

HEINLEIN GENEALOGY

BELL FARM



Perhaps the most concrete example that Moon's agricultural roots were no longer holding the community together was the sacrifice of the Bell Farm to make way for the Greater Pittsburgh International Airport. The vast, relatively flat nature of the land made the Bell Farm—and several other neighboring properties—the perfect place for an airport.

The pioneer family farm on the frontier had by the 20th century evolved into a large commercial operation known as Bell Farm. This unique enterprise was certainly one of the more prominent aspects of Moon Township's economic history between 1920 and 1940. The Co-operative farm existed on the land now occupied by the Pittsburgh International Airport and the Airport Office Park for a period of 20 years.

Established in the early 1920's by John A. Bell, this modern dairy farm comprised 1,180 acres in both Moon and Findlay Townships. Moon Township had always been primarily farm country and Mr. Bell decided to purchase a number of small stagnant farms combining them into one large modern dairy and stock farm.

The farm had more than 20 buildings including horse barns, cattle barns, a grain mill, pump-house, water reservoir, creamery, office, garages and residences for both married and single employees. There were houses on the farm for the workers and their families and a boarding and rooming house that included a modern kitchen, dining room able to seat 20, and a large hobby/recreation room. The lower level included an apartment for the chef, John Byrd, and his family. Mr. Byrd, who had worked for Mr. Bell for 20 years before operating the boarding house, was known as a great cook. Visitors to Bell Farm always looked forward to returning for another good meal.

The farm employed 35 full-time employees and an additional 35 to 40 men who were hired in the summer making a total of 75 employees annually. The Bell Farm operation grew 200 acres of wheat and 100 acres of oats and barley as well as alfalfa, soybeans,