

April 2014

## THE NEUENSCHWANDER BARN

Golfers in Bella Vista who play the Berksdale Golf Course see and try to avoid hitting the large barn that stands beside the #6 fairway. The barn stands on what long time residents used to call the Neuenschwander farm. Neighbors just to the west were Sadie Cunningham and her brother Ray who had a dairy farm at the site where Cunningham Corner now stands.

The farm was held by several owners before becoming the Neuenschwander farm. Part of that property was purchased by Daniel Royer from John Horton in 1893, and Royer added to it through a land grant in late 1901. The Royer family sold the farm, by then at 157 acres, to Perry Waters in 1912, and it went through two more owners before John A. Neuenschwander bought it in 1919. Neuenschwander and his wife, Effie, who died in 1950, had no children. He sold the farm in 1952 and died four years later at age 88.

Former resident Bob Anderson, who spent several years living on the farm as a child and thirty years later joined Village Publications as its business manager, said his father bought the farm in 1957, moved his family there from Colorado in 1958, and sold the farm to Cooper Communities in 1965. The original house was a small two-bedroom house with a separate laundry building nearby. They converted the laundry room into sleeping quarters for Bob and his brother, then later added on to the original house, doubling its size.

Anderson was told by Sadie Cunningham, whose family moved to the area when she was a child in 1904, that she heard the barn was built in 1903, which would make it now over 100 years old. Ralph Squires, who grew up on a farm in the Tanyard Creek area, remembers when his dad was helping Neuenschwander put up hay in the mid 1930's, and says the barn seemed like an old barn even then, although very well built.

The Berksdale Golf Course was opened in 1978, and ten years later, the farmhouse was burned down as a training exercise for the Fire Department, in September 1988. The Golf Maintenance building was built just north of where the farmhouse formerly stood. In the hillside between it and the barn can still be seen the storage cellar where the farmers stored their milk and food to keep it cold in the days before refrigeration.

The driveway going to the Golf Maintenance building and running along in front of the barn was formerly the old main road before it was moved to the west and eventually became four-lane Highway 71. On the right edge of the fairway, an old stone bridge is visible under the road just north of the barn. The road ran southwest away from the barn, crossed Sugar Creek about where the golf cart bridge today spans the creek near the restrooms, then traveled south along the west side of the valley past Lake Bella Vista and on to Bentonville.

Picture 1: This barn, believed to have been built in 1903, stands along the #6 fairway on the Berksdale Golf Course.

Picture 2: Farmers throughout the area had cold food storage cellars near their houses, usually built over a spring. In addition to this one visible near the Golf Maintenance building, examples of others are the one on Manchester Drive behind Cooper Elementary School, and the one behind the American Legion building at the corner of Highway 71 and Kingsland.

Picture 3: The road that goes in front of the barn still crosses this old stone bridge.

Picture 4: A lone golfer practices his putting on the #3 green with the golf cart bridge in the foreground and the old barn, believed to have been built in 1903, visible in the distance.

