

Growing Up On A Brighton Township Family Farm

The Brighton Township Historical Society presents this article as a nostalgic view of childhood on a family farm in Brighton Township. Our backdrop is the rolling hilly landscape of the Township circa early 1940's. A panoramic perspective of the area at the time would have revealed a landscape of farm houses, large barns and fields.

Our focus centers around two young kids, a boy and a girl, growing up on two separate farms. Now long into adulthood, both shared with us a few memories and reflections of family life on a Brighton Township farm.

Both farms are now long gone and only exist on memory lane. But those memories are still very vivid for Patrick Haffey. The Haffey Farm could only be characterized as a "family farm." In the early 1940's the farm was owned by Pat's parents Edward and Hazel. Started in 1889 by his Grandfather, the 99 acre farm was handed down. Pat was one of seven sons and three daughters.

The Haffey Farm was located in the general area of the Friendship Ridge complex. Specifically, a two-story red brick house was located at the present site of the American Red Cross. A long, straight dirt lane from Dutch Ridge Road led to the family farmhouse. Near the house were a large barn of weathered wood and two large well-used chicken coops. By 1940 the house had electricity and water. Water was supplied by five wells. Incredibly, as Pat points out, the wells were hand dug and at least forty feet deep.

The primary function of the Haffey Farm and other local farms in the early 1940's was milk production. Milk was by nature immune to the seasonality of farming. Milk, a cash crop, produced a steady flow of income throughout the year. The Haffey operation also incorporated chicken and egg production. The farm size could support as many as twenty to twenty-five cows and 1,000 chickens. Chickens were raised to maturity and sold or kept as egg-laying hens. Like other working farms in Brighton Township, vegetable gardens, orchards and hog raising were to lesser extent part of the farm mix. Field crops, corn and grains were generally used as animal feed.

In 1940 Pat was 10 years old and recalls each day starting at around 6:00 am The first order of business was cow milking and barn cleaning. He said at that point in time hand milking prevailed. Hand strength was the key to milking a cow fast and efficiently. Pat mentioned, laughingly, you could always tell a real dairy farmer by his hand shake. "You thought he was going to crush your hand." Everyone was busy at that time of the morning and chores were completed about 7:30 am The cows were released in the pasture. Typically and traditionally, a farm breakfast was then served. Then off to school, walking to one of Brighton Township's one room schools. Pat attended the Armstrong School. The one room school was conveniently located adjacent to the farm. It still exists today as a private residence.

Three and a half miles beyond the Haffey Farm was the Jones Dairy Farm which was owned by Jefferson and Hazel Jones. Three daughters, two of which were twins, and an Uncle resided on the farm. The twin daughters were named Velma Jean and Wilma Jane. Velma Jean or as she is called "Jean" shares with us her recollections.

In 1940 she is a ten year old on the farm. The 150 acre farm was started in 1909 by her grandfather and was located at what is now the Michael Baker Jr. Corporation site. At that time the farm was located on both sides of Dutch Ridge Road. In fact, two houses



one part of the farm are still in use today. The barn was located along with the family homestead and other out buildings on the north side of Dutch Ridge Road. The Jones Farm supported twenty to thirty milking cows. Also, the Jones' operation sold vegetables in season.

The morning program was not unlike mornings at the Haffey's or other dairy operations in the Township. After school, Jean indicated, the morning routine was duplicated around 7:30 pm She walked home after school at 4:00 pm with her siblings from the original Barclay one room school, located in the vicinity of the water tower at the intersection of Tuscarawas Road and Dutch Ridge Road. After family supper, the evening routine would begin. Unlike the morning, it also involved the additional effort of herding the cows from the fields back to the milking barn. Jean shared that the kids often rode ponies to accomplish this task. At times cows in the far fields had to cross Dutch Ridge Road on the way back to the barn. While cows were slow, she said, the herd rarely held up traffic. After all, in the early 1940's that part of Dutch Ridge Road was sparsely populated or traveled.

Similarity in the Jones and Haffey Farm operations while obvious do depart in one important aspect. The Jones farm sold milk via home delivery, milk route and milkman. Whereas, the Haffey's sold their milk in bulk to a milk delivery operator in Midland. Pat pointed out that the competition from other farmers engaged in home delivery was intense. Jean's Dad processed and delivered milk door to door in Beaver, Bridgewater, Rochester and Monaca. Also, cleaning and sanitizing milk bottles was a major procedure. However, the Haffey's were not left out of the door-to-door retail business; every Saturday was egg delivery day throughout the area.

This has been a brief glimpse at a farm lifestyle of the early 1940's. But Pat and Jean did not want to end on that note. Pat wanted to make it clear that farm youngsters weren't engaged in endless heavy hard work and drudgery. Jean echoed that sentiment by adding kids never were expected to do anything that they physically were incapable of performing. Everyone pitched in and worked on a family farm. Pat made clear that they had free time though. He and his buddies played mush ball, engaged in horseback riding, hunted and fished. A smile crossed Jean's face recalling sled riding behind the Barclay School with her friends. "Sure we kept busy back then, but that was the way life was." Pat said, "I am proud of the hard work I did."

By now some readers have figured out who Velma Jean Jones is. Other readers have concluded that this article might have been a better human interest tale. After all, two people share similar backgrounds, upbringings and values forged by farm life. They probably should have gotten married; they would have lived happily ever after. As a matter of fact, they did marry. After 63 years, 6 children, 16 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren, Pat and Jean Haffey still live on a part of the original Jones Farm right here in Brighton Township.

Non-Residential Recycling Requirements

Commercial and other non-residential establishments are reminded that participation in the Township's recycling program is mandatory. Township ordinance requires that all businesses must separate high-grade office paper, aluminum food & beverage containers and corrugated paper (cardboard) from the waste stream, and store the materials until collection. Each location is also encouraged to recycle clear, brown and green glass food and beverage containers; steel and bimetal food and beverage containers; newspaper and magazines; and PET (1) and HDPE (2) plastics. An annual report must be submitted to the Township by the establishment or their contracted hauler disclosing the type and weight of materials recycled during the previous year. The Township is required by the PA Department of Environmental Protection to report annually the types and amounts of materials recycled by both residential and commercial sources.