



Walter Knott
Farmer, Agricultural Developer, Restaurateur, Theme Park
Innovator, Homesteader
1889 - 1981
Buena Park, California

Walter Knott and his wife, Cordelia, moved onto a homestead near Buena Park, California in 1920. Today, part of that land is Knott's Berry Farm, one of America's premier theme parks and family destinations.

Before Knott's Berry Farm, however, the Knott family was successful at other ventures as well. During the late 1920s and early '30s, they sold berry plants directly from their farm. Also in the '30s, Walter Knott began to work with a friend, Rudolph Boysen, to develop a cross between red raspberries and blackberries. When Knott successfully crossed the two, he named the new mixture "boysenberry" after his friend.

Cordelia Knott was successful in her own right, making delicious jams and jellies made from her husband's boysenberries. She soon followed with home baked pies, biscuits, and sandwiches. In June 1934, she served eight fried chicken dinners that cost 65 cent each, and the world's largest chicken restaurant was born. Today, the Chicken Dinner Restaurant serves more that 1.5 million chicken dinners each year.

To entertain customers waiting to eat at the restaurant, in 1940 Walter Knott began building a small display that paid homage to the Old West. As the popularity of the restaurant and the Old West display grew, Knott began to build more. In the 1960s, rides were incorporated, and soon Knott's Berry Farm theme park was developed.

Millions of people visit Knott's Berry Farm each year, and millions more continue to eat food products made from boysenberries. Incredibly, both of these major innovations began on the simple homestead of Walter and Cordelia Knott.

Cordelia Knott lived until 1974. After she passed away, Walter Knott continued to live on part of their original farm until he died in 1981.