

Over two centuries in the family for Lime Spring Farm

BY WENDY WEHR
ROHRERSTOWN — The more than two-century-old Lime Spring Farm predates all the other farms in this year's Century Farm program. But while it's the oldest, it's also probably the most vulnerable farm to be recognized this year.

"Unfortunately we are being forced out of farming," says Sarah Ann Stauffer. Miss Stauffer and her brother Charles have seen their Lime Spring Farm, located just west of Rohrerstown, diminish over the years, as land was taken for the Route 30 by-pass, pipelines, and waterlines, and as industries have sprung up around them.

"Costs of farming are going up," says Miss Stauffer. "You have a \$30,000 tractor and a \$10,000 piece of equipment that you use only once a year, and it's impossible to get a return on your investment with only 10 acres."

While the Lime Spring Farm hasn't shrunk to 10 acres, the loss of land is quite serious and her point is well-taken. Today there are 110 tillable acres, whereas in years back there were roughly 175, recalls Miss Stauffer.

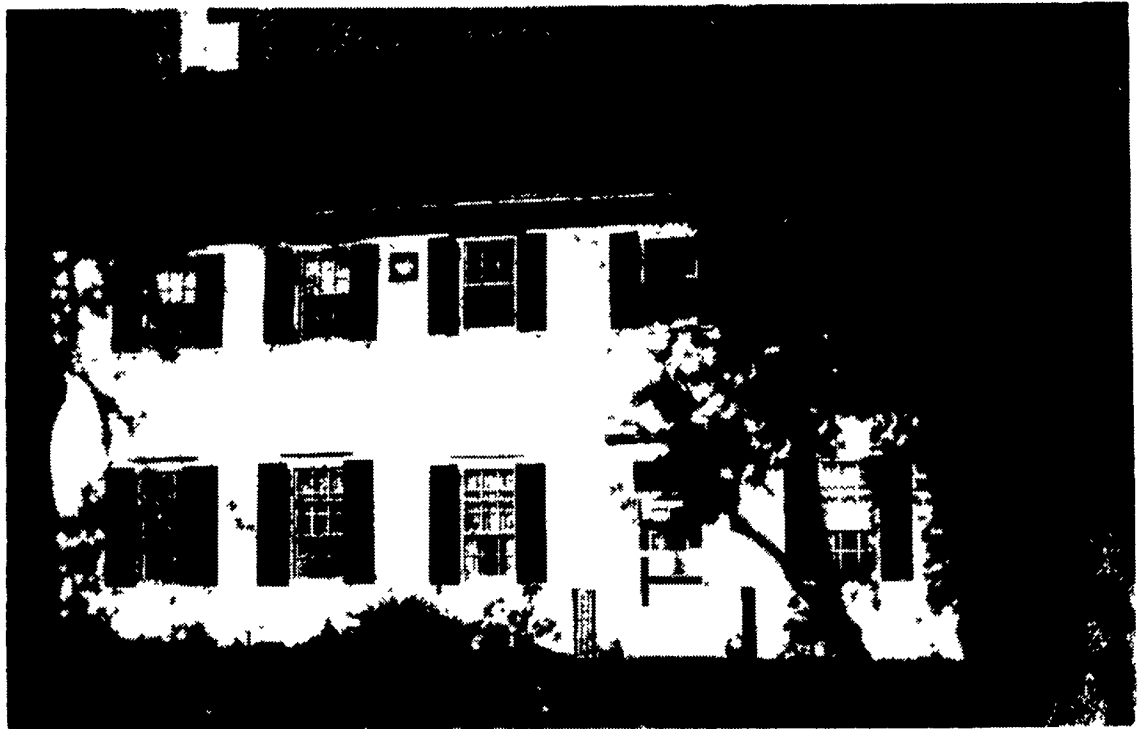
Even though the Stauffers have rented out the farmland for several

generations, they are aware of the productivity of the land. Today, Gary Brubaker farms the land, and prior to that his father Glenn tilled the soil. Previous tenants went on to purchase their own farms after working for the Stauffers for a number of years.

Both Sarah and Charles appreciate living on the farm now. And they have fond memories of earlier days when they visited their grandparents there. There are a number of residences on Lime Spring Farm, and the oldest dates back to one of the original owners.

Peter Lehman established the farm in 1745, following his emigration from an area in Europe that is modern-day Switzerland. The oldest house, where Charles lives today, was built by Johannes, or John, Lehman in 1769. Also standing from those days is what the Stauffers refer to as the "still house."

"I can remember my grandmother out there with the help making soap," recalls Sarah about the still house. And Charles speculates that the building got its name from the days when whiskey was the most valuable product to be made from the farmer's grain.



This home on Lime Spring Farm dates from 1769, as engraved on the marker between the upstairs windows. Today Charles Stauffer, co-ownewr of the farm, lives here.

The Lehman's chose Lime Spring Farm, as the name suggests, for the productive spring that still provides water on the

place. "There's always been plenty of water no matter how dry it gets," say Sarah and Charles. In the days before city water, the people of Rohrerstown would come out for water, and local churches would perform baptisms at the spring. Sarah adds that her grandfather told her about the days when the buggies would be lined up along the lane, waiting to get water from the spring.

The lane into Lime Spring Farm goes under a railroad track. Charles explained that this was the original Philadelphia-Columbia line, which was built to compete with goods being taken all the way down the Susquehanna to Baltimore. The railroad was built

so that goods coming down the Susquehanna could be diverted at Columbia and taken by rail to Philadelphia. Sarah remembers walking with her grandfather down by the railroad track and being shown the original stone ties that were used in those days.

With such a rich history, Charles and Sarah Stauffer understandably resent the encroachment of industry and urbanization on the picturesque and productive Lime Spring Farm. One can only hope that through the Century Farm program and local efforts for agricultural preservation that the historic and productive farms of Lancaster County can be maintained for future generations.



This sizable bank barn at Lime Spring Farm dates back through the generations as well.

BY WENDY WEHR
MOUNT JOY — The J. Earl Martin farm is the "youngest" of the Century Farms this year, but it has its fair share of history behind it too. In 1876 Daniel Wolgemuth purchased the farm, and two original houses, one stone and one log, are still occupied today as living memories of the family history.

Today, J. Earl Martin Jr., who was born and raised on the farm, and his wife Helen, live in the stone house, and their son Galen farms the land. J. Earl Martin, Sr. also lives in an apartment in the house. At the ripe old age of 89, he remembers moving to the stone house at age seven. The farm came down through his mother's family, the Wolgemuths.

Galen took over the farming operation in the early 70's. J. Earl Jr. says that, "Galen always wanted to farm, and I always said I'd help any of my children who wanted to, because that's what my father did for me."

Of the Martins' five children only Galen took up the challenge of

farming. Galen has wanted to farm as long as anyone in the family can remember. "The opportunity was

here so I took advantage of it," remarks Galen.

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Helen and J. Earl Martin Jr. take a moment for a photo with their son Galen and Earl's dad, J. Earl Sr.

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 drought and the avian influenza epidemic as examples of Pa. farmers, "surviving almost every difficulty associated with farming."

Turning to the subject of soil and water conservation, Scranton said that the state has recently signed a contract with the Pa. Association of Conservation District Directors, Inc., to earmark \$50,000 for educational programs aimed at cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay. Funds will be channeled toward the dissemination of information concerning nutrient control, coordination of regional workshops and implementation of a statewide Chesapeake Bay conference in January.

"We want to help farmers preserve the soil and its precious nutrients," the Lt. Governor said.

Other programs designed to aid the state's agricultural community, said Scranton, include strengthening of the Milk Security Fund and the creation of the \$10 million Family Farm Assistance Program.

Also featured during the evening's program was John H. Frazier, Jr., chairman of Frazier-Parrott Commodities, Inc., and a member of the Chicago Board of Trade. Speaking on the subject of future commodity prices, Frazier noted the importance of oil prices in regulating the price of nearly everything else, including ag commodities. Frazier said that oil prices have dropped by 40 percent in recent years, and pointed out that many experts predict no sharp increases in the foreseeable future. The oil situation will tend to stabilize agricultural commodities, he said.

Turning to grain crops, Frazier

said that this year's record crop will not halt an upswing in demand for the kind of winter wheat grown throughout Pennsylvania.

The speaker said that the corn market is close to reaching its low point, and that other uses for corn such as in the production of alcohol and sweeteners, will enhance the grain's market potential.

Frazier predicts an increase in the acreage planted to soybeans next year because of the ease with which the crop can be planted and maintained.

Overall, said Frazier, no runaway commodity prices are predicted, with most prices remaining stable or possibly dipping slightly.

Addressing the problem of the country's vanishing farmland, was 4-H member, Greg Musser, of Elizabethtown, who presented his talk entitled, "Where's the Land?". Musser called for more stringent zoning policies, the establishment of agricultural preservation areas and deed restriction programs to insure the future of our irreplaceable farmland.

The son of Mr. and Mrs. Harold Z. Musser, Greg is the recipient of this year's Outstanding 4-H Boy Award, one of the 4-H program's highest honors.

Initiated in New York in 1937, the Century Farm program was adopted by the Bradford County Historical Society in 1948. The program became statewide in 1976, when the Pa. Department of Agriculture assumed administrative duties.

To date, 844 Century Farms have been recognized across Pennsylvania, with Tuesday night's ceremonies bringing Lancaster County's total to 80 Century Farms.