

Ohio's Outstanding Century Farm 1997 Regional Winners

1997 NORTHEAST REGIONAL WINNER Brown Family Farm William and Katharine Brown Knox County

This 172-acre family farm in Knox County supports three families. William and Katharine Brown live in the family homestead, built in 1832 by farm founder, Mahlon Walters. The family has possession of the original deed signed by then-President James Monroe. A barn which Walters built remains today and is used to house the family's dairy heifers. William and Katharine started the dairy herd when they married in 1947 and their sons, Dan and his wife Kathie, Kelly and wife Marcia, run the dairy operation and the farm's cropping program. William manages the replacement heifers and directs the family's maple syrup operation. He represents the third generation of the Brown family to be maple syrup producers on this farm. They currently have 3,000 maple syrup trees.

The farm is a rich blend of heritage and modernization. For example, much of the furniture in the house is original and has been carefully preserved by the Brown family. The historical integrity of the farmstead and outbuildings have been protected, however the farm operation is a modern one. The bank barn has 60 ft. 12 x 12 inch hand-hewn beams. This barn housed the dairy operation until a new barn was built in 1978. A covered manure storage facility was built in 1994 which allows the Brown family to be good environmental stewards by better managing the manure from the 80-cow Holstein dairy herd that is milked three times daily. They also use no-till planting and contour strips in the cropping program.

The farm was awarded the Knox SWCD Conservation award in 1987 and was named as an Ohio Tree Farm in 1989. Dan currently serves on the county Soil and Water Conservation Board; Kelly serves on the Fredericktown School Board; William serves as president of the Ohio Maple Producers Association. All the labor for the farm is provided by family members which includes Dan's and Kelly's six children, who are active in 4-H. The house has three large basement rooms, three stairways, six bedrooms on the second floor and is believed to have been one of the stops for the underground railroad which was used by slaves in the mid-19th century to gain freedom. The Browns have four other children, Susan, Sandra, Tim and Matt.

1997 NORTHEAST REGIONAL WINNER
Bowman Family Farm
Warren and Dorotha Bowman
Stark County

Warren and Dorotha Bowman operate a 470-acre, 60-head cow/calf and Christmas tree farm in southern Stark County. Their farm was the 22nd farm in Ohio to be named an Ohio Tree Farm in 1948. The Bowman farm sits at the edge of the Seven Ranges which were laid out in 1787 and a cornerstone marking this remains on the farm today.

Farm ownership extends back to Warren's great-great grandfather, Thomas Newhouse, who acquired the original 150 acres in 1816. He and his wife are buried in a family cemetery on the farm. The original log cabin he built survived until the early part of the 20th century. His son, Thomas Junior, built the brick colonial house in 1848 in which Warren and Dorotha live today. This house was built from bricks fired on the farm and poplar and oak wood cut on the centennial land. The walls of the house are three bricks thick with this original material. Warren, age 82, and Dorotha, age 75, were married in 1941 and still operate the farm themselves today. Warren took over the farm in the midst of the Great Depression at the age of 19 when his father took an off-farm job to help the family survive. Warren started milking cows and raising potatoes to help pay off the farm mortgage. He and Dorotha raised four children on the farm; Richard, Jim, Carol and Dale. The family has been active with the Little Country Church in Waynesburg and Warren has been a participant with the Sandy Valley Ruritan. Warren and Dorotha and their daughter, Carol Bagley and her family, have done missionary work.

The family has preserved their historical heritage. One of the most cherished items is the original farm deed signed by then-President James Madison written on sheepskin parchment. "Eight generations have worked this farm. We feel privileged today to be a part of that heritage," Warren said. One of the most troubling times for the farm was ten years ago when the city of Magnolia took part of the farm for a sewage treatment plant. Although the Bowmans tried to keep the land from being taken, the city invoked eminent domain and took the land for the plant. According to Warren, losing the 15 acres was not critical to the farm operation but it represented a loss for the farmstead of land which was a section of the original homestead founded by Thomas Newhouse.

**1997 SOUTHEAST REGIONAL WINNER
Tunis Family Farm
James and Dorothy Tunis
Muskingum County**

The Tunis family farm dates back to 1815 when Henry Tunis migrated to Ohio from New Jersey to find a farm and raise his family. The farm dates back to being part of the Revolutionary War grants to soldiers in the Ohio territory. Henry paid \$200 for the 100 acres of land in Muskingum County. He cleared the land for farming. His son, Madison, built the huge brick house which has dominated the family farm since 1872 after the original homestead was struck by lightning and burned. This house has been lived in by each generation of Tunis family members since that time. Susan Tunis Hindel, daughter of James and Dorothy, and her family currently live in the house, which features two stairways, two layers of sandstone foundation blocks, the original interior woodwork, bricks made on the farm and many of the original window panes. Henry and his wife Elizabeth are buried in a family plot on the farm near the house.

James and Dorothy milked cows on the farm for 44 years, getting out of the dairy business in 1988 as part of the Federal Dairy Buyout Program. James had started the dairy operation in 1942 when he took over the farm after his father had a heart attack. The family's dairy herd was one of the top producing herds in Muskingum County and consistently ranked near the top of the dairy herd testing program.

The Tunis family has the distinction of being in the Ripley's Believe It or Not records. Judith Elaine Tunis, daughter of James and Dorothy, represented the first girl to be born in the Tunis family for 95 years; she and her parents were featured in the popular syndicated Ripley's feature carried in local newspapers. The family has carefully preserved its historical heritage. Besides maintaining the homestead and several other original outbuildings, they have original farm account books kept by Madison Tunis showing to the penny how much the house cost to build, what crops sold for and overall records of the farm. In addition, Dorothy has extensively researched the family's history and has compiled a Tunis family record book.

1997 SOUTHEAST REGIONAL WINNER
Eastview Farm
Pat Tripp
Carroll County

Pat Tripp and her late husband, Wayne, represent the fourth generation of their family to farm the nearly 200 acres of land known as Eastview Farm, just outside Bowerston. The Tripp family acquired the land in 1854 when Robert Leggett bought the farm. It was originally part of a 1,000-acre grant given to General James Ball, a first cousin of George Washington, for service rendered in the Revolutionary War. While the original deed has been lost, the Tripp family has deeds dating back to 1835, including a deed signed by Henry Ball, presumably James' son.

Wayne, who passed away two years ago, was one of the first farmers in Ohio to bring Belgian Blue cattle into the state. He imported a cow, a heifer and a young bull from Canada in 1988 and eventually built a sizable herd of cattle noted for their lean and muscular carcasses. After Wayne's death, Pat sold some of the cattle but farmed out the rest of the herd to other breeders and has maintained interest in those cattle. She operates the farm as a cash grain and hay operation today. When she and Wayne married in 1952, they originally had Milking Shorthorn cattle and showed them across the U.S. The present brick homestead on the farm was built in four sections and completed in 1861. A nearby barn still used today was built in 1876. The historical integrity of the house has been carefully maintained, including the original brick exterior and trim. They have preserved Robert Leggett's original bedroom furniture and a blanket chest which came across the Appalachian Mountains from eastern Pennsylvania to Carroll County in the mid-19th century.

Pat and Wayne raised three daughters on the farm; Judy Brunswick of Minneapolis, Jill McGruder of Cincinnati and Joyce Keener of Buffalo, N.Y. Wayne was very active with the Carroll County Farm Bureau and the Carroll Electric REA Board of Directors. Pat has also been very active with the Carroll County Public Library board. In 1950, ten acres of the original farm were taken to provide land for the Conotton Valley High School which now stands in front of the farm.

1997 SOUTHWEST REGIONAL WINNER
Hackney Family Farm
David and Patricia Hackney
Clinton County

The Hackney family farm dates back to 1843 when Mary Elizabeth Hackney was given a grant of 100 acres of wooded land in Clinton County from her brother. Each of her brothers received a 200-acre parcel when their father died, but Mary Elizabeth was only three years at the time and did not receive any land. Her brother generously decided she also deserved land, so his 100-acre gift is the original land base for the Hackney Century Farm.

The house which Mary Elizabeth built in 1844 serves as home for David and Patricia Hackney and their children today. A barn built in 1846 houses the family's cow/calf and purebred Hampshire sheep operation. Lumber to build the house came from the woods on the farm and the homestead still had some of the original wood shingles until 20 years ago, when the roof was replaced. The house featured a large double fireplace and a spring house built into the basement complete with a running spring. Not only was the spring water used for the farm, but its unique air movement system helped cool the rest of the house in the summer.

The farm has a long history of involvement with Duroc hogs and today the family shows purebred Hampshire sheep. Robert, David's father, was one of the first Ohio FFA members to receive an American Farmer degree in 1933, having received his Ohio State Farmer FFA degree in 1930. His wife, Mary, is a retired public school teacher. The family has been very active with the Chester Friends Church. Robert was a Sunday school teacher for many years; David serves as a clerk of the church and Patricia has served as treasurer for the past 17 years. She is also secretary of the Wilmington Yearly Meeting. They have three children: Mark, Kent, and Suzanne Addison.

1997 SOUTHWEST REGIONAL WINNER
Wright Family Farm
Juanita Wright
Preble County

Disapproving of slavery, William McCreary moved his family from South Carolina to the new Ohio territory and purchased 160 acres in southwest Ohio in 1808. A devout Presbyterian, McCreary wanted to farm in free territory so he began clearing land and farming in what would eventually become Preble County. He held the first organizational meeting of the local Presbyterian Church in his home and eventually returned to South Carolina to encourage other folks to move to Ohio.

His great-great grandson, Harold and his wife Juanita, acquired the farm in 1955 and began farming and raising registered paint and quarter horses. Harold also worked for nearby Hueston Woods. He and Juanita also operated a riding stable in conjunction with Hueston Woods for many years. They participated in the local youth organizations by leasing horses for riding to the local Boy Scout troops. Before he passed away a year ago, Harold also served as an elder and trustee of the Morning Sun Presbyterian Church. Today, Juanita, her children and grandchildren operate the farm which includes a cash grain operation plus horse training and boarding. They have an original deed signed by then-President James Madison for the quarter section homestead.

The original house built by William is part of the homestead in which Juanita resides in today. They raised six children on the farm: Darrell, Wayne, Russell, Lisa, Randy and Judy. According to Juanita all the children live near the farm and still work on the farmstead, including several of the grandchildren who keep 4-H projects at the farm. The farm has kept the original acreage intact. The house features a distinctive horseshoe design in the shingles on the roof, put there as a pleasant surprise for the Wrights by the roofers who put the shingles in place. The family's involvement and reputation with horses prompted the design. "We think it is important to preserve Ohio's farms because of the rapid changes to rural areas from shopping malls and encroaching suburbs. Over the years, many people have visited the farm as part of our horse training and stables and we've always tried to make this farm more than just our farm," Juanita said.

**1997 NORTHWEST REGIONAL WINNER
Colflesh Family Farm
Lawrence and Jeanne Colflesh
Delaware County**

If one phrase could sum up the 143 years in which the Colflesh family has owned the farmland in Delaware County, it would definitely be “a deep, abiding love for the land”. From the day when George Neilson bought 117 acres in Berlin Township east of Delaware to the present day with Lawrence and Jeanne Colflesh and their son, Ted, and his children, farming this same land, a reverence for the land has been instilled in this family.

Lawrence took over ownership of the original family homestead and land in 1975 although he and son Ted had been in partnership since 1973 and jointly owned some 750 acres. As a partnership today, they now farm more than 1,500 acres in a cash grain and hog operation. Their shared love for the land is evidenced by their deep involvement with soil conservation. Lawrence was selected for the Ohio SWCD Hall of Fame and spent 21 years as supervisor for the Delaware SWCD. Ted has spent another 10 years on this same board. Their farm has twice been selected to receive a Goodyear Conservation Award, in 1953 and in 1987. Their conservation practices include more the 500,000 feet of subsurface drainage and more than 3,000 feet of 8x16 inch mains. The Colflesh family operates their own drain tile installation equipment and has systematically tiled their land. When George Neilson moved to this acreage in 1854, it was entirely wooded. A brick mason by trade, he wanted to farm so he cleared the land by himself and started his operation. Over the years, the original acreage was split between family members and the Colflesh family brought the parcels back together, finishing this in 1984 when Ted bought the last remaining 50 acres.

Lawrence and Jeanne will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Christmas Eve 1997. They raised four children on this homestead: Nancy, Jacque and twins Ted and Phil. A third generation of Colflesh farmer, represented by Ted's son Chris, is actively involved with the farm today. “We must pass on to our children and our children's children the love of God and this beautiful land of ours and the importance of remembering our hard-working ancestors and what they have passed on to us. We are stewards of the soil, air and water and must never forget we have been given this land for our children,” Jeanne said. The farm sits less than two miles east of Delaware and houses have sprung up where corn and soybeans once grew in abundance. The Colflesh family has seen first-hand what urban expansion has done to Ohio's prime farmland.

1997 NORTHWEST REGIONAL WINNER
Lilly Family Farm
Carl and Caroline Lilly
Defiance County

Thanks to the efforts of Orville Ensign and his sons Earl and Charles, Ohio hog producers in northwest Ohio were able to win the war against hog cholera. The laboratory in which they developed hog cholera serum still stands on the 200-acre farm of their descendants, Carl and Caroline Lilly. Ensign bought the original acreage in 1888. Between 1893 and 1900, he built numerous buildings including the house in which Carl and Caroline live today.

The outbuildings include a unique two-story hog barn, called the Piggery. This barn featured corn storage on the upper floor and a hog finishing floor on the lower level. Feed was made in the top, and then they fed by chute to the hogs beneath. The laboratory is a stone block building which features an underground cellar in which the hog cholera serum was kept cool. Hog cholera was also known as swine fever and it was an economically devastating disease for Ohio hog producers. Although it was identified in 1883, immunization wasn't developed until 1903 when it was determined that a viral infection caused the disease. Orville and his sons built the lab and began producing hog cholera serum. This continued for some 60 years, until 1973 when hog cholera was eventually eradicated from Ohio. Much of the original equipment has been kept by Carl and Caroline who moved to the farm in 1951.

The farm is also noted for its five operating springs. The Lillys raised five daughters and two sons on the farm, including Cynthia Kiacz of Bryan; Chris Rice of Clearwater, Florida; Cathy Browning of Sugargrove; Celeste Rossman of Bryan; Cara Lilly of Little Elm, Texas; Clay Lilly of Spencer, Iowa; and the late Chet Lilly. The farm has been named as an Ohio Historic Homestead and today the farm operation includes corn, soybeans and wheat.