

## HEINLEIN GENEALOGY

### BELL FARM

The Bells' multi-million-dollar business empire collapsed in 1925 when Bell Sr.'s flagship Carnegie Trust Company along with two of his other banks collapsed. Newspapers of the day reported extensively on Bell's rags to riches story along with detailed accounts of his financial ruin. Bell Sr. was convicted on multiple counts of embezzlement, but due to ill health, served only two years of his sentence as a patient in Allegheny General Hospital before being released. Never recovering his health, John Bell Sr. passed in 1933.

A downturn in the coal industry also contributed to the family's financial ruin. Bankruptcy sales followed. The transfer of the dairy farm from father to son was disputed by the father's creditors and despite the court deciding ownership in favor of Bell Jr., the farm was sold in 1927 to help pay debts.

The Bell Farm was a nationally known stock farm for registered Holsteins and hosted annual field days for buyers, sellers and those who simply enjoyed spending a day on the farm. The Bell name was much respected in dairy circles and the farm and herd continued under the Bell name long after being sold to Charles Nettour and Edward E. Reick of Pittsburgh's Reick Dairy Company.

The farm continued to operate until 1941 when the herd was auctioned and the land sold to the Federal Government for the construction of an Army Air Corps airport. In 1945, most of the property was conveyed to Allegheny County for construction of a new airport, but not before trees were transplanted to North and South parks and coal was mined. The Greater Pittsburgh Airport opened in the Fall of 1950.



*A photo of the former Bell Farm hangs in the airside terminal of Pittsburgh International Airport. Bellfarm Kitchen is the name given to the airport hotel's restaurant.*

Following the family's bankruptcy and loss of the farm, Bell Jr. headed to Tulsa, Oklahoma where he established a company that supplied oil drilling equipment. His partner in the venture was the son of the founder of Philips Petroleum. Within a short time, Bell Jr. returned to Pennsylvania where he and his family made their home in Edgeworth. Circa 1935, Bell purchased the former Tener farm on Camp Meeting Road in nearby Sewickley Township where he not only re-established a prize-winning Holstein herd, but also began a stable of brood mares that formed the foundation for the family's future success in the Thoroughbred industry.

