

**HOMESTEADING PROGRAM  
RICH CABINS CAMP PROFILE****Name of Camp: Rich Cabins****Time Period: Summer, 1900****Camp Theme: Immigrant Family Homestead****Significance in American History.**

Immigration into the United States from European countries was very high from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century through the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. After the Homestead Act was passed in 1862, railroads and land developers advertised the availability of land in the West to the crowded and politically troubled countries of Europe. As Native Americans were economically defeated and moved onto reserves, more and more families of European origins moved into the West and homesteaded. The nature of the area changed considerably from the days when the only single men, trappers, traders, adventurers of European origin were here. Family homesteads created a stable, "civilizing" atmosphere and led to a more populated West and the generations of Westerners with diverse national backgrounds that followed. The family was a unit of work, defense, and independence on the frontier.

**Characters.**

**Joseph "Joe" Rich (formerly spelled Risch).** Came to the United States in 1880 from the village of Lienz, in the province of Tirol, Austria, after his sister Frieda had immigrated a couple of years earlier with her husband, Joseph Wertz. The story goes that the priest in their area of Austria said that they could marry but not have children because there was not enough land to support more people there. Joe Rich found and homesteaded the Rich Cabins site shortly after his arrival. He came in New Mexico Territory to be close to his sister and family who were living in Catskill, a community to the north.

**Francis Regel Rich.** Joe went back to Austria to marry Francis and brought her back with him to the United States. We don't really know exactly when she came, but we are allowing her to be part of the scene in 1900. She probably did not arrive in the US until after 1910. She is shy and doesn't speak English as well as her sister-in-law Frieda or the brothers but she is learning New Mexican and American ways very quickly. Francis is very good with the animals, especially the cows and chickens.

**Louis Rich.** The second of the Rich Brothers, who are only a couple of years apart in age until David. He came to the United States with John. See their story below. Louis has a gold claim in La Belle on the other side of the mountain. He works his mine there much of the time but returns regularly to do his part on the family farm and ranch.

**John Rich.** The third brother who came to the United States with Louis a year after Joe. They got work permits and worked in Arizona for the railroad cutting railroad ties. After they had finished the work there, they started to New Mexico but ran out of money on the way. When they had only 20 cents between them, they walked along the railroad tracks to Springer and joined their brother Joe at the place here.

**David Rich.** The youngest brother and the last to immigrate to this country. David is seven years younger than John. He was struck by lightning as he was climbing over a fence and now uses a cane to walk since one side (we don't know which) is still partially paralyzed.

**Frieda Rich Wertz.** Is the eldest of the family by one year and the first to come to the United States. She is a very adaptable and resourceful woman -- the mother of two sons, David and Louie. Frieda lives with her husband and boys in Catskill, a logging town several miles northwest of the Rich Cabins site, but visits frequently and stays to help out during the busy working season of the summer. Frieda is known as a fabulous cook.

**Rose Spinner Schwartz.** The wife of one of Louis's friends on the other side of Baldy in the mining town of Elizabethtown. Rose has come into Cimarron to do some business and came out to the Rich's to stay over for a couple of days. She has become quite friendly with both Marie and Frieda. She and Frieda have boys about the same age. Rose likes to garden and admires the Rich's good land and abundant water. The soil in Elizabethtown is rocky and dry by comparison.

### **Historical Background of Camp.**

The Rich family came to New Mexico in the 1880's from the village of Lienz in the province of Tirol, located in southeast Austria near the Italian border. Frieda was the first to immigrate with her husband, Joseph Wertz. They lived in the town of Catskill that used to be located north of the present Rich Cabins site and supplied meat for the workers there. Next came Joe who was a year younger than Frieda. He was the founder of the Rich Ranch. His next two brothers, John and Louis, followed. They secured work permits and cut railroad ties near Flagstaff, Arizona, before joining Joe in New Mexico and becoming partners in the ranching operation. Joe returned to Austria to marry "Marie" and brought her to New Mexico. David was the last to arrive.

### **Present Time at Rich Cabins.**

By 1900 the ranch had been established for almost twenty years and was a stable business. All the siblings who immigrate were here and had adopted the heart as their brand. The original cabin has been enlarged several times to accommodate the entire family. It was considered a nice home in its day, and their prosperity can be measured by the fact that they had wooden rather than dirt floors. Research some significant events in the United States and New Mexico that would be relevant to the Riches, also things to mention in your first person roles to mark the time period.

### **Future Developments.**

In 1916 the property was sold to Stanley M. Chase of the neighboring Chase Ranch which is still in operation. By 1918 Joe had relocated to the Platte Valley region of Wyoming and started the Rich Brothers Ranch there with John and David. Frieda and her husband Joseph Wertz moved to Trinidad where they lived for the rest of their lives. Only Louis stayed in New Mexico and has descendents living in the area still. He lived and worked in or near the mining town Elizabethtown until he married Rose Spinner Schwartz after she was widowed in 1922. They moved to Springer and had two children together as well as raising her six boys.

### **Characters' Clothing and Appearance.**

**Women:** High necked or collared, loose workdresses with aprons or a skirt and blouse; one petticoat, low-heeled lace-up work shoes. Prints and simple plaids in a variety of colors. See drawings and pictures in references listed below, but take care to notice dates on the photos... 10 years either way makes a difference in the styles, especially for women.

Accessories include: Shawls, wool for warmth and rain protection; Coats, 3/4 or full length "dusters" or men's jackets; Cardigan sweaters of plain design and dark or neutral colors, collared or with V-neck. Sunbonnets and/or wide brimmed straw hats for outdoor work are essential to look right. Jewelry, Perhaps a locket or cameo for dress wear (not for work), wedding bands, Pin or necklace watches; Handkerchiefs, fine cotton

often trimmed with crochet or lace; Fans; Hairpieces and combs for ornament but simple tortoise shell; Stockings, black or dark brown opaque tights. Lace up boots.

Appearance: Neat, clean and orderly even in work clothing; housekeeping is meticulous; hairstyles of the period and class are long hair drawn back into a bun or twist.

If hair is short, wear a bonnet, scarf tied behind the head, or wide brim sun hat to disguise the short hair. No obviously dyed or colored hair.

**Men:** Henley knit shirts, flannel collared or heavy cotton collarless shirts with fuller button-fly trousers of the period in heavy cottons, twill, gabardine and wool with button on suspenders and work boots. Some bib overalls were worn, often with blazer like jackets. Roll neck cotton or wool pullover sweaters, collared or V-neck cardigan sweaters; and wool jackets -- dark and neutral colors --for nights and cool weather.

Accessories include: Handkerchiefs, white or subtle print, no bandanas; Pocket watches; Socks; hats, wide brim for sun protection and billed "golf" cap styles. See pictures of the period for details. Lace up boots.

Appearance: Neat, clean and orderly as much as possible; dirty only as work has made you; barns, tools, etc. in order; hairstyles of the period were short -- to the ears and above nape of the neck -- but without "buzzed" or shaved areas. No obviously dyed hair colors like orange, purple, and such.

### **Language.**

All characters would be comfortable in English although spoken with an Austrian accent. Some hint of this could be given by using certain words for simple replies, like "nein" for "no". Research this, practice and do the best you can. "Beverly Hillbillies" accents are definitely not appropriate.

Speech in that era seems formal to us today. Married couples usually addressed each other as well as friends and family members as Mr. and Mrs rather than by first names unless saying "My brother, Joe, who started the family ranch."

### **Props.**

- Tools and implements for farming, gardening and livestock
- Household implements and cookware and kitchen utensils of the period
- Family photos in the home
- Fountain pens with the look of the period, notebooks and ledger looking books reminiscent of the period (no electric colors, plastics, etc.)
- Laundry tub, wringer, and scrub board
- Knitting, crochet, quilting, embroidery, or just mending needlework plus yarn, thread, needles, embroidery hoop etc.
- Saints of Austrian origin in pictures or statue, rosary, and indications that the family is of the Catholic faith
- Toys or evidence of Frieda's two children in the household -- they would have been ages 2 and 6 in 1900, but, if their picture with the bear skin is used, they are 12 and 8 in that photo.

### **Program Activities Provided for Campers.**

- Cow Milking
- Livestock & Animal Care (Cows, Pigs, Chickens, Burros)
- Gardening
- Corn Grinding & Misc. Farm Chores
- Home Visit (Tour)
- Soap making
- Evening Family Gathering (Campfire)

### **Staff Roles and Responsibilities as Historical Interpreters.**

- Welcoming campers as travelers passing through - In character, first person interp
- Check in - Out of character, third person interp
- Home visit - In character
- Gardening, care of livestock, milking, other activities -- In character

### **Campers' Roles.**

Travelers passing through and needing a place to stay in exchange for helping with the chores.

### **Positive Values to be depicted at Rich Cabins.**

- Hard work and cooperation within the family unit to accomplish the tasks at hand
- Respect and value for the work of all of genders and ages
- Contribution to America of its immigrant population
- Hospitality to travelers

### **Relationship to BSA Program Goals.**

- Appreciate the role played by each member of the family and the multi-gender, multi-generational roles within the extended family unit of that era
- Experience the hard work and resourcefulness that it took to survive and succeed 100 years ago
- Learn skills such as quilting, cow milking, gardening, etc.
- Enjoy games and music of the period and national origin of the Rich family
- Respect and understanding of the diversity of the homesteaders of the American West

### **References.**

Green, Harvey. *The Light of the Home: An Intimate View of the Lives of Women in Victorian America.*

Luchetti, Cathy, with Orwell, Carol. *Women of the West.*

Lupton, F. *Farmers and Housekeepers Cyclopedia.*

Salas Marquez, Ruben. *New Mexico: A Brief Multi-History*

Seymour, John. *The Forgotten Crafts: A Practical Guide to Traditional Skills*

Time-Life Books: The Old West (Series). Look for *The Ranchers.*

**Do on-line searches on immigrant migration/population in the American West; details of what's happening in 1900 in United States, Europe and New Mexico; songs, games, and stories that would have come over from Austria at that time.**