

# 1979 LANCASTER COUNTY CENTURY FARMS

## Dennis and Linda Umbrell

ELIZABETHTOWN — A 325 acre tract of land was purchased by a Risser family near Elizabethtown over 240 years ago.

Since that day in 1739, only Risser families have resided on a major portion of the original property.

Presently, Dennis Umbrell and his wife, the former Linda Risser, own the farm. The Umbrell's and their two children, Tina Elizabeth and Matthew Wade, occupy the main portion of the home.

The other side of the 21 room house is occupied by Linda's parents, Amos and Elizabeth Risser.

Therefore, three of the nine generations of Risser's are residing on the original homestead.

According to Amos Risser, the present stone home was built in 1811. Only a two room section has been added since that time.

They are certain that their forefathers resided in a log cabin, possibly located in an area south of the barn.

Linda Umbrell wishes that previous generations would have recorded more information, to benefit the inquisitive younger generations.

Located next to the home, is an original "summer house." This building was used as a kitchen during the summer months. It afforded cooler working conditions. Also, the main home remained free of a farmer's summer dust.

An arch cellar in the basement of the house was the convenient storage center for milk, eggs, and other cold storage items.

Beside the home, is a "bake house" and there is also an area where butchering was done. The Risser's used to butcher five hogs a year for family use. A neighboring butcher would assist the family at this annual event.

Although the original tract of land included 325 acres; the farm has been divided to create neighboring farms.

Also, a portion of the land was sold to build the Risser Mennonite Church.

Presently the Umbrell's own 102 acres of land, and rent additional ground.

There primary livestock is steers and swine. In the near future, they will be completing a 120 sow farrowing house. Eventually, they hope to fatten all the pigs on the farm.

The Umbrells raise a majority of corn and alfalfa. During this season, Dennis Umbrell has been busy with custom silo filling.

Originally the Risser farm was a predominate Holstein dairy operation. Although there were times when a few steers could be found on the premises.

Amos Risser can remember his father buying laying hens to add to the operation. Amos continued the poultry operation.

It is difficult to imagine how many Risser families were born on this homestead in the past 240 years. Some of



Three of the nine generations of Risser's currently reside in the original farm house, presently owned by Dennis and Linda Umbrell. The house was built in 1811. The Risser family has owned the farm since 1739.

the families have migrated to Canada.

And, every five years a Risser reunion is held with some of the family descendants. A few years ago it was held in Elizabethtown. In 1981, the Umbrell's and Risser's

would like to travel to Canada for the same Risser clan reunion.

The Risser's need to be congratulated for their maintenance of the beautiful pre-revolutionary homestead.

See photo

Page 23



This has been the home of Calvin Keene's ancestors during the previous four generations. The Century Farm is located near Bartville in Bart Township. The frame home was built approximately 120 years ago. Prior to that time, the ancestors lived in a log cabin.

## Calvin and Valeria Keene

CHRISTIANA — Prior to 1832 Gainer Moore purchased an 183 acre tract of land at a sheriff sale. The selling price was \$472.

This land was nestled in a valley near Bartville, southwest of Nine Points in Colrain Township.

In 1832 the same land, now located in Bart Township, was sold for approximately \$1000 to David Beyer. Since that year, the farm has remained with the Beyer descendants, presently owned by Calvin Keene and his wife, Valeria.

Calvin's mother was a Beyer prior to her marriage.

The Keenes do have records proving that their tract of land was a part of the original grant of William Penn son's, Thomas and Richard. The grant is dated October 9, 1753 and the purchasing price was 260 pounds.

According to Calvin, the farm has remained basically the same in the past century.

A few acres have been removed from the original land as a result of two roads, that intersect the property. A few building lots were sold

to family members in the 42 acre woodland on the property.

In the Beyer-Keene tradition, the farm has always been a dairy operation.

Presently milking 50 Holsteins, with a dumping station, Calvin is considering a pipeline system in the future.

Although, the Keene's raise their own replacements, the size of the buildings presently limits the herd size.

The original frame barn burnt in 1966. It was rebuilt to burn again in 1968. The present barn was rebuilt at that time. The original

(Turn to Page 24)



A wood shed surrounded this fieldstone fireplace at one time. It was constructed with sand - limestone mortar.



Albert and Katherine Fry own this 80 acre farm on Erisman Road between Manheim and Mount Joy. It was originally purchased by Isaac Brubaker for his son-in-law, Albert H. Erb, the great grandfather of Albert Fry, Jr.

## Albert and Katherine Fry

MANHEIM — A peaceful grove of trees is nestled in the meadow valley of the century farm owned by Albert and Katherine Fry.

This grove has seen many family picnics, campfires, and births of calves. It also yielded the fieldstone for the foundations of a home and barn in 1868. It has been the inspiration of the name, "Peaceful Grove Farm."

The original trees may no longer exist, but the family memories have remained through the generations preceding Albert Fry, Jr.

A marked stone in both the barn and house indicate that the buildings were constructed by Jacob and Fannie Snyder in 1868.

According to family history, the Snyder's were unable to keep the farm and it was sold at a public sale in 1874.

As the story explains, a neighboring farmer, Isaac Brubaker, began his walk towards the sale. As he traveled he did some thinking, and decided to return home rather than attend the sale.

Supposedly he told his

wife, "If I go, I know I will buy the farm."

His wife replied, "go and buy it."

And, as records prove, that is exactly what he did.

Since the original Brubaker purchase, the farm has been sold to four generations of the same family.

(Turn to Page 33)



This burlled cherry desk was originally owned by Isaac Brubaker, the purchaser of the Fry homestead. Albert Fry Jr. bought the desk at a public sale and has refinished it. The piece takes a treasured place in a home filled with family heirlooms.