

HEINLEIN GENEALOGY

BELL FARM

Everything possible was done to maintain the health of the cows and also to maintain cleanliness of both the animals and the barns. Any animal, that became sick, was cared for personally by top farm employees. A veterinarian was on call at all times. Wood shavings were spread on the floors of the barns and were changed frequently. Large numbers of flypaper ribbons were used in the barns and were changed continually. After surge milkers were installed in 1934, the udders and tails of all cows would be washed before the milkers were attached. All creamery workers and milkers were required to wear white uniforms and each of these employees were subject to an examination each month by the health department. The farm continued to be a vital part of the community.

During the 1936 flood, Bell Farm furnished milk and truckloads of bread normally used at the farm to all families in need in the nearby town of Coraopolis. Also during that crisis, all of the farm's portable water pumps were loaned out to help in the cleanup.

All former farm residents to whom we spoke mentioned the sense of family, which existed there over the years—not only involving church activities, but in everyday life. Also, most residents were concerned about political and other matters, which might adversely affect Bell Farm. Mr. Nettrour said that any politician running for office or taking political action in those years without consideration for Bell Farm would have had difficulty being elected.

In 1941 when rumors arose that Allegheny County wanted to acquire the farm property for an airport, Mr. Reick, out of concern for the farm residents and employees, investigated the possibility of moving the entire operation elsewhere, but no suitable location could be found.

Mr. Reick made the difficult decision to sell the farm, including 335 head of cattle, all equipment and the buildings at auction. The cattle sale officially recognized as the largest in the history of the Holstein breed was attended by dairymen from throughout the country. All farm equipment and buildings were sold except for the Bell Farm Church. The church was later sold to the First Church of God, Greensburg, PA. It was moved piece by piece, reassembled, and is still in use today.

Our thanks to former Bell Farm residents and their family members for their bits of information and recollections. We are also grateful to Kathryn Slasor, longtime newspaper writer, who wrote an extensive series of articles on Bell Farm and airport development in the late 1960's, which was also a resource.