

Sixty Years Ago

25 May 2025

25 May 1965: Traveling up the road to Cowles, New Mexico, we are about to begin a new way of life, in a new world, at Los Pinos Ranch. As we ascend the narrow dirt road up the Pecos River, a spectacular view of snow-capped Pecos Baldy looms before us. We are surrounded by the Ponderosa Pines for which the ranch was named. Mule deer curiously observe our progress. Our Mom, Alice J, has gone on ahead to meet with the former owners. Our Dad, Bill Sr, has had to remain at work, commuting the 2,000 miles to join us as often as possible.

A lot has changed in the past six decades; a lot remains the same: Los Pinos's aspen-log cabins have survived for over 100 years thanks to diligent repairs and a great deal of chinking. The original tar-paper roof covering, which provided us with entertainment during frequent rainstorms, has been replaced by metal. That also helps to shed snow in the long winter months. Remnants of the waterwheel are no longer in evidence, a few pieces of its hardware hang on the woodshed. Only the charming old cowbarn has succumbed to the elements.

The "modern" additions, those equipped with plumbing, only date to the 1930s. No running water for the earlier visitor. The two remaining outhouses are reminders of past amenities. There were only twin beds in the cabins in 1965! Fireplaces and wood stoves continue as the main source of heat. There is electricity throughout, but guests are still served dinner by candlelight.

There were 4 horses to begin with: Dusty, Twofer, Chico and Valentine, with Belle joining the herd that summer. Equine numbers have fluctuated from year to year (challenge Bill and Alice to name them all), providing family and guests with wonderful memories of rides into the Pecos Wilderness. The family cats and dogs are also remembered with love and many humorous stories. Goats no longer grace the premises. Not to be left out are the resident wildlife. Hummingbirds, ground squirrels and chipmunks are still a great source of entertainment.

Although our parents are no longer with us, their dedication, hard work, humor and love remain an inspiration to us as the Mcsweeny family continues in the guest ranch tradition. Of course, Los Pinos wouldn't be what it is today without the many guests who have stayed with us over the years. You have added a sense of extended family and long-lasting friendships. We look forward to welcoming you back to Los Pinos Ranch *"where the road ends and the trails begin."*

With kind regards, Alice and Bill McSweeney