shareholders Annual Report for the Chipita Park Land Company, 1997. This historical information is anecdotal from Howard Wilson.*

“On December 31, 1996, the Board of Directors met for the last time at the office of the company in Chipita Lodge where the business of the Chipita Park Company and its predecessor, the Ute Pass Land and Water Company, was conducted since Frank Marcroft undertook the development of the Park in 1927.

Since the organization of the Chipita Park Company after Frank Marcroft’s untimely death in 1942 [sic], the venerable log building called Chipita Lodge (or simply the Lodge) has served variously as land office and real estate agency; summer Post Office; meeting place for the Homeowners Association before Marcroft Hall was built; dance hall for weekly square dances in the summer; dining room and restaurant; snack bar for teenagers who whiled away summer days around a juke box; meeting place for the Trout Club and it’s annual fish fry; the Ute Pass Investment Club; Cub Scouts and the erstwhile Fountain Creek Yacht Club. For several years, weekly candlelight meetings were held by a group of hardy souls who met in front of the fireplace for conversation and sharing. The price of admission was a log or a stick of fireplace wood to keep a fire burning.

From the Marcroft era through the halcyon days during and after the war when stewardship of the Park passed into the hands of the Chipita Park Company, the Lodge was the center of life in the community. Now, it’s time having come and gone, it has been sold and soon will be reborn as a Bed and Breakfast offering quality accommodations to visitors. People will no longer be able to ask “Where are the guest rooms in the lodge?” when they happen by as they did when it served as an office or when the Marcrofts served lunch to prospective lot buyers who were transported up the Pass from Colorado Springs and Manitou in touring cars. In the early days, salesmen on the street snagged likely prospects who were brought to the lodge, fed a meal, shown the plats of lots for sale and treated to a film presentation showing all the amenities of property ownership. Afterward, they were given a tour; as they drove along the Park roads, the salesmen waved their arms at the tree covered mountain and extolled the advantages of owning a cabin in the pines. Along the way, they caught site of the shuffleboard court, the play ground and the picnic pavilion, the lake, the riding stables, the clay tennis court and seven hole golf course that shared the pasture with the prairie dogs (pocket gophers, actually). To folks from the flat lands, the Park was a veritable paradise. They were charmed by the scenic views, the wooded slopes of Mt. Esther, and the wild flowers, and they were exhilarated by the clear blue skies, the pine scented air and the rarified atmosphere.”