

The History of Squire Valleevue Farm—Then and Now

Harry W. Palmer

This history of Valleevue Farm passed through four general phases. Pioneers opened the land in the 1820s after the War of 1812. Small farms soon followed. By the turn of the century, some wealthy families began to buy land to create their estates. Mr. Andrew Squire bequeathed all of his land to Case Western Reserve University. And later, the descendants of Jephtha Wade II gifted a portion of the Valley Ridge Farm to the University. The Hollister family has since given the University two gifts of five acres each. These gifts have made Case Western Reserve the largest land owner in Hunting Valley. The piece of land now totals about 400 acres.

Valleevue Farm was transferred to Flora Stone Mather College in 1937 following the death of Eleanor Squire. The women raised funds and purchased a station wagon to drive to their new facility. The home of Mr. Squire's prize pigs was remodeled into a dormitory and named the Pink Pig.

Food was raised on the farm to supply the kitchens on campus, and girls came to the farm to help in the gardens. The house by the farm entrance was used to provide experience to students majoring in home economics.

Dr. Franklin J. Bacon, chairman of the biology department, was also the director of Squire Valleevue Farm. He occupied the Manor House until the late 1950s. Dr. James Gray, Vice President of Administration, was named director in 1959. Dr. Norman Alldridge succeeded him in 1960. Edward Clark, Maintenance Superintendent, moved into the Manor House the same year. This same year, medical school started using the farm and the biology department entered into research on rabbits. Water and gas had to be brought into the farm to handle the increased usage.

Mr. George Kummers, the farm manager, passed away in 1965 after many years of dedicated work. He was replaced by Mr. Harry Palmer, who continues to this day. His wife, June, also serves as office secretary and secretary to the Farm Management Committee.

In 1968 a fire destroyed the barn used for sheep and other animals. The building which provided space for much research and perhaps some hayloft escapades was a total loss. A new sheep barn was built a year later but received very little use. In the years that followed, the building housed equipment and was home to a flock of chickens.

Since its earliest use by the University, the farm has been a center for recreation. There have been hay rides, sledding, picnicking and hiking, to name a few. There are two fishing ponds, two baseball backstops, four volleyball courts, and a five-mile cross country running trail. An interpretive trail leads hikers to part of the Wade estate.

Research has been done in the field by botany, genetics, ponds life, ecology, and entomology. Classes are currently held twice each week by the biology department. "Summer in the Country" classes are taught through the Department of Continuing Education. The Cleveland Institute of Art has been holding some classes in the Pink Pig. Geology has a teaching lab for the study of erosion and four wells for studying the levels in the water table. Public schools have used our ponds as study areas for elementary students, and the Museum of Natural History often brings their summer classes to the farm.

Farming is reduced to raising chickens. We usually have about 1,000 birds on hand to provide fertilized eggs for research on campus by the medical school and biology department.

The farm is visited by over 18,000 users at the picnic grounds, Sheep Barn and Pink Pig. In addition to these numbers, the Manor House is used by many groups for social and educational purposes.