

December 10, 1984

Dear Charles & Kay:

We thought perhaps you might appreciate a history of your place as best we know it. Unless this information is handed down, it will be lost forever. Since this information has been handed down to us, we cannot guarantee the accuracy of every detail but know that generally it is accurate.

In the closing days of the Civil War, William Foster (Bill's great grandfather) sent word to his wife in Tennessee that the Union Army was moving south through her area. She was directed to leave and go to the mountains of north Georgia where a few relatives lived. It was felt that if she got off the anticipated route of the enemy, she would be safe until her husband could get out of the Confederate Army and meet her there. She, her two small boys, and an older aunt, packed their belongings into a wagon pulled by a steer and made their way over the rugged terrain to where you are now. Bill's grandfather, William Nelson Foster, was one (1) year old when the wagon came upon your land. The family proceeded to squat on that land. The site of the original log cabin is about halfway between the house and the corn crib. The present house was built in 1896 by William Nelson Foster. One of the sons moved west to Texas, but William Nelson Foster, known as "Nels" married Amanda Higdon, known as "Mandy". This couple had five (5) children named Baxter (Bill's father), Mae, Grady, Ida, and Laurie. Additionally, they raised another child now known as Eileen Pack of Copperhill, Tennessee. It seemed Eileen's parents were proceeding westerly and Eileen was excess baggage.

Mandy died after the children were grown. Nels married Agnes Postell soon thereafter. This early re-marriage angered some of the five (5) children and their kin. Although Agnes was much younger than Nels, she was a very good wife to Nels, especially in his later years when he needed care. Agnes worked diligently doing the heavy chores on the farm. Nels died about 1949. About 1918, Baxter bought the land adjacent to your farm from Nels. He proceeded to build a home located approximately where the log house is now located. Upon his departure to Florida in 1927, this property was sold back to Nels. At this time, Bill was six (6) months old. Nels later re-sold the property

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to Dealas McArthur and thereafter the property was re-sold three times to the present owner.

In 1962, Bill bought his grandfather's place from Agnes. Agnes had moved away from the property shortly after the death of her husband. Thereafter, the property was neglected and became badly overgrown and in disrepair. The porch had fallen down and local vandals had broken windows, destroyed the furniture, and created havoc. An old iron stove was broken up and thrown down the well. An organ was beaten to the floor. His letter box and personal papers were damaged severely and all his papers thrown about. The main part of the house remained in good shape in that a metal roof had been put on years before Nels died. A cousin, Clyde Foster, agreed to help restore the old home. Part of the kitchen was previously damaged due to Ida leaving live coals in a basket. A portion of the kitchen was partitioned off and converted into the present bathroom. Prior thereto, an outhouse served this purpose. Clyde's son, Alvin, did the wiring and plumbing. Clyde's wife, Ruby, helped to start a clean up of the inside of the home. She used Eagle lye to wash down the walls and floor. For many years she did this type cleaning each spring before we got there. The outhouse, ~~smoke house~~, chicken house, car shed and blacksmith's shop were too rotted to salvage and were therefore dismantled and burned. The corn crib and barn were in fairly good condition and were saved. However, extensive work was done on the barn in that it was leaning inward and had to be jacked up, braced, etc. We put a metal roof on the barn. A visit to the loft of the barn will show a center span bolted which was required to jack up the barn. The foundation of the house was shored up, the porch completely rebuilt and a metal roof put thereon. The well on the porch was closed in, cleaned out, and a pump put under the house. Gravel was brought in to make a parking lot and make the road more accessible. Bill, with the help of Pat, reclaimed the fields. Jennifer and Joyce reclaimed the house. For many years Clyde and Ruby put in a garden for us each spring and opened up the house. Ruby always had fresh cut flowers in the house. Bill's mother and father spent late summer and fall in the house from about 1963 until about 1972. In addition, we have so many wonderful memories of the old place, the place having been shared with many friends and family, many of whom are gone now.

As for your house itself, upon completion in 1896, the house was considered one of the finest and most modern in the area. Nels Foster operated his grocery store and post office near Highway Number 2 a short distance east of Hipp's

Chapel. Bill's great grandfather, grandfather, and father timbered and farmed large surrounding areas in proximity to the house. Incidentally, the Fosters simply squatted on the land from the late 1860's until the property was purchased from a Colonel Collier in 1896. Colonel Collier was the first owner of the property following its being divided into government lots after it had been taken away from the Cherokee Indians. The general area is shown as "Foster's Hollow" on older forestry maps. Evidence indicates that a large Cherokee encampment was once established over the entire property, concentrating in the creek area. Near the southern boundary will be found alot of flint or quartz indicating an area where arrowheads and spear points were made. At one time this could be found but now might be overgrown. The tumbledown chimney northwest of the property, along the trail, was known as the McArthur place, though no property was ever deeded. For a sum of money, Nels Foster allowed a couple to erect a house and live thereon during their lifetime. The sum of money was paid by a man who had impregnated the couple's daughter but preferred not to marry her. A strange solution but it worked.

Bowers, we believe this pretty ~~much concludes~~ our knowledge of the property as passed on to us by others. Jess Cantrell and his wife should be a pretty good source of information about the property and its residents. Myrtle's father, Luke, and Nels were competitor store keepers. Ruby, Clyde's wife, still lives in the area and is a good source of historical information. Lillie Bell Postell, Mae's daughter, is an excellent source of information. Since your family will hopefully own the land for many years to come, I suggest you talk to these people before it is too late.

It makes us very happy to know that you and your children love the place and are able to use it even more than we were able to do. While it was difficult parting with the place, it has been made a lot easier knowing that the neglect of the property has ceased and you have brought it back to life.

We wish you and your family good health, a happy Christmas and much enjoyment in future years of "Nels Foster's place".

Lou,  
Joyce Bell.

