

Memories Warm Bollingers' Home

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— On many wintry, snowy days, Paul and Ethel Bollinger can be found wrapped in the warmth of their farmhouse, sorting through memories.

"This is second best," Paul said of their 113-acre farm named Milbach Spring, for the spring that bubbles up in their meadow.

As much loved as the Lebanon County farm referred to as "second best" has become, it can't compare with the splendor of the memories the Bollingers retain of the family's former century farm built circa 1700.

If they had their desires, the Bollingers would still live on the farm torn down in 1980 to make way for Project 70, a wildlife preserve. The Bollingers fought to retain the farm, but government loomed larger and the property was eventually condemned.

"They said the land was no good, but that year, we got 20 rib-

bons for our corn at the fair," Bollinger said as he pointed to a photograph among hundreds of others picturing the story of their lifetime.

Close to Ethel's heart also is the farm on which she grew up in Manheim. Her dad Paul Heagy was a poultry farmer. In the 1930s, the family had a burgeoning operation quite unlike today's high tech poultry houses.

The pullets were housed in hand-built rain shelters scattered across the fields, bordered by mountainous ranges.

"We had over 100 rain shelters and it was my job to open and close them everyday," Ethel said of the method used to protect the birds from ravaging wild life.

"It was considered a big operation then, but small today," she said of the need to hunt, grade, and pack 99 cases of eggs weekly.

Characteristic of many farmers his age, Bollinger has bad knees. He had an appointment for an operation—until the doctor told him he wouldn't be allowed to go



Paul And Ethel Bollinger sort through photographs, which bring a flood of memories.



When the government wanted the Bollingers' Century Farm to turn into a wildlife preserve, it condemned the land by saying it wasn't any good, but the Bollingers garnered 20 ribbons for their corn at the Farm Show that year.



The Bollingers' children display ribbons won at 4-H competitions.

to the barn for three months. "That did it!" exclaimed Bollinger, who would rather put up with the pain and inconvenience of bad knees than be barred from feeding

the steers on the farm. The couple have three sons and a daughter. Son Don recently took over the farming operation.

Growing up, the children were deeply involved in 4-H and FFA activities, evidenced by the prolific amount of pictures and ribbons garnered over the years. Their three sons received FFA Keystone Degrees, and this year, a granddaughter Amy Bollinger, received the Degree.

A picture from the past shows former Pennsylvania Gov. Shaef-fer with son Eugene and his steer at the Farm Show.

The Farm Show and 4-H hold fond memories for the Bollingers. He himself had been a 4-H'er and he was determined his own children would reap the benefits of 4-H involvement. Photographs show the children received numerous ribbons for sheep, steers, and capons. Bollinger and his wife are thrilled to see their grandchildren continue the family tradition by competing at the Farm Show.

While the Pennsylvania Farm Show is massive in size compared to Bollinger's growing up year, the excitement he felt would be hard to match.

"It was real exciting. When I was about 10 years old, the whole school closed down, and we went up to see it," he said.

One photograph shows his dad with a picture of his first car—a Hudson.

Several pictures show Ethel's dad at a Farm Show booth where he touted the advantages of using McKomb incubators.

As is the Bollingers' practice, they visited the Farm Show this year.

"The changes are really something. Sometimes I wonder at the high-price machinery," Bollinger said.

Bollinger continues to enjoy fair competition. This past year he entered four samples of hay and received third and fifth placings.

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This picture taken at the Pennsylvania Farm Show in the 1930s, show Ethel's dad Paul Heagy and two company representatives with the latest poultry equipment from MaKomb.

HOMESTEAD NOTES