

Hocking County farm wins 1998 Ohio's Outstanding Century Farm Award

[Editor's note: Elizabeth Shaw's Fairview Farms in Hocking County won the 1998 Ohio's Outstanding Century Farm Award. Following is a history of the farm recounted by Tim Reeves, *Ohio's Country Journal*.]

In the early part of the 19th century, Germany was racked by one war after another. To escape a dismal future, many young German men fled to other countries, especially the new United States, which welcomed them with war-free arms.

One of those thousands of immigrants was a man named Sampson Carpenter, who bought 30 acres of rolling farmland in Hocking County for \$110 near the little town of Rockbridge, Ohio. The gently rolling land reminded him of his native Germany. While Sampson worked to buy more land and build up the farm, it was his son, Abel, who made the most visible contribution to the farm when he built the massive house and barn.

"Abel's house was the talk of the town, literally," said Elizabeth Shaw, who with her late husband, Otto, operated the farm for many years. Elizabeth still lives in this

meticulously preserved homestead.

The barn was also a marvel of efficiency and design at the time it was built. In 1910, it was doubled in size and cited by many as the type of barn to build.

For Abel Carpenter, leading was natural. He served as county commissioner from 1879-1882 and instilled in his family the desire to be the best farmers they could possibly be. His daughter, Emma, married Otto Shaw and took over the farm operation in 1906. Otto fit well with Abel's progressive thinking and continued to build the operation until his untimely death in a train accident at age 39. His son, Paul, was only sixteen years old at the time of Otto's death. He and his mother, Emma, tried to keep the farm operating as best they could.

Paul became nationally recognized for his knowledge of livestock, especially sheep. He and son Otto were featured in an article in the October 1956 issue of *Farm Journal*



Fairview Farms
Hocking County

and Country Gentlemen, which described their outstanding market lamb production. They were crossbreeding to obtain the best market lambs they could, a cutting-edge technique at that time.

In 1962, Otto and his wife Elizabeth took over management of the farm and became active in community affairs. "We were married in 1946 and moved into a house down the road from the main farm," Elizabeth said. Otto continued to work with his father, Paul, until he passed away and Otto and Elizabeth moved into the house in 1962. When Otto passed away in 1992, Elizabeth and son Bill formed a working partnership to keep the farm going.

Today, a new generation of farmers is working into the operation as the grandchildren of Elizabeth and Otto learn to farm. Bill's daughters, Morgan and Mallory, have both become experienced hay makers. "This farm has been a part of Ohio's agriculture for the past 163 years. We'd like to see it continue to do so in the future," Bill said.



Some of the Shaw family on the porch of their homestead on Fairview Farms, in Rockbridge, Ohio. From left: Debbie, Mallory, Elizabeth, Morgan, and Bill.