

BRUESCH RANCH HISTORY

Johann (John) Jacob Bruesch was born April 1, 1846 in Jenins, Switzerland, a small village in the foothills overlooking the Rhine River north of Chur. He came to America at age 23, arriving in New York, March 9, 1870. He settled in the area of Staunton, Virginia where he worked as a butcher. He married Hannah Belle Johnston of on June 29, 1873 at Staunton, Virginia. She was born July 12, 1856 at Newbury, Vermont.

From Staunton, John and Hannah began a long trip by wagon and team, traveling south along the Atlantic coast to the most southern point of Florida. Florida didn't suit John. They traveled west across the Gulf Coast states and northwest to Gainesville, Texas. John supported his family by trading horses and work as a butcher. When they arrived in Gainesville, the town was just being laid out and there were only five houses. A number of years had passed after their marriage and their settling in Gainesville. Their first child was born in Staunton in 1873. Three more children were born in Gainesville.

This area of Texas was tornado country. After a particularly bad tornado, and disease that claimed their oldest sons, John and Hannah decided they'd had enough and moved on to Silver City, New Mexico where their fifth child was born. In 1886 or 1887, the family moved on to Central, New Mexico (about 7 miles east of Silver City) where the rest of their family was born. John became a naturalized citizen on March 6, 1890.

John and Hannah's Children			
Name	Birth	Place of birth	Died
Arthur Alfred	Dec. 2, 1873	Staunton, VA	Dec. 11, 1881
Mary Margaret	Dec. 2, 1877	Gainesville, TX	Nov. 27 1961
John William	Aug. 8, 1880	Gainesville, TX	Sept. 12, 1881
William Wallace	Nov. 20, 1882	Gainesville, TX	June 10, 1972
Anna Abby	Mar. 8, 1886	Silver City, NM	Feb. 3, 1978
John Jacob (Jake)	Sept. 20, 1888	Central, NM	Nov. 2, 1973
Joseph Harold	July 25, 1890	Central, NM	May 9, 1986
Walter Ernest	Dec. 5, 1892	Central, NM	Sept. 20, 1976
Arthur Allan	Dec. 5, 1892	Central, NM	April 6, 1968
Ella Irene	Apr. 15, 1894	Central, NM	Nov. 27, 1961
Baby boy	Apr. 15, 1894	Central, NM	April 15, 1894
Dorothy Mariam	Sept. 9, 1896	Central, NM	Aug. 1, 1970
Georgia Belle	Mar. 28, 1900	Central, NM	Dec. 7, 1974

John and Hannah became uneasy with an increasing rough environment at Central, and John probably had an itch to travel again. They decided to sell their property and move to John Day, Oregon. With two wagons and teams, saddle horses and necessary gear, they left Central, New Mexico for Oregon in May of 1902, just after school was out. John and Hannah traveled with nine of their children. The eldest child, Mary, remained in Central with her husband, George S. Dalrymple, and three children. Maps were of poor quality; they relied on "word of mouth" from other travelers. They traveled near the Datil Mountains in New Mexico, through the Petrified Forest, Winslow, Tuba City, and Lee's Ferry in Arizona, then to Hatch, Panguitch, Salt Lake City, Ogden, Corinne, Promontory Station, Locomotive Springs, Kelton, and Park Valley in Utah.

They arrived at the Park Valley, Utah area in the middle of a blizzard and found they couldn't cross the snow-covered mountains. The family had no idea what winter meant. They headed back to Cedar Creek, UT, with the intent to round the Raft River Mountains and continue westward through the upper Raft River Valley, on to Birch Creek, then Oakley and westerly to Oregon. They crossed the Utah-Idaho line on September 19, 1902. The next day, they stopped at Raft River on what now is the EY Ranch to wash clothes. Thomas King and Will Eames, traveling on horseback from Almo to Ogden, encountered John and family. Mr. King and Mr. Eames advised the family to stay in Almo until spring because the high passes would be covered with snow and directed the Bruesch family to the Clark Ranch (later owned by the Dewayne Ward family).

John and Hannah decided to stop for the winter so the children could go to school. Hannah was tired of traveling. With Mr. Clark's help, John and Hannah made arrangements to buy the George B. Graham ranch west of Almo. On November 11, 1902 John paid Mr. Graham \$1800 for about 250 acres in Section 20 of Township 15 South, Range 24 East and Mr. Graham's water rights to Scythe Creek (later renamed Graham Creek). The Bruesches spent the winter of 1902 in the Graham cabin. In the summer of 1903, a larger log house was built immediately east of Mr. Graham's house. This house, with a few updates, is still in use. (see Main House below)

In December of 1903, John purchased an adjacent 120-acre property to the east from Warren Richardson and Ed Stevenson. John received a homestead patent in August of 1907 for an adjacent 80-acre parcel, immediately north of his house.

Over the next seventeen years, a number of John and Hannah's children married into local families. William Wallace married Elva Marie Dayley of Springdale. Anna Abby married Lorenzo Durfee of Almo. John Jacob (Jake) married Ida Durfee (sister to Lorenzo) of Almo. Walter Ernest married Nellie Blanche Loveland of Albion. Ella Irene married David Durfee of Almo. Dorothy Mariam married Joel Henry Wake of Almo.

John Jacob (Jake) married Ida Durfee on February 5, 1908 in Almo. Ida was born June 6, 1881 at Ogden Utah and was the daughter of Henry Dennison Durfee and Jane Isabell Barker. After their marriage, Jake and Ida moved into a log home adjacent to Graham Creek at the eastern boundary ("bottom of Call Field") of the present day Bruesch Ranch. Ida and Jake had six children, Iona Marie, Ada Belle, William Wallace (Bill), Lois Edna, Mary Margaret, and Lawrence Dean (Bud), all born in Almo. About 1916, Jake purchased homestead rights for 320 acres (sections 18 and 19) along the easterly base of Graham Peak (Upper Ranch). About a year later Jake constructed a wood framed house (Upper Ranch House) in the southeastern corner of the homestead. Lumber for this house came from a small portable mill in Stines Canyon. The home site was adjacent to a natural spring and included a cellar, outbuildings, corral, stockyards and garden. When winter weather came the family moved for the season to a log house owned by Alice Rice on the corner of Big Cove Road and Bruesch Ranch Road.

While Jake and Ida lived at the Upper Ranch, John sold his ranch to Fred Nye in March of 1917. John and Hannah moved to Ogden, UT. Mr. Nye began defaulting on his payments and was evicted in the early 1920's. Jake bought his parents ranch shortly after the eviction. Repairs were made to John and Hannah's log house and Jake, Ida, and family moved in. During the time it was vacant some cattle entered what is now the kitchen and their weight broke through the floor. In August of 1926 Jake received a homestead patent for 320 acres west of his homestead purchase (west half of section

18, centered on Quaking Aspen Creek). In December of 1954, Jake received a homestead patent for 80 acres in the northeast corner of section 20. This connected "John's Ranch" with "Jake's Ranch" (Upper Ranch). Jake purchased the former T. James Green 240 acre homestead adjacent to the southeastern portion of his ranch. He also obtained an 80-acre parcel of land ("on the Bench") about a quarter mile west of Castle Rock by paying back taxes.

After a few years in Ogden, Hannah became ill and felt the need to be near her children. John & Hannah moved from Ogden to Almo. John and Hannah tried living alone in Jake's Upper Ranch House but Hannah's worsening illness and John's poor eyesight prompted a move into the Main House where they occupied the living room as their quarters. After several months of being bedridden, Hannah died May 29, 1929. John continued living with Jake and Ida. John died October 4, 1934 while visiting his daughter, Georgia in Pocatello, Idaho.

In the fall of 1929, Jake was involved in a hunting accident. He lost his right hand at the wrist and the left wrist was severely injured. Jake and Ida's older son, William Wallace, Bill, was beginning his junior year in high school at Rupert, ID. Bill, not quite 17, had had to quit school and pick up all of the ranch's work. Jake's right arm was fitted with a hook. He managed to adapt to his handicap to a degree and was able to resume some of the work. Bill was needed to work the ranch and was unable to return to school. Arrangements were made for Bill to share in the production of the Ranch.

In the spring of 1936, Lois (Bill's younger sister) invited Virginia Mae Estes to visit the ranch. Virginia and Lois became good friends while attending the Albion Normal School. Bill and Virginia were married on August 10, 1940. Virginia was born November 14, 1916 at Twin Falls, ID. In the spring of 1941, Bill constructed a small two-room house about seventy-five yards west of Jake and Ida's home (see Upper House below). Over the next few years, two additions were made to this house to accommodate their expanding family. One of the additions, completed in the mid-1940's used some salvage from Jake and Ida's house built at the Upper Ranch. Bill and Virginia had three children, William Richard, Alan Wayne and Janet Lee.

In the early 1950s, Jake and Ida traded Bill and Virginia houses. The Upper House, with two bedrooms, was cramped with a family of five. The Main House with four bedrooms was a much better fit.

In the early 1960s, Jake decided to retire and deeded his interest in the Ranch over to Bill. Jake and Ida lived in the Upper House. Jake died November 2, 1973 at home. After Jake's death, Ida lived with her daughter, Ada, in Rupert where she died on April 14, 1975.

In 1965, after Bill owned the Ranch, he exchanged land with his first cousin, Arthur Taylor. The 80 acres on the Bench was traded for 40 acres north of the Knoll in the southeast corner of the Upper Ranch. This transaction was the last property change and resulted in the current configuration of the Bruesch Ranch with all contiguous land.

Bill continued ranching until the mid 1970s then began leasing the Ranch. The Ranch has been leased from then to the present time. Clair and Judy Teeter were initial long-term lessees and lived in the Upper House during their lease. Cordell and Patti Sheridan have leased the Ranch for many years and currently are the leaseholders

Bill and Virginia continued to live on the Ranch until their deaths. Bill died on May 13, 1989. Virginia leased the Ranch to the Sheridan Family until her death on December 28, 1995. Upon Virginia's death, Richard, Alan and Janet inherited the Ranch through a trust and continued the Sheridan lease.

Rod and Laura Jones rented the Upper House from 1990 to 2006. Mike and Sadie Udy currently rent the Upper House.

Brief history of Bruesch Ranch's Main House and Upper House

Main House

The Main House was constructed of Douglas fir logs in the summer of 1903 by Johann (John) Jacob Bruesch and his family. The logs were harvested from the fir groves on the north side of Granite Mountain, southwest of the house. The logs were dragged off the mountain by draft horse and were hewn by hand with an adz. The roof was an off-center design and was covered with tarpaper or rolled composition roofing. A Mr. Peterson helped John and son Jake with the construction. The logs rest on a flat rock foundation. A concrete foundation fascia was later added to seal out vermin and elements. The approximate dimensions of the original log frame are 28 feet by 36 feet. There were five rooms, kitchen, dining room, family room (may have been used as a bedroom) and two bedrooms. Some time after initial construction, Gene Durfee covered the interior log walls with lath and plaster.

In 1936 the "up-stairs" was added. One bedroom off the kitchen was utilized in part for the staircase and the remaining space was converted into a bathroom. The "up stairs" was divided into three bedrooms. Bill Bruesch along with Earl Taylor did most of the framing and carpentry. Gus Erickson's father built the chimney. A spring about 600 feet to the southwest was piped to the house, replacing the well near the house. Elbert Durfee installed the plumbing and fixtures in 1937 and the electrical wiring in about 1939. Electrical power service was provided by REA in November of 1940. The south porch began as a lean-to (roof supported on the log house and posts) and eventually was closed in the 1940s. The east porch, originally open to the east, was constructed in the early 1940s with final enclosure completed in late 1970's. In the early 1950's the log exterior was covered with white asbestos shingle siding. The original cedar shingle roof was covered by a painted steel sheet roofing in 1992. The spring pipe and water supply plumbing was replaced in 1994.

The present lower level floor plan is the same as constructed except for two doorway modifications and utilization of one bedroom for the bathroom and stairway.

Upper House

The initial two-room Upper House was built in 1941 of new lumber frame construction. The approximate floor plan was 12 feet by 22 feet. The well, located a short distance to the south, was hand dug shortly prior to beginning construction. The lean-to porch to the east was added in the late summer of 1942. In 1945 two bedrooms and a bathroom were added on the west side extending beyond to the south. Materials were salvaged

from the Upper Ranch House (about one mile to the northwest) for the 1945 addition. Pressurized plumbing was included in the 1945 addition.

Bill Bruesch completed the majority of the Upper House's 1941 through 1945 construction. He received assistance from his father, Jake and brother Lawrence D. Bruesch (Bud). Earl Taylor helped with the construction. Elbert Durfee installed the electrical and plumbing systems.

In the summer of 1953, a natural spring about 700 feet south was developed replacing the well to supply house water. In the summer of 1974 the living room and an additional bedroom were added to the south resulting in the present configuration. Daley Construction constructed the 1974 edition. The chimney was replaced in 1989 and a new painted sheet steel roof was added in the summer of 1993.

All phases of construction is supported on a concrete foundation. The porch has a concrete floor.



The above history was assembled by Alan Bruesch, with help from Janet (Bruesch) Powers and Richard Bruesch for Almolaho.com in September of 2007. This history was gathered from writings from many of the individuals referenced above. If readers have a more accurate memory of this, please contact us or the Almolaho.com website.