**HISTORY OF BROWN HOMESTEAD LAND**

Date: Sept, 2017

I was reading some Telluride books and rummaging thru some old files and found history on the Brown Homestead land (not the condos) that may be of some interest to our current owners. Part of this history comes from a taped interview (located in the Telluride Library) with Joseph Brown, grandson of Frank Brown who first owned our land

The history is………..

* Frank Brown (aka the Brown Homestead) came to the Telluride area in appx 1870…..as a trapper. And moved here permanently in 1877
* He established himself on the site of our current condo project in 1877. He called it San Miguel Park
* After failing at placer mining, in 1879 Frank Brown retreated to his heritage…dairy farming
* In 1877, he formally surveyed the Town of San Miguel at our location….although it seems that it was not platted with streets, lots etc until 1885. There is a recorded map of the plat from 1902……too big for inclusion here
* Why this location? Speculation is: 1) adjacent to Mill Creek, and 2) halfway between the placer mines at Keystone Hill and the base of the mining operations at the east end of what was then called Columbia----now Telluride
* Platted lots then looked like present day Telluride lots-------i.e. long and narrow and small.
* Asking prices were $15/lot………..considered high at the time
* Some street names were later taken by Telluride…Pine, Willow, Spruce
* By 1880, the “town” achieved a population of 5 women, 200 men, one post office (Frank Brown was postmaster), one general store, a school, and one restaurant. And assorted placer mining operations nearby
* But no bar per one story……….and that (along with its inferior location relative to the mines) lead to the demise of the Town of San Miguel and the rise of nearby Columbia (aka Telluride). Telluride, incidentally, was formally plated and organized in 1878------one year after San Miguel was “surveyed”.
* Brown also had obtained ownership of all the water rights to the Mill Creek behind the land to the north.
* By 1885, the new Town of Telluride (1.5 miles east) had taken over as the region’s dominant town………850 population vs San Miguel at 175 (and declining)
* Brown sold all the water rights to the Town of Telluride in 1902…. retaining only as much as he needed for his use and to operate his dairy farm.
* And that water sale contract was the cornerstone of a Brown Homestead condo lawsuit against the Town of Telluride in 1995, wherein our HOA sued to continue receiving the free water that we had been getting since our first condos were built in 1978. The end result? A majority win for the HOA. In the decision, Telluride: 1) agreed to waive the demand they had on us for unpaid water tap fees ----about $100,000+, 2) paid our legal fees of over $20,000, 3) agreed to continue to give then-current owners free water (but not sewer) for the duration of their ownership, 4) allowed the BH to continue its “1 water meter per two households” (a very big deal inasmuch as the plumbing costs to clean up our piping issues would have been easily $10,000 for each unit in 1995), and 5) required us to sign a Pre-Annexation Agreement that allowed the Town of Telluride to annex the BH property (which is technically in the county) at any time that the Town deems it appropriate.
* And that old “storage building” behind our Building A…………..that was called the “rock house” (because you will note that the basic construction of the building is still there today….rocks). It was the milk storage building where the milk from the 70-80 cows was stored. We currently have one stream that (sometimes) runs along the west side of the building, and there used to be a stream on the east side. The purpose was it helped keep the building (and the milk) cool. From this milk they got 50-100 pounds of butter per week, and also the cool temperature in the building allowed the cream to rise to the top and they were able to “separate” it and sell it in Telluride. This was important as Telluride had no separator anywhere
* The population of San Miguel dwindled to about 2 dozen families around 1900 as nearby Telluride was the obvious choice for miners and all the associated developments
* Farmer Frank Brown’s dairy was done in the Telluride area around 1925
* Our condo developer Jerry Vass told us that the basic structure of the “Red House” to the west of the Brown Homestead condos is the original Frank Brown homestead. And of course one has to strip way all the add-ons to get to the original.
* And the wooden structure out front of the Red House----still there in 2017---is reportedly the original post office from San Miguel City
* Other activities around 1900 included a 9-hole golf course and a racing track just east of the gas station across the street, used for roping, bronco riding, horse races, etc.
* And the 880 acre vacant “Valley Floor” land parcel across from/around the BH condos………was first assembled in the 1930’s (no known cost), sold in 1967 for $300,000, sold again for $6,000,000 in 1983, and finally 570 acres of the total land (south side of highway 145) was condemned by the Town of Telluride in 2007 for $50,000,000 and then deeded to the Nature Conservancy
* By the early 1900’s, San Miguel (aka the Brown Homestead) had lost most of its spunk and just fizzled out, as nearby Telluride and the mines above town prospered.
* The current Brown Homestead condos were built in 1978 and 1979. Constructed by our then-next door neighbor Jerry Vass (who owned the “Red House”) in conjunction with developer Burt Richmond. Our land initially included all the property in front of the Red House to the highway…and we had a tennis court!. Our “excess land” in front of the Red House was leased to the Red House in two phases that garnered $25,000 EACH for our HOA in 1997-98. And those figures fully paid for our parking lot paving and our front landscaped berm along Highway 145. And then the Red House wanted to own the land so we sold it to them…. for $150,000 in 2010.
* Since 1978, our condos have gone thru a re-siding once, and a re-roofing also. And then in 2010-11 a major $1,200,000 remodeling project of new roof/siding/windows/decks in order to eradicate some major wood rot that was infiltrating the property.
* And now in 2017, after about 5 years of planning, our neighbor SMVC (San Miguel Valley Corp) is set to break ground on the appx 120 acres that surround the BH. With plans calling for 20 single family homes on minimum 6 acres lots, generally north, west and east of us. Specific details of that development are still unclear, but these homes will be……big and upscale
* So in conclusion……….as of 2017, our remodel is complete, the appx 120 acre property around us is to be re-developed with single family residential, plus a deed-restricted apartment housing component that is currently planned for about ½ mile east of the BH on the SMVC land, and the 570 acre parcel across the street from us is deeded to the Nature Conservancy (except for the gas station). And the Brown Homestead condos and the HOA are simply awaiting the next phase in our history.

***PICTORAL HISTORY BELOW………………***