

Ring Homestead

Valle Vidal Unit – Carson National Forest

Distance from Casa del Gavilan to trail head:

50 miles – 75-90 minutes

Trail length: 1 mile loop trail

Elevation change: 30 feet

Difficulty: Easy

Points of interest: Ring Homestead

No passes or fees are required in Valle Vidal



When logging began in earnest in the Cimarron area, Ring and Ponil Park was two of several townsites that sprang up in the vast sea of timber in the mountains to the northwest of the town. Ring, Ponil Park, and other towns houses hundreds of loggers while the timber lasted. When the endless supply of trees ended, the loggers pulled up the tracks as they departed leaving scant evidence of their presence other than stumps as far as the eye could see. Only the grass was left to whisper in the wind.

The stumps, as well as other evidence of the massive logging from over a century ago, have disappeared from the Valle Vidal. What remains of these towns are a few old cabins, some of the machinery used to cut and haul the logs and lumber, and cemeteries of the loved ones they left behind. At the Ring Townsite the smokestacks of the mill lay on the ground where the mill once stood. The Ring cemetery contains a number of markers, most of them weathered far beyond recognition. The only remains of both townsites are a few ruined cabins, and bits of machinery scattered around the area.

The east side of Valle Vidal is typically closed between January 1st through March 31. During this time the gravel road through Valle Vidal is open but no hiking or other activities off the main road are permitted, which includes this hike. During winter months snow can block the road in places. Be cautious of driving into Valle Vidal during or after heavy rains, or in winter weather. Cell phones will only work for a mile or two off Highway 64. The rest of the time you'll be out of cell phone range and "on your own". Traffic along the road can be very sparse except for summer months and hunting season. Make certain you have a spare tire as flat tires do sometimes occur on the gravel road.

To reach the trailhead, drive north out of Cimarron on Highway 64 (toward Raton) five miles. On the right (east) side of the road you'll see a sign "Valle Vidal Unit Carson National Forest" pointing to the left (west). Turn west onto the gravel road. This part of the road passes through Ted Turner's nearly 600,000 Vermejo Park Ranch which runs into Colorado. You will see gated side roads for numerous gas wells along the main road. The road is a public highway, but no hiking or other activities are permitted off the gravel road. Twenty one miles from Highway 64 a sign marks the entrance into Valle Vidal. Beyond this point hiking and other off-road activities are permitted with some restrictions. Proceed another 8 miles to the McCrystal campground on the right side of the road. Park in the campground, or along the north (right) side of the road. Well maintained pit toilets are available in the McCrystal Campground and near the Ring Homestead.

Just inside the entrance to the campground is a sign for the "Ring Place Interpretive Trail". Follow this trail across the road to the Ring Homestead. Circle the homestead and read the informational panels about the history of the Ring Family. From the homestead follow the dirt road west, then south. Philmont Scout Ranch staffs the Ring Homestead, as well as a few other areas in the Valle Vidal, during the summer months. So don't be surprised if you see crews of Scouts around the Ring Place during the summer months. The Philmont staff is happy to answer questions about the Ring Homestead and the history of the area from non-Scout visitors.

The following information is from: <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1994-09-18-me-39916-story.html>

The ranch, with its authentic two-story log cabin, barn and root cellar, is part of a 100,000-acre addition to the Carson National Forest donated about 12 years ago by Pennzoil Corp. Timothy Ring came to the United States from Ireland just in time for the Civil War, fought on the Union side and took a bullet in a lung. Ring purchased the 320-acre ranch in 1890 for \$960, Young said.

Born in County Cork, Ireland, Ring married Irish-born Catherine Byrnes in Chicago after the Civil War. They had seven daughters--Margaret, Mabel, Mary, Maud, Myrtle, Amy and Anna. The last of them, Anna, died in 1984 at age 92. The Rings had no sons, and only Margaret and Amy ever married. When Timothy Ring died in 1903, there were no men to run the ranch.

Catherine Ring sold it in 1906, but the property continued as a ranch until the 1980s, Young said.

For more information: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/carson/recreation/horseriding-camping/recarea/?recid=44224&actid=104>

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