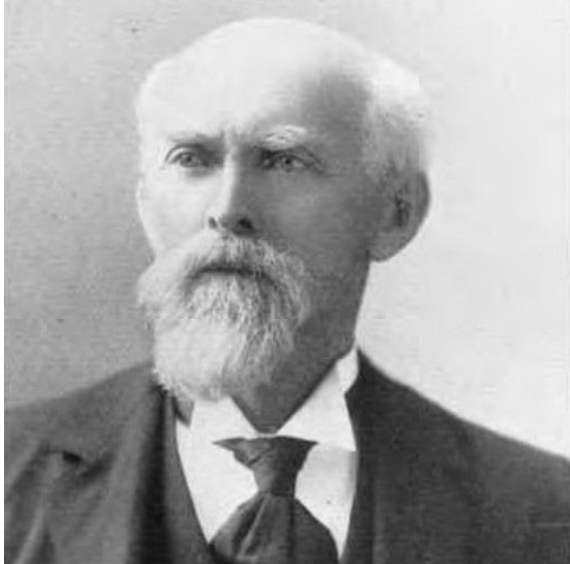


Courage and Perseverance: The Settling of Pine Brook Hills

Dave Davies presented an excellent early history of Pine Brook at the July 29 HOA membership meeting. You can view his slides [here](#). Read on for his summer 2014 Pine Brook Press article...

In 1650 a Scotsman named Philip Maxwell came to the US and settled in Massachusetts and thereby set in motion events that would ultimately result in us all living in what we now call



Pine Brook Hills. From Philip descended Colonel James Maxwell, and later in 1839 his son James Philip Maxwell (Figure 1) was born in Walworth County, Massachusetts. He was educated at Lawrence University where he graduated as an engineer in 1859 and he came to Colorado the following year.

James Philip Maxwell's training as a civil and mining engineer made him a well-known figure first in what was the territory and later the State of Colorado. From 1871 to 1872 he was in the House of Representatives. He was President of the Senate after the State was admitted to the union, Treasurer of Boulder County, and the State

Engineer for Colorado. He also prospected for gold, built wagon roads, and made a major contribution to the Boulder area. He married Francelia Orrill Smith and they had four children: Clint J. Maxwell, Helen F. Maxwell, Marie Maxwell Burger and Marc N. Maxwell.

SO HOW DOES THIS RESULT IN PINE BROOK HILLS?



It turns out that James P. Maxwell, being very successful, was able to purchase a large tract of land in North Boulder. These several thousand acres surrounded what we now call Linden Avenue from Broadway into the hills. His son Clint managed a cattle ranch on the property known as the Maxwell Ranch. Son Marc became a pharmacist in the city of Boulder. The Maxwell house (Figure 2) is still in existence, now surrounded by Wonderland Hills. The family is still remembered by Maxwell Park just off Linden.



Marc and Clint inherited the land after James Philip Maxwell's death in 1929. Marc Maxwell himself died in 1960 and at his death the executor of his estate sold about 950 acres to a small group of entrepreneurs and developers. The executor was James M. Burger, the son of James Philip Maxwell's daughter Marie who had married a distinguished Boulder math teacher named William Burger. We will come across him later.

William Wagner, Joseph Erni and William Stasick, the group of entrepreneurs, established a Colorado company called Pine Brook Hills Inc. in 1960. This company is the direct ancestor of what we often call the HOA. In fact, the legal "HOA" entity is still Pine Brook Hills Inc., now a not-for-profit corporation.

William Stasick soon split with the others and created what is now called Boulder Heights. He died just a few years ago in Las Vegas. He called himself the "Mogul of the Mountains" for his role in the development of PBH and Boulder Heights. Of William Wagner we know little, except that he was involved in contracting for the others and in exchange was given several lots near Pine Needle that he later sold to Boulder Open Space.

The Maxwell family estate executor, James Maxwell Burger was not to be left out. He took over the development of what is now the Spring Valley Estates north of lower Linden.



Joseph Erni was the partner who with his wife Elizabeth (Betty) took over the specific development of Pine Brook Hills. Joe was born in Switzerland in 1924 and was in the early years an engineer with local company, Metron Instruments. The family lived initially on Spruce in the city. In 1960 Joe built the first house in PBH on Timber Lane (Figure 4). With the help of several of the incoming residents they graded the original roads and laid out and sold many of the original lots.

Joe (and John Seward) were even deputized by the County Sheriff to provide some law enforcement. Joe also provided the first residents with emergency water. Interesting that Joe Erni was Swiss. Many people tell me that PBH reminds them of Switzerland.

Joe was called a dreamer and visionary, but it took Betty to keep him grounded. Joe is still alive; his daughter Nancy provided information for this article. Very soon other builders and developers came in and built on the Erni dream. In particular Kirk and Jan Hendricks, the de Haas family, and many now almost forgotten builders and developers such as Paul Rinde, Geo Gleason, Mike Cameron and Pete Dietrick continued the development of PBH. Early pioneering families moved in often having to live without services such as water, mail, proper roads, even law enforcement until the infrastructure caught up. Some of those early names include the Swards, Marshall and Edith Coon, the Athearns, the Rhineharts, Boyd Jones, the Van Loons, the Wiedemanns and many others who are still with us.

Among the many recollections are Kirk Hendrick's skill with dynamite and jack hammer. The Athearns and others having to lobby the gas company and eventually having to raise a bond issue to get gas lines laid. The banks refusing to close on loans until water was seen to come from faucets – well water, of course. The mail man refusing to come to PBH until the roads were improved and the result was a line of mail boxes where the road to Spring Valley is now.

The roads were graded by the residents and developers in the 60s, but not adopted by the County until the early 70s. The residents even had to pay the County for the road signs. In the County records there is a copy of a receipt to John Seward for \$50 that he paid to the County on behalf of the HOA for road signs. The de Haas family are, of course, well known to us. On August 23, 1966, the de Haas family (Thijs, Trudy and three small children, one of whom was Bob) moved into Pine Brook Hills. The Water District at that time had a \$30,000 debt and problems in supplying water to the homes. Trudy attended a Water Board meeting at Ernie Smith's house. She was the only attendee! After the meeting she was asked if she was busy and could she volunteer with the District. Despite knowing nothing about water systems, she volunteered to help in any way that she could, and worked as the volunteer manager of the District for the next 11 years. From that came Bob's involvement and the subsequent realization of one of the original Erni dreams, a lake to supply water to PBH!



As evidence of Joe Erni's dream. This is the original promotional ad for PBH with Joe's son Ken Erni in front. There were plans for a ski slope and a lake, as well as hiking and riding. We certainly got the hiking and we have the lake now (although we cannot swim in it!) but not the ski slope. The slope was to be where Hawk Lane ends and reputedly the remains of the base are still there.

What we do have is a wonderful scenic mountain environment with incredible views and wildlife, yet within easy reach of the city. My personal view is that we owe these pioneers a thank you. It was not easy for them.

THANKS TO MANY FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THIS ARTICLE. AMONG OTHERS I THANK NANCY ERNI, JO WIEDEMANN, JOHN SEWARD, BOULDER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, AL GERRISH, JAN HENDRICKS, HELEN RHINEHART, MARIE ZANOWICK AND SEVERAL OTHERS.

Early History of Pine Brook Hills

By: Jo Wiedemann

Marc N. Maxwell owned most of Pine Brook Hills, 937.45 acres until his death January 7, 1960. Today you can see the old Maxwell two story red brick home on the hill looking north from Linden Avenue in the area of Linden Park Drive. Mr. Maxwell's executor, James M. Burger, sold the 937.45 acres to Pine Brook Hills, Inc., a Colorado company, whose officers were William Wagner, President; William Stasick, Secretary and Joseph B Erni.

A right-of-way was bought to the property on May 12, 1961 for \$3,200. An escrow account of \$36,800 was established with Great Western Savings and Loan Association for an exclusive option to purchase the land. The escrow was then used as a down payment with a first mortgage of \$147,052.69, which made the average cost per acre, \$196.12. The mortgage was for a period of five years. First payment due July 1, 1962 for the amount of \$29,410.53 and a like amount on July 1st of each and every calendar year there-after to and including July 1, 1966. Interest in the amount of 6% per annum was to be due on any delinquent payments. A total of 7 units makes up Pine Brook Hills. Two officers left the company before and during the first 120 acre release and Joseph B. Erni became president and Elizabeth C. Erni became Secretary-Treasurer for the rest of the project.

In 1961, 10 lots are recorded as being sold, 1962, 49 were sold, 1963, 25 were sold, 1964, 43 lots were counted. In 1965 with 132 lots counted as being sold making it a boom year. In 1966, 86 were sold and Pine Brook Hills, Inc. should have been paid off by the middle of the year.

Today Pine Brook Hills sits on 1888 acres. Over the years acreage had been picked up which added to the original acreage.