

## Adolph and Helen Dupre

The story of Adolph and Helen Dupre dates back to the late 1920s. Adolph Dupre immigrated to the United States from Germany in the late 20s. Adolph, whose first love was forestry and farming, moved to Western Pennsylvania and worked as a groundskeeper on a Pittsburgh businessman's estate in Ligonier, Pennsylvania. There he met Helen, one of the housekeepers at the estate. They married in 1928. A forester by trade, but an innovator and builder by nature, Adolph and his new bride, Helen, in 1932 purchased 2-1/2 acres of land for \$13.00 which was their entire savings.



Their hope was to work the land and become self-sufficient, to raise a family and enjoy life in an area of wooded hills and streamlined valleys similar to their native Bavaria. "You build your own independence with God's earth, rocks and trees."

Recognizing that his newly purchased land was similar to his "old country" origin, Adolph rebuilt an aging farmhouse and dubbed it the Bavarian Cabin. What followed were many years of hard work by Adolph, Helen and their three children: sons Philip and Herman, and daughter Luitgarde. By selling felled timber from the forest, tapping and producing syrup from their maple trees, and building small cabins and cottages, Adolph's entrepreneurial dream was beginning to become a reality.

During the next twenty years, he built twenty-eight cabins with the native stone and wood, all in plentiful supply on Seven Springs land. He designed these cabins himself with unique beauty and style. Many of them are still in use today.

But why did he build them? His years as a groundskeeper in Ligonier convinced him that business people from the Pittsburgh area yearned to relax, hunt and fish in a beautiful, natural environment. So Adolph would rent them cabins, either by season or by the year. It was a new source of income to supplement the yield of Seven Springs Farm. It was also a way to meet new friends with whom he could swap stories of wildlife, the forest, and appreciate the natural beauty of the Laurel Highlands.



As the stream of visitors to Seven Springs grew, Adolph built the Tyrol House, a combination clubhouse and dining hall, complete with guestrooms. Every morning, Helen Dupre would prepare breakfast and invite everyone to enjoy them-selves before starting out on their day's activities. As time passed, she and other women, who worked part time as "servers," began to prepare for the visitors and guests. The Tyrol House became the center of social activity on Seven Springs Farm.

Through all of this, Helen Dupre had a desire of her own: a desire to ski. "I always wanted to ski, and when I saw the land where we built our first home, I wanted it to be my ski area," she said. Added to Helen's desire to ski was the fact that Seven Springs was a natural snow bowl, blanketing the hills from early December through March. "Early on," Helen mused, "We realized we couldn't move all the snow we got, so we decided to take advantage of it."

Helen convinced Adolph to build a mechanical rope tow, powered by an old Packard automobile engine that was held stationary on wooden blocks. It was the first rope tow outside of Vermont. By 1935, winter enthusiasts with wooden plank skis

and leather bindings traversed the Seven Springs slopes. The popularity of skiing at Seven Springs Farm grew like wildfire.

In 1937, the Dupres opened Seven Springs farm to the public with runs such as Suicide Hill, Nose Dive and Hell's Highway. A private club consisting of 50 members was formed in 1938. The Seven Springs Club grew steadily as families and friends spread the word about the year-round activities at Seven Springs.

While Adolph continued to fell trees, quarry rock and build more and more cabins and overnight facilities, Helen tended to the farm's cattle, made maple syrup and cooked and served meals to the ever-growing number of summer and winter visitors.

Inevitably, life on the farm slowly changed to life at a ski resort. By 1948, the Seven Springs Farm had grown to almost 10,000 acres and, while skiing still attracted the largest number of visitors, summertime activity also grew. Two tennis courts, installed in 1945, saw more players taking advantage of the pristine mountain air and natural surroundings to enjoy their recreational pursuits. More and more, the rustic atmosphere of Seven Springs Farm began to take on the appearance of a resort, and the entire Dupre family worked daily to fulfill the recreational needs of their guests. Still a private club in the summer, Seven Springs Farm was open to everyone for skiing in the winter. The ski slopes boasted three lifts and even had lights for night skiing.

A person could stay overnight in a private room or could sleep in a dorm and even have three meals a day, if they wished. All the food at Seven Springs was grown and raised on the Farm, under the supervision of Helen Dupre. Streams were stocked with brook and rainbow trout from the Dupre's own hatchery. Brown Swiss cattle grazed the slopes in the summer.

Then in 1955, Adolph Dupre died. By looking around the fledgling resort, one could see the results of years of sweat and toil by Adolph & Helen. With Adolph gone, Helen, with the help of their three children, began to enhance and enlarge their dreams of self-sufficiency.

The Dupre family installed the first poma lift in the area in 1957, followed by a second in 1958. In 1960, a double chairlift and the first snowmaking system, designed and built by their son, Herman, was put into operation. By making their own snow, the Dupres could supplement marginal snowfalls and extend the ski season. The year 1960 also saw new guestrooms being built to accommodate more skiers. The resort began awarding trophies for special skiing events, such as giant slalom races, as a regular feature in the winter.

Between 1960 and 1990, Seven Springs enjoyed phenomenal growth. The first section of what is now the resort's Main Lodge, with a formal dining area, 37 sleeping rooms and a new indoor swimming pool, was completed in 1965. Seventy-three new guestrooms were added to the Main Lodge in 1967 and the Seven Springs 18-hole golf course was finished in 1969. The Convention Hall was built in 1972 and continues to provide meeting attendees with the most up-to-date facilities available. In 1974, the 313-room high-rise hotel and new hotel lobby were opened.

Throughout the 1970's and 1980's, many improvements and additions to the resort were completed. An expanded ski lodge, more dining facilities, the entire North Face ski area, the first quad chair lift, a fine dining restaurant called Helen's, an exhibit hall and additional tennis courts were all added to make Seven Springs one of the finest resorts in the eastern United States.

Then in September 1987, came the groundbreaking for 800 condominiums and town homes. The Skier Services Building was built in 2000 and in November of 2001 a high-speed, six-passenger lift was added, the first of its kind in the Mid Atlantic Region.

Seven Springs is now the largest employer in Somerset County with more than 1,200 staff members during peak ski season and 800 from spring through fall. Seven Springs offers a year-round sylvan retreat with lodging for some 5,000 overnight guests in its 10-story high-rise, chalets, condominiums, cabins and other accommodations.

But to any resident of the United States, Seven Springs means skiing! It is Pennsylvania's largest ski area with more than 30 major slopes and trails. The resort is serviced by one high-speed six-person chair, two quad chairs, five triple chair lifts, two rope tows, one handlebar rope tow, and a Magic Carpet conveyor lift, for a maximum lift capacity of 22,200 skiers per hour. Night skiing can be enjoyed on 95% of its slopes.

At the time of Helen's death, in 1994, the growth of the resort was only equaled by the growth of the Dupre family. The three Dupre children had given Helen 24 grandchildren and quite a number of great grandchildren.

The children of Adolph and Helen have not forgotten what made their family prosper. It was the desire to have others enjoy the natural beauty and exhilarating experience of working, living and playing in the mountains of Western Pennsylvania. Serving the needs of their guests and visitors had always been uppermost in the minds of Adolph & Helen, and they instilled this service philosophy in every one of their Seven Springs employees.