

# Springdale Farm And One-Room School Perpetuates Heritage

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NEW WINDSOR, Md. —

When John Cornell Lovell surveys his herd of purebred Angus that grazes on the pastureland adjacent to the family homestead, he takes pride in the fact that the farm has been in the family since the 1870s. His maternal grandparents settled in the sheltered valley surrounded by rolling green pastures and make Springdale Farm their home.

"I was born in this house," said Lovell. He perpetuates the family's agricultural heritage, farming 250 acres at home and leasing over 100 additional acres nearby. "My grandfather was a cattle drover, and Dad had a hatchery" he recalled.

"Grandfather Cornell" bought cattle from farms in the area and in neighboring towns. "When it came time to sell them, he drove them to the cattle cars at the railroad. He would ride in the caboose to the cattle yard in Baltimore." It might come as a surprise to present day Main Street residents to know that cattle were driven past the front doors of their New Windsor homes. That was around 1910, and Lovell was "just a little kid" then.

Lovell runs Springdale Farm with the assistance of herdsman, Robert Mehlman, and Alvey "Nook" Weller. The senior citizen keeps fit by playing a major role in the daily operation revolving around his herd of 140 Angus. The cow-calf operation boasts 60 cows calving this spring. There is even a set of twins in the pasture.

"I always liked Black Angus," said Lovell. "That goes way back. They are the best for marbling in beef and I think the nicest looking."

Standing in the fields as proof to his testimonials are fine examples of the Angus breed. A son of Pine Drive Big Sky and Blackwell, from the Wye herd, are the Springdale Farm herd bulls.

"The calves have the right birth weight and they look promising," remarked Lovell. He markets his animals primarily through private treaty sales. Some of his young stock was sold at the Maryland Angus Futurity to 4-Hers and will be shown in Carroll, Howard, and Frederick Counties. As an active member in the Maryland and

American Angus Associations and the Cattlemen's Association, Lovell participates in the clubs and promotes the Angus breed.

Whether the day's agenda includes making round bales of alfalfa hay, trying to plant oats between the raindrops, or tending to business inside the white frame house, John Lovell rises with the sun. "I don't need an alarm clock. Dr. Harney gets me up at 6:14, no later, seven days a week." The temperamental Siamese cat that he refers to was dubbed "Harney, because that's where I found him. And we gave him a Ph.D. in orneriness, so we call him Dr. Harney."

Mr. Lovell shares his comfortable home with other four-legged friends. Recently widowed, he appreciates the presence of Princess, a loving and sensitive Golden Retriever who is a loyal companion at home and around the farm. And B.C. Samantha rounds out the family of quadrupeds. The black and white cat just showed up one day and has been at Springdale ever since. B.C. stands for "Barn Cat" although she now claims residency in the main house.

As he begins his day, Lovell fixes his breakfast. "I give The Princess a little milk every morning when I have my cereal," he said with a smile. He talks to Robert every day and then heads out to the barn or the pasture or wherever duty calls.

Springdale Farm is unique, not only in its past heritage and pastoral beauty, but also because it harbors a piece of history. Lovell has only to walk to the end of his lane to visit the one-room schoolhouse that he attended as a child. The brick structure, complete with belfry, stands on the crest of a hill as a reminder of a past way of life. "My mother went there and my grandfather, Ellsworth Lovell, taught school there."

"The bell rang five minutes before nine every morning," recalled Lovell. He and his brother, Marker, made their way up the hill to the little school where they studied reading, writing and arithmetic for six years. "There were about four or five kids in each grade," he explained, with about 25 kids altogether.

The day began with the Pledge, led by his teacher, Joseph Langdon. Mr. Langdon walked the two



John Lovell and his faithful companion, Princess, enjoy the warmth of the woodstove on a rainy day.



Springdale School, a brick one-room schoolhouse, was built in 1854.

miles of dirt road from nearby New Windsor to teach his scholars. "He was halfway strict," Lovell said of his former teacher. "But he wasn't mean. I don't recall that he ever used a switch or paddle." Most disciplinary actions consisted of standing in the corner or sitting on the dunce stool and wearing a dunce cap.

At noontime the children went home for lunch and returned when the bell sounded at five minutes before one. Sometimes the kids ate their lunch at school or hurriedly ate their lunches and returned "because we were trying to play a game." Baseball, tag, hide and seek, leap frog, and marbles were popular games, "and we played mumbly peg with our knives," he recalled.

The bricks of the old schoolhouse, which bears the date 1854, show the scratch marks where boys sharpened their knives.

Close inspection of the outside walls reveals initials carved at child height on several of the bricks. The old-handled pump is gone now, but Lovell said "it was there for a long time. They said the well was contaminated, so every day, it was the chore of one of the kids to go to the house across the road or to our house for a bucket of water to fill the cooler inside," he explained.

John and Marker Lovell attended Springdale School until 1927 when the school was put up for sale. Their father purchased the building. "Dad made a chicken house out of it," he explained. After years of duty as an outbuilding on Springdale Farm, John's brother, Marker, took on the monumental task of restoring the building, inside and out, to its former condition.

The charming one-room schoolhouse stands ready for schoolchildren once again. In its restored condition, it now serves as a model for today's students to visit and relive a day that now only exists in the history pages.

When they cross the worn stone threshold at Springdale School, students step back into a different time. Desks with inkwells and slates face the front where the teacher's desk sits on a platform.

"The students used to go up and sit on a bench in front of the teacher's desk where he would cross examine and see what you knew," said John Lovell with a chuckle.

The airy room is filled with authentic period furnishings from little metal lunch pails to the old pot-bellied stove. Mr. Lovell said that occasionally the teacher heated a pot of soup on the stove. That was during those cold, snowy days when the kids would bring their sleds to school and ride the slopes that dipped down to the Lovells' home. Old books and readers line the shelves, and maps and a portrait of George Washington hang on the walls. The only things missing are the privies that stood out back.

Marker Lovell delights in retelling stories of his one-room schoolhouse days to the pupils of today. John and Marker both are examples of small town boys that made good. After graduating from the one-room Springdale School, they attended the larger, more modern New Windsor School. Marker earned a law degree from the University of Maryland, and John Lovell earned a degree in dairy science. And they both maintain fond memories of the little schoolhouse along Springdale Road.



John Lovell surveys a pasture full of heifers where one cow has twins. Lovell has 140 head of purebred Angus cattle. The Springdale School is visible in the background.

## Homestead Notes