



The Story of Cold Springs Ranch

By

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Introduction

At the 2011 annual meeting of the Cold Springs Ranch Property Owners Association (POA), Cam Currie asked me to write the history of the Ranch, which I have attempted to do here. Little did I know how many interesting stories I would stumble over in the course of my research. The trips to the Waynesville library and courthouse, the hours of reading, as well as the many discussions and interviews with local people, brought me many hours of pleasure.

I am hopeful that the Cold Springs Ranch community will keep this document current by adding new information or by correcting any errors which may be found. I will leave the electronic file of this booklet with the permanent files of the POA so that it can be updated electronically from time to time.



John and Gloria Schroeder

The Schroeder Family & Cold Springs Ranch

Gloria and I were drawn to the Great Smoky Mountains by a series of experiences. After a meeting with a pension fund client in Raleigh, we stopped off for a visit with some friends in Waynesville. We spent all night talking about the coming of the new age and the advisability of having a survival home in the Great Smoky Mountains. I previously had been favorably biased toward the area by conversations with my boss and mentor, Sir John Templeton, who

frequently reminisced with fondness of the mountains and of his growing up nearby in Eastern Tennessee. This was before he went off to Yale and Oxford. In 1965, he turned the Templeton investment organization over to me in a trust when he moved to the Bahamas.

In 1988, we bought a second home near Exit 20 on Route 40 (238 Pinecrest Lane, Waynesville), which we and our family have enjoyed to this day. Our neighbors, Larry Adcock and Dan Moore, showed us the beauty of the larger area. Larry Adcock owned and lived with his family for several years at the Salvation Army Mountain Mission, later called the Salt & Light community, next to what we now call Cold Springs Ranch. Dan Moore, who served as Master Officer in the Wildlife Service, also was very familiar with the area. Knowing of my interest in acquiring more land, Dan called me one day in 1993 and said: *"John, the most beautiful piece of land I know of is coming on the market tomorrow."*

Gloria and I went to see the property and decided, without hesitation, to buy. It was not only the beauty of the land, but also the possibility and excitement of endless camping and hiking for us and our grown children that convinced us. The lure of the National Forest, and access to the nearby Appalachian Trail and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, were irresistible. It was at a point in my life, after years of executive activities, when I began to feel more deeply about the Divine in nature and the power of intuition. Since I was about to retire from the Board of Directors of the Morgan Stanley Funds and was looking for a way to indulge my interest in trees, which I had pursued as a hobby all my life, this was a perfect

fit. Of course, with my professional investment background, I also recognized the improving dynamics of the real estate cycle.

The Schroeder family purchase of the Ranch property in 1993, as mentioned before, was intended as a long-term investment for us and our children, and as a place to build an arboretum where one could find at least one tree of every species growing in the eastern United States in temperature zones 6 and 7. I had been fascinated with botany since an early age but never had time to gain more than superficial knowledge.

With the *Audubon Manual of Eastern Trees* in hand -- and the help of Dan Moore, Larry Adcock, Grady Rathbone and Harry Ward, the county ranger-botanist -- I found that ninety of the identified one hundred and sixty seven species were present on the property. For example: four species of oak, three of maple, etc. So, I had to find seventy-seven species and plant them. Some of them, like the American Elm and the American Chestnut, had succumbed to a virus and become extinct. The Forest Service helped me find one of each species that were found to be impervious to the blight and I planted them on the property. At this time they are still thriving. Some of these trees could not survive our harsh winters, such as Long Leaf Pine, a Ginkgo tree and a Bald Cypress. Some were inadvertently cut down by maintenance crews. I replaced these trees last year with the help of Tom Saxton. Readers can find details of each of the one hundred and sixty-seven species and their locations in a booklet I published in 2004, a copy of which is in the attached files.



After several years it became clear that we could accomplish our goal, including the arboretum, on fifty acres in the center of the property, which included the pond we had built. Therefore, the remaining two hundred acres could be subdivided and developed. This was also in the best interest of our five children, to whom we had gifted ninety percent of the property over a period of several years. We held the property in the name of Pinecrest Partners.

We donated the fifty acres which, together with Ore Knob, now represent the common property of the Cold Springs Ranch POA. We did so without claiming a tax deduction to keep out the public. For designation of common property, we selected the land around the pond, the streams, the hiking paths and the selected campgrounds. We sacrificed several building lots. The land area of our common property is larger than that of the famous Bronx Botanical Garden in New York, which serves as, among other things, the headquarters of the World Wildlife Federation.

With the help of my lawyer David Haynes (no known relation to Jasper), I wrote a set of covenants which, with some amendments, still stand today. The aim was to create an environmentally sound, gated, upscale community that complied with modern sanitary laws. I wanted to disturb the trees as little as possible. I also wanted no overhead wires, old cars or ugly signs showing, no half-finished buildings or bright lights to disturb the view for hikers in the National Park. We also included size limits, including minimum and maximum floor space, and height restrictions. As of this writing, the community has made great progress. There are now fourteen beautiful residences, some of which have consolidated with adjoining properties. I expect there will be more than twenty-five homes eventually. For the record, we bought the property in 1993, sold our first lot in December of 1998 and the last in January 2006.

Before I could begin, I had to find a name for the community. My aim was to find a Cherokee word that had some spiritual, uplifting or nature-loving meaning. I went to the Cherokee museum, bought a Cherokee dictionary and brainstormed with various people. No success. One day I drove up Cold Springs Road, the forest service road that connects with exit 7 of Route 40, and noticed the name of Cold Springs Creek. That's when I had my 'aha moment.' I asked my lawyer to check for the availability of 'Cold Springs Ranch.' He did and was able to give me a positive answer within a week. The name was available and obviously appropriate both by its location and by the fact that we have at least twenty cold springs on the property. Who knows: Cold Springs Road may some day be thought of as the road named for our Ranch.

I also hired Kevin Ensley, the best surveyor I could find, to do the official surveying and subdividing. In laying out the lots we were guided by natural features such as roads, streams and ridges. We also wanted to ensure that the houses were invisible from each other. We ended up with thirty-five lots with an average of about six acres each, plus common property and Ore Knob. (Kevin Ensley later became a County Commissioner.)

I called in environmental engineers from Raleigh to make sure that our development did not violate any environmental rules, especially on our upland bog between lots 25 and 28. We received a clean bill of health.

The decision to keep all wires underground was not easy because a major overhead power line ran across our property along Juniper and Balsam roads into the Ferguson cabin on the neighboring property to the north. We learned later that this had been the main road down into the valley before Max Patch Road was extended beyond the cabin by the gate. After a great deal of negotiating with the Fergusons and the utility company and much expense, I was able to move the line where it is now along our northern boundary on the neighbor's property.

Before I go any further, I have to say more about Dan Moore, who agreed to act early on as the property's General Manager for me. The history of Cold Springs Ranch should include his name. Without him the Ranch probably would not have become a reality. Since I was away in New York and Florida for much of the time, he supervised the building of the roads, the cutting of the pond, the laying of electric and telephone lines, and handled all financial details, including the checkbook. He spent months personally clearing Ore Knob. He supervised the tree removal and built the fence. Dan also spent many months cutting and clearing the hiking trails. (Since the formal creation of the POA, these trails have been maintained by the trail and tree committee of Jim Northey, Bill Phillips and Tom Saxton.)

When the development activities were completed and we turned it over to the Home Owners Association, Dan Moore, who owned Lot 19, became the first President and served for one year. I was lucky to have found Dan during his first year of retirement from the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission. We owe him full appreciation and recognition as an essential person in the formation of Cold Springs Ranch. Mike Miller, who bought the first two lots in 1998, followed Dan as President and has served very ably for more than 10 years. He too deserves our gratitude and respect. Mike also has contributed to this history and to the further development of the Ranch. Among other improvements, the community improved the entrance and the security gates.

The road system on the Ranch consisted originally only of the main road which runs from the gate to the back gate and was the original logging road for the forest service. Later we named it Juniper Road. In addition there was Basswood Road, which ran to a barn on the common property opposite Lot 17. That barn had been built in 1952 and lasted about fifty years until it collapsed in a snowstorm in 2002. The old chestnut boards, which could

be valuable, are stored nearby. Another original road was the afore-mentioned one we now call Balsam Road leading past Mike Miller's house. Mike selected the name because of his fondness for Balsam firs. All other roads on the property were added by us. Our road builder was Johnny Lowe and his crew, including William Sutton, a great grandson of Bud Haynes. We named all the roads, including the original ones, after trees. This was not easy, since Haywood permitted only one road county-wide for each tree for 911 identification and most tree names had already been taken. I guess I was carried away by my love of trees.

During the thirteen years of our ownership, our whole family enjoyed hiking and camping on the property. We still enjoy hiking there occasionally as honorary members. My oldest grandson, also named John Schroeder, told me recently that he wants to buy a lot when he can afford it. We never threw any grand parties on the land, except for on September 11, 1998. Our oldest daughter Lynn permitted a close friend to get married on the top of Ore Knob at sunset. The wedding was followed by a party, co-celebrating the wedding and Donnie Noland's birthday, on what is now Mike Miller's property. Among the fifty or so guests were old Haywood names like Ferguson, Noland, Palmer and Sutton.

As the century turned and real estate values were rising, many of the homeowners were concerned that some mogul might come along and buy Ore Knob and build some unsightly Taj Mahal. They approached me to buy the property, which I had planned to keep for my family forever. After much thought and knowing that Gloria and I, who had been elected as Honorary Members, and our children would be allowed back for visits, we reluctantly agreed to sell Ore Knob to the community so that it could be added to the common property for all to enjoy the magnificent views forever and to listen to the spirits of the Cherokee Indians who roamed there less than three hundred years ago.

Acknowledgements

I must start by thanking Cam Currie for her inspiration and careful proofreading of the first draft of this manuscript.

I also want to give credit and thanks to Alan Lenk for his magnificent cover photo, as well as several others throughout this booklet.

During my twenty-five years of living in the Cove Creek area and interacting with the people of Haywood County, I have developed a deep love and respect for their history and culture. I want to thank them for the many courtesies they have extended to Gloria and me through the years. Our children think of this as their home as much as they do of New York and New England.

I want to express my gratitude to Dan Moore and Larry Adcock, as well as to Grady Rathbone, who was born on the property and lived in Jasper Haynes house till 1963, for the information they shared with me. I also want to thank Grady for the many years he helped us to maintain and improve the property.

I spent many hours interviewing members of the Ferguson family, who gave me valuable information and insight. I am particularly grateful to four people: James Ferguson, whom many of you know as the owner of Ferguson's store, who is a grandson of Jeb; June Ferguson, who is the niece of Major Cecil Brown; and Jeff Ferguson, who with his mother Betsy owns the Rock Realty Agency.

Thanks also to Sandra Davis and her brother, William Sutton, as well as their cousin Randy Sutton, for the included photo of Jasper Haynes and the information they provided about the Haynes family.

I also found a wealth of information in a book published in 2009 to celebrate the 200th anniversary of Haywood County, *The Bicentennial History of Haywood County*, by Curtis W. Wood, Jr. Another valuable source of information was W. Clark Medford's oft-quoted book, *The Early History of Haywood County*. Among other revelations, it was the source of the information on the early ownership of the Ranch, from which I copied freely from pages 180 – 181. I left a copy of the book, signed by Clark Medford, for the files.

The story of Major Cecil Brown's life came from the booklet entitled *Smoky Mountain High, the Consuming Passion of Cecil Brown* by Frank Durocher, published in 2007. I have attached a copy of this booklet, the original survey of the Ranch, a map drawn by me with lot numbers, trails, roads and campgrounds, and a copy of the arboretum brochure with the scientific name and location of each tree for the permanent files of the POA.

We all owe a big thank you to my daughter Lynn for her assistance with the design and production of this manuscript and final booklet. Lynn lived in Waynesville when we purchased Cold Springs Ranch, and she grew to know every inch of the property. She loves it as much as Gloria and I.

Recently Gloria and I had the great pleasure of a surprise celebration on Ore Knob, during which members of the Ranch presented me with an artistic photograph of me looking out over the mountains and an unveiling of a large metal sign dedicating the "John Schroeder Arboretum." I was truly touched and am very grateful.

I regret that the tyranny of age will not permit me to follow my larger vision to see the spirit of Cold Springs Ranch expand to an entire ecologically friendly, upscale community of Maple Springs Village, one surrounded entirely by the National Forest and connected by a good blacktop road, with its own community center, a fulltime village manager, supervised by an elected village board. The community would be a perfect size: once square mile wide and almost that high. Perhaps there might also be a Bed and Breakfast for temporary visitors who want a perfect getaway to enjoy the views and the forest. Under such circumstances, property owners would enjoy greater comfort, security and property values.

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