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(EDITOR'S NOTE: Last week's story about the Last Stand of the Buffalo in Cherokee County told the tale of the Hoopers Bald refuge built by George Gordon Moore. This article tells more on the same story. Most of the story here came from an article written by Buss Walker, Outdoor Edi-

tor of the Chattanooga (Tenn.) Times in July of 1962 covering the origin of the Wild Hogs in this area. It was later reprinted in the Tennessee Conservationist magazine, which furnished copies of the story and pictures to the Scout for our use. Included in this story are several changes and additions prepared by Bob Barker of Mt. Ranier, Md., the Scout's WNC historical adviser. All the pictures were originally made available by Capt. Frank W. Swan of Andrews. Our thanks to all these people.)

For several years we've been trying to run down facts on the importation of the original Russian boars in the Cherokee National Forest, said to have come from George Gordon Moore's wildlife refuge on Hoopers' Bald on the North Carolina side of the line. Facts were difficult to come by, for most of the things you could learn were hear-say, passed down by word of mouth, none of the stories exactly the same.

Ted Davis had a pretty true slant because of his personal knowledge of Cotton McGuire, Mr. Moore's general manager of the original refuge and later owner when the entire project was decided to him by Mr. Moore.

Recently while talking with Capt. Frank W. Swan of Andrews, who was honorary wagon master of the wagon train from Tellico Plains, we mentioned that years ago we'd had a standing invitation from Banker John H. Christy of Andrews to go on their club's annual bear hunt with them, and that Christy had told of being a member of a group that had moved five buffalo from the Moore refuge over mountain trails to the ball park in Andrews.

Asked if he knew anything about the buffalo, Captain Swan said that he was master of the ox-wagon train that had moved all the animals into the Hooper Bald refuge originally and had worked for several years with Mr. Moore in getting it established. And there it was, simple as that.

An older brother of Capt. Swan, Dave Swan of Andrews (dec.) was General Superintendent of the entire job for George Gordon Moore in the building of the Lodge, roads, trails, fences, etc. Dave Swan was also Agent for the Whiting interests, an English Company known as Graham County Land & Transport Corp. of Delaware, owners of large tracts of timber.

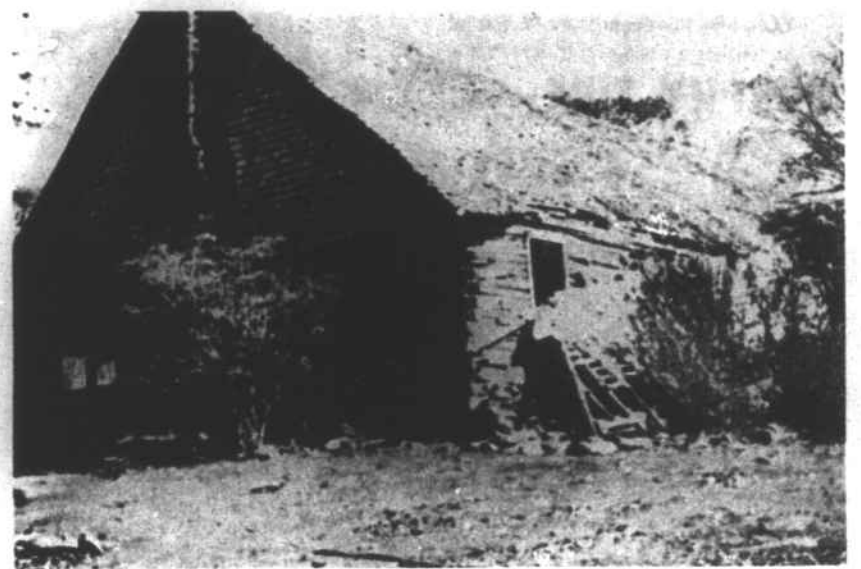
Last week we met Captain Swan, a retired cavalry officer and once a member of old Battery B of Chattanooga, at his home in Andrews and went over the entire mountain area on the North Carolina side, just below the clouds that take in Jeffrey's Hill, Stratton Meadows, Whig Cabin, and Haw Knob.

The trip included a mountain peak visit to the old Swan home place at Swan Meadows, 4,500 feet up between the high places and just below the 5,400 foot top of Stratton Bald. Swan Meadows was the original Bob Stratton home before and during the Civil War. Bob Stratton was a son of original John Stratton (1799-1862) for whom the John Place or Stratton Meadows was named. Bob Creek and the Bob Stratton Bald were named for Bob Stratton who was the first settler who entered 100 acres in 1852, same being surveyed by J. W. C. Piercy, but it was several years after the death of Robert B. Stratton, or January 4, 1872, before the State of North Carolina, for \$9.40, mailed Stratton his grant. Bob Stratton was bushwhacked on Sept. 2, 1864, while cow hunting on Ball Play Creek, in Monroe County and was buried in the side of the road where he fell. A companion, Jack Roberts, the severely wounded, crawled into a pile of driftwood and escaped, but died two days later of his wounds and is buried in Old Rafter Cemetery. Narcissus Stratton, widow of Bob and her children, except the oldest son, John, who was also killed during the war, lived at the Bob Place until about 1871. The Stratton lands were sold at a Special Master's sale in Robbinsville on June 4, 1893, to the last and highest bidder, John Swan, father of Capt. Swan. John Swan, a Pennsylvania native and experienced lumberman, moved his family from Citico in Monroe County to the Old Bob Stratton place over Little Fodderstack, Big Fodderstack and the Bob Stratton Bald in 1896 and lived there until 1900. On April 27, 1899, during a late snow storm, the Swan family lost 28 head of cattle, froze to death.

That is, we visited every interesting place up among the peaks with exception of the Hoopers' Bald area where Moore's refuge was established. Happens it can be reached now only jeep or on horseback. A recent cloud-burst washed out the old logging road, including bridges, and we were told at Robbinsville that we couldn't make the last two miles in a car. We went as far as the car could make it, which was within an air-line mile—straight



CAPT. FRANK W. SWAN of Andrews posed with three bear cubs from the Hoopers Bald refuge at the time he was master of the ox wagon train that moved the Russian Boar and western buffalo from Murphy and Andrews into the area.



George Gordon Moore's original lodge at Hoopers Bald slowly fell into a state of disrepair after 'Cotton' McGuire left the bald. This picture was taken in later years.

up --- of Stratton Meadows, then had to turn back and spent the rest of the day riding out logging trails beneath the sky-line.

About the refuge here are Captain Swan's own words: The game refuge at Hoopers' Bald (he said) was established in 1912 by George Gordon Moore, an American who at that time lived at St. Clair, Mich.

The lodge was 90 feet long by 40 feet wide, built out of logs. It had 10 bedrooms, two baths and a kitchen and dining room. The lobby was 45 by 20 feet.

The lower house was a caretaker's home --- a four-room cabin with a porch all the way around it.

A game fence was built of double strand woven wire around approximately 1,500 acres to put animals in. The first animals were moved in from Murphy by wagon train, pulled by oxen. The animals included 14 young wild boar that weighed about 50 pounds each, and eight buffalo (bison) that weighed between 400 and 500 pounds each.

The rest of the animals were moved in later from Andrews over the Snowbird Valley Railway, a narrow gauge railroad from Andrews to Snowbird Mills (present Cherokee Indian settlement in Graham County, but then known as the John Teesateska Fields).

The animals were then transported by the ox wagon train from there to Hoopers' Bald. This shipment included four additional buffalo, six Colorado mule deer, 14 elk, and 34 bear. And that was the number of animals that were turned loose at that time.

The wild boar were put in an enclosure built out of rich chestnut rails, nine rails high, taking in about 1,200 acres. One of the things I can say about this is that the rail fences didn't hold the wild boar any longer than it took us to put them in there. And as for the fence around the big enclosure, the bear got out of there as fast as we put them in.

Mr. Moore was mistakenly identified (continued Captain Swan) by a lot of sports writers as being an Englishman. This probably was due to the fact that he was American Adviser for some English capitalists. He kept the refuge on Hoopers' Bald and at his big ranch in the West for the purpose of entertaining these English people.

Mr. Moore now lives at Monterey, Calif. A number of years ago his manager at Hoopers' Bald, Cotton Mc-

Guire, sent him a number of Russian boar and I understand they have established a pretty good herd of them out there.

Cotton McGuire was at the Hoopers' Bald until April 24, 1939, when his house burned down, his family and some guests escaping just in time but with only their night clothes. Nothing was saved.

Cotton and his wife, Mabel Hooper McGuire, and their

children, following the destruction of their home, moved down on West Buffalo Creek to the original homestead of Dr. Enos C. Hooper, first settler on West Buffalo in 1838 and for whom the Hooper Bald was named. Mrs. McGuire was Dr. Hooper's great-granddaughter. Cotton, who was born Sept. 26, 1893, is now a member of the Cherokee Scout & Clay County Progress, Thurs., Dec. 26, 1963

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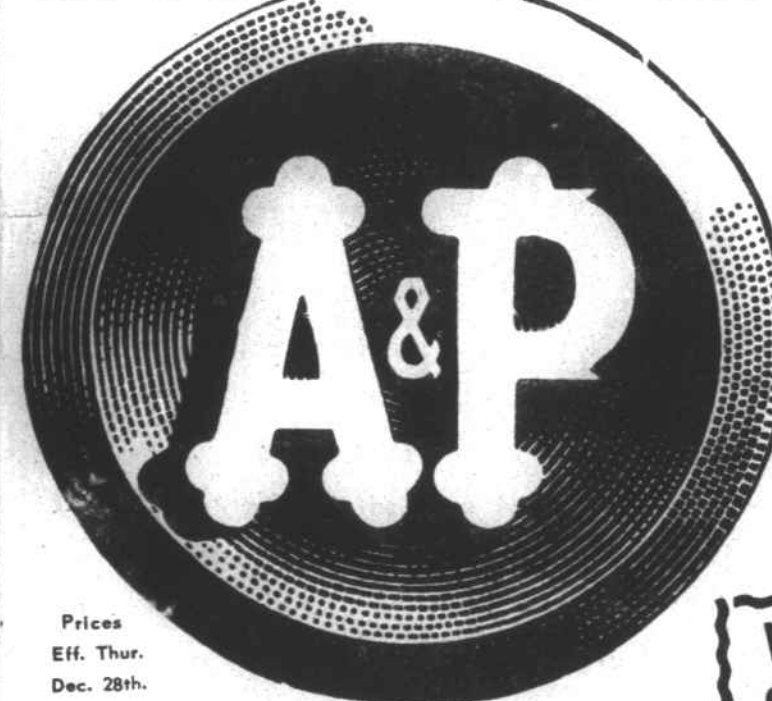
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