

German immigrants settle Buckwalter farm

By MELISSA PIPER

SMOKETOWN - One of the oldest family-owned farms in Lancaster County is the Paul Buckwalter homestead located in the countryside near here.

The Buckwalter's have owned the property for almost 230 years, with the original deed having been written by Thomas and Richard Penn, sons of William Penn.

The first Buckwalter to own the property was Theodorius Buckwalter (spelled with a "d") who moved to the Lancaster County area from Pheonixville in 1747. Buckwalder's father Francis had been an immigrant from Germany who after surviving much religious persecution, brought his family to America.

Two of Francis' sons moved to the area while the remaining children stayed near Philadelphia and began a successful ironworks business.

The original house built on the 200 acres (original deed) reflected the typical German influence of architecture. It was constructed of stone with decorative shutters and doorways. The house was located over a spring, which provided cooling for the milk and dairy products. The house was torn down in 1900, but not before another dwelling had been constructed near the older house.

The second house or more properly a summer kitchen was built in 1874 with a main living structure being finished in 1875. The two buildings were never joined except for a porch.

Grassland quartet wins state award

Four members of the Grassland FFA Chapter at the Garden Spot High School were recently named as state proficiency award winners at the State Mid-Winter Convention held in Harrisburg.

The quartet included, E. Keith Feister, son of Mr. and Mrs. George Feister, East Earl; Arthur Horst, son of Mr. and Mrs. Leroy Horst, Bowersville; Ray Martin, son of Mr. and Mrs. Eli W. Martin, New Holland R1 and Lloyd Hoover, son of Mr. and Mrs. Elmer M. Hoover, Leola.

Feister, Keystone farming degree recipient and a 1975 graduate of Garden Spot High School, was a winner in the Horse Production proficiency program. Feister owned his own horse projects during his FFA years and toured the state attending numerous Appaloosa horse shows.

The youth was selected as the Lancaster County Star Agri-businessman and won Foundation medals in Sales and Service. He is currently employed at Hempt Farms of Camp Hill.

In the agricultural processing program, Arthur Horst was selected as the state winner. Horst was selected for his work at the David B. Hurst Feed Mill in Bowersville. Serving as student advisor for the Grassland Chapter, Horst also participated on the state parliamentary procedure team and several judging teams. He was also a participant in the land judging contest and in tractor driving.

Ray Martin was the state winner in Dairy Production adding the honor to his Keystone Farming Degree and Eastern Region Star Farmer award.

Ray is in partnership with his father and has about 40 dairy animals. He has helped to build structures for the animals as well as select quality cows for the herd.

The youth served as president of the Grassland FFA and was the county vice-president along with being the recipient of the DeKalb Achievement award. Ray is currently a member of the Garden Spot Young Farmers.

Named recipient of the Home and Farmstead Improvement Proficiency Award was Lloyd Hoover. Lloyd is currently serving as the state vice-president an office he received after being president of the Grassland Chapter.

Lloyd's award followed many months of working on improvement projects on his parent's farm. His major project was to convert a burned out house trailer into a swine and veal calf barn.

Lloyd has received a number of distinguished awards including honors from Sperry - New Holland and Victor F. Weaver's.

All the youths have received their Keystone Degree Awards - their advisor has been Clifford Day, ag instructor at Garden Spot High School.

Being in very much the same style as many frame type dwellings of the era, the house was square and lacked any detailed design. The doorways however, did lend them-



Mr. and Mrs. Paul Buckwalter, Smoketown, look over the original deed for their property in Lancaster County. The Buckwalter farm is nearly 230 years old.

selves to European forms as they were low and decorative with glass on the top.

Although a bake oven graced the kitchen area there were no fireplaces in the main rooms. Much of the day was spent in the kitchen area so that the oven warmth was all that was required.

Paul Buckwalter's grandfather was the first to live in the newer house and being a horse doctor, divided the kitchen in half for his office. Along with his medical duties, which took him around the county and among the Amish, Buckwalter carried out general farming on his 200 acres.

A bank barn was raised in 1871 and records indicate that it cost \$1000. It was made of white pine which was evidently floated down the Susquehanna as pegs in the planks show where it was tied together for a raft.

Paul Buckwalter was the seventh generation of the family to farm the property. By 1938 it had been reduced to 57 acres and the producer had a generalized farm.

"Even back then we had to have a little of everything to keep going," he explained. "Not many people specialized."

Buckwalter still has 17 milk cows and does the farming although he hires some help in the summer months.

Although the Buckwalter property has been carried on through seven generations, the trend has come to an end as Buckwalter has no male children. Two daughters have provided six grandsons, that might perhaps farm in the future, but the Buckwalter name will soon fade into history as has much of the original land.

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