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Bud and Kathy Benson Oral History Summary

Bud and Kathy Benson shared their family history, with Kathy tracing her ancestry to her grandfather Charles Wolf, a German immigrant who settled in Colorado in the late 1800s. Charles left Germany at 17 to avoid military service, working his way westward before homesteading on Gruff Creek in 1892. He married Effie Hughes, a mail-order bride from Iowa, and together they raised five children, including Kathy's father, Paul Wolf. Charles was a respected rancher who contributed to securing water rights for the region, a lengthy legal battle that ultimately allowed the Medano Creek's water to be diverted for irrigation.

The Wolf ranch became a prominent property, known for its cattle and as a haven for hunters. Paul Wolf, who took over the ranch, upheld the family's reputation for hard work and hospitality. In 1959, the ranch was sold as part of a large land transaction, marking the end of the family's ownership.

The interview also covered Bud's family, highlighting their ranching heritage and connections to the Schmidt family, who also homesteaded in the area. Kathy reflected on her upbringing on the ranch, describing the hard work, camaraderie, and adventures such as branding cattle and hay stacking. They also recounted local traditions like "Gallo Day" in Gardner, a Spanish holiday featuring horse races and rooster games.

The Bensons emphasized the importance of preserving the history of homesteaders and ranching families in the region, as many original properties and records have faded into obscurity.

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