

Crescent Moon Ranching History

John Lee, a cattleman from Prescott, Arizona, was the first person recorded to homestead this spot, now known as Crescent Moon Ranch, in the 1880s. At the time, he called it the OK Ranch for his cattle brand and put in an irrigation ditch, garden, and orchard. Lee's stay was short, however.

After changing hands a few times, Henry and Dorette Schuerman bought the 160-acre ranch with David and Margaret Dumas in 1905 for \$2,200. They raised families, built a school, and grew a thriving orchard in lower Oak Creek's renowned fruit-growing region. In the early 1900s, fruit trees, vineyards, and vegetable gardens sprawled over three terraces—though none of the plantings remains today. A bird's-eye view of the property reveals lower, middle, and upper agricultural benches and the furrows and berms of the fields. The parking lot and walkways at this site, and the surrounding fields, once formed part of the lower agricultural field.



Like most homesteads at the time, the Dumas' farm had chickens and a vegetable garden for the family, in addition to orchard fruit sold at markets.

Courtesy of Sedona Heritage Museum, Sedona, AZ



The Schuerman family built its winery out of the local red sandstone rocks. Floods washed away this building, along with much of the property, in the early 1900s.

Courtesy of Sedona Heritage Museum, Sedona, AZ



The prized fruits grown along Oak Creek drew visitors from around the state. This fruit stand displayed Schuerman's fruit at a Yavapai County Fair around 1930.

Courtesy of Sedona Heritage Museum, Sedona, AZ



The Schuermans used Oak Creek's water to grow many stone fruits, but also grapes, which they pressed into juice (shown here) to make wine; the Red Rock grape wine was sold to miners and loggers in Jerome and Flagstaff.

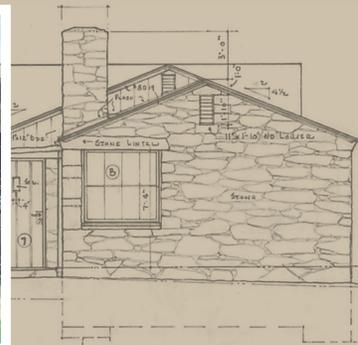
Courtesy of Sedona Heritage Museum, Sedona, AZ

By 1920, the property slipped into decline after the deaths of H. Schuerman and D. Dumas. Andrew Baldwin purchased the ranch in 1936 for \$6,000 to make it a showplace to attract real estate clients. He built a house of cutting-edge design, made many improvements, and re-named it Palo Bonito.

Baldwin died in 1943, and 10 years later, his wife sold the property to Lois Maury, who already owned a ranch named Crescent Moon near present-day Scottsdale, Arizona. Maury married her ranch hand in 1955; she and Nick Duncan moved here and gave this spot its current name. To preserve the property in perpetuity, Duncan sold the ranch in 1980 to the Trust for Public Land, which deeded the property to the U.S. Forest Service the same year.

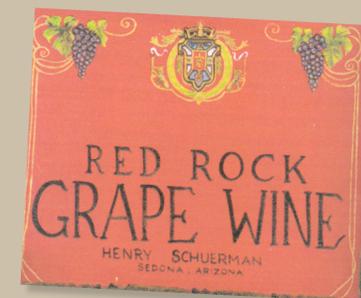


Andrew Baldwin hired a Phoenix-based architecture firm to design this ranch home. It was constructed in 1939 with river cobbles from Oak Creek and lintels of local red sandstone. The U.S. Forest Service was deeded the property in 1980 and restored the home, which is available to rent under the Forest Service cabin rental program.



Many buildings on the property, including a barn, chicken coops, sheds, and a blacksmith shop, provide clues about early settlement along Oak Creek and the changes that took place here.

This special spot has gone from a homestead and farm, to a commercial orchard, to a weekend retreat, and is now a popular place to recreate, where a rich history resounds in the relics left from that time.



Wine drinkers saw this label on Schuerman's wine bottles.



Courtesy of Sedona Heritage Museum, Sedona, AZ

John Lay and his wife, America, moved to Sedona around 1910 and, along with John's brother Elijah, were among the early homesteaders in the area. Here John Lay stands in front of the corral and barn on the OK Ranch, now Crescent Moon.