

Years Of Successful Poultry Breeding For Roland Romig

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Bradford Co. Correspondent
SAYRE (Bradford County) — Hanging on a living room wall is one of Roland Romig's most prized possessions — an intricate wood inlaid picture of Noah gathering several different breeds of birds into the ark.

The picture is valued not just because of its beauty, but it speaks to Roland about two of his lifelong pursuits: being a servant of God, and of caring for and breeding many different breeds and varieties of poultry.

Roland comes by his love of poultry honestly. His father, Arthur Romig, was a well-known breeder who showed throughout the United States.

"My dad was in the exhibition of poultry from before the time I was born, and he showed at the old famous shows of Boston and Madison Square Garden and some other shows," Romig said.

"He'd always send the poultry away with a price on them, and if somebody bought them they just didn't send them back. They always, in those days, sent them by railway express. Very seldom did they ever come back. He had such quality birds."

However, in the early 1950s, when diseases became more prevalent, Arthur Romig stopped exhibiting the birds and started concentrating on breeding.

Roland was only 18 years old when his father died, but he carried on the poultry tradition by working for the Turner family in nearby Horseheads, N.Y.

The Turners, at Pleasant View Farms, not only bred poultry but also exhibited at many fairs and shows.

"Because I came in (to the job) knowing poultry, they gave me a lot of the responsibilities of the exhibition of poultry," Romig said.

"I knew where all the breeders were in the East, and so, any bird that we did not have, come fair time, I would go make several trips around the countryside to find the birds we needed."

In 1964 Romig began his other career, that of a Baptist minister, by attending seminary.

"For a few years I didn't have

poultry, but most every place I ended up pastoring, after I started pastoring, I've had poultry."

He often got the whole family involved, including his wife, Beverly, who grew up on a farm, and their five children: Arthur, who is now the superintendent of the Chemung County N.Y. Fair poultry show; Audrey, Brenda, David and Joy.

When his ministry brought him back to Elmira 12 years ago, Romig decided to expand his poultry flock. Because he lived in Pennsylvania, he was able to show at the Pennsylvania Farm Show as well as many other state and county fairs.

"My sons were bigger and they had some interest in the showing, and we started traveling to the fairs and had a string similar to what the Turners did in years past," Romig explained.

"About the time I started showing poultry again, I joined the American Poultry Association and had points started to build toward the master exhibitor (honor)."

Points are accumulated through having champion and high-placing poultry at all the shows. Although achieving master exhibitor status wasn't first on his mind, Romig was honored to receive his master exhibitor award in 1991.

"My number is '185' and no one else will ever have that number," Romig said with a satisfied chuckle. "I'm number 185 Master Exhibitor."

Just over one year ago, however, Romig moved to Sayre where he was unable to keep poultry on his property.

"I had a public sale," Romig explained. "I had the largest sale of exhibition poultry except maybe one other in the last 30 to 40 years. I had nearly 3,000 head that I sold."

That was in December 1995. However, in January 1996 Romig did exhibit the poultry of which he retained ownership in partnership with other people.

Now his birds are scattered throughout Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Ohio, and Ontario, Canada. In total, he has about 100 birds.

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Roland Romig shows off some of his prized memories from years in the poultry business. Included in the display is his master exhibitor plaque which he received in 1991, a sawmill blade painted to depict two Buff Brahma bird, one of his many trophies and an inlaid-wood picture of Noah gathering several different breeds of fowl into the ark.

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