

Join us for our next open house the 1st Saturday of the month 10am-2pm



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A publication of the Monroe, Ohio Historical Society

July 2024

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10 E. Elm Street
Monroe, OH 45050
(513) 539-2270

Email: Info@MonroeOhHistoricalSociety.org
www.MonroeOhHistoricalSociety.com

Tours/Open Houses

Our main museum at 10 E. Elm Street and the 1910 Building located next door are open on the 1st Saturday of each month April thru October with a special holiday open house in December. The Cabin is located at Community Park is open during special events. All of our facilities are available to private group tours by contacting us at least a week in advance.

BUTLER COUNTY HOGS PERFECTED IN MONROE

Abstracts from a promotional pamphlet printed 1870

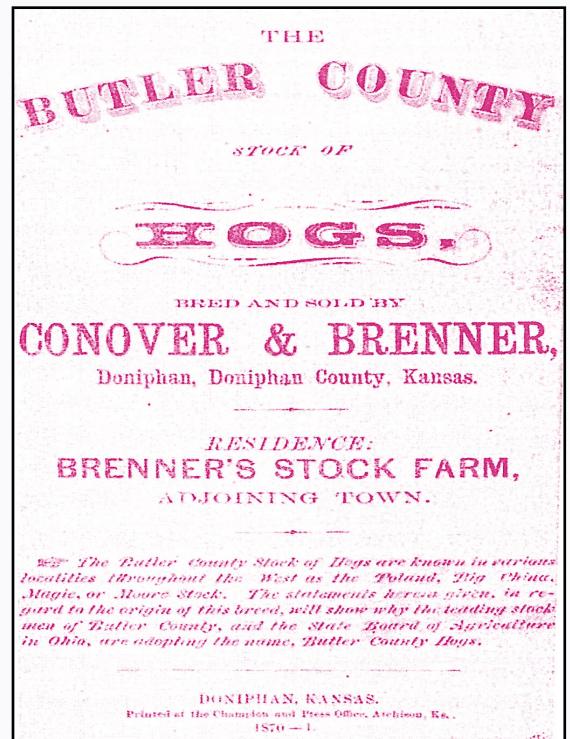
No county in the United States, of equal area, has produced so many hogs of a superior quality as the County of Butler. The Breed which is so highly esteemed by our farmers, is the result of careful and judicious breeding, conducted by the best breeders in this country...they are known extensively as the Poland and Big China, or Magie Stock but more generally known as the Butler County Stock (for in Butler County the breed was perfected).

Mr. T.J. Conover, of Monroe, Butler County, Ohio, has been engaged in breeding these fine hogs for thirty years. He has supplied many of the most careful breeders of the West.

Mr. Conover's stock farm, known as Mount Airy, situated a mile east of Monroe, Butler County, Ohio, is one among the many fine improved farms, with handsome residences, to be found in the great Miami Valley.



World's Largest Pig - Poland China hog in Monroe (Marion Warner photo)



DONIPHAN, KANSAS.
Printed at the Champion and Press Office, Atchison, Ks.
1870 — 1.

Original ad from the Conover Farm, Monroe.



Check out our website at www.MonroeOhHistoricalSociety.org

A LOOK BACK AT 1967'S BIG HEADLINES

reprinted from the Middletown Journal (June 11, 1967)

Long-Forgotten Plow Brings Monroe's Past Back To Life

By PAUL STEIGERWALD

Journal Correspondent

MONROE — When talk about a sesquicentennial for the village of Monroe began, Ralph "Babe" Line of Hamilton-Lebanon Road near Monroe remembered a plow stored in his barn that was manufactured in Monroe during the 1890s. He had acquired it in a farm sale about 1932.

A good friend of his, Dr. M.A. Boyd, a retired dentist, agreed to install a new handle on the plow. Dr. Boyd's father was the Monroe blacksmith who helped build similar plows.

Last week the rejuvenated plow was shown to the public and the unveiling attracted C. F. "Boon" Warner, whose father Charles had the patent for the plows since 1876 and had set up a shop to manufacture them in Monroe.

At that time plowing a field was hand labor for the farmer but the "bar plow" doubled the efficiency of the average man who could now plow 10 instead of five acres per day. It even incorporated a shear pin, a safety feature to keep from damaging the plow when it hit a snag or stump.

The plant employed six men and was located on South Main Street. They could manufacture everything including steam bending the handles except a portion of the steel that went into it. "Boon" took over operation of the plant in 1908 when

it was necessary to raise the price of the Bar Plow from \$20 to \$25 due to rising costs and higher labor expenses.

Warner, 88 and one of the village's oldest residents, has failing eyesight but a keen mind to recall the past. "The plant burned down in 1916 with the loss of all equipment and supplies," he said. "I lost one of the best-equipped shops in southern Ohio and over 10,000 feet of oak lumber and had no insurance."

He rebuilt the structure, but for the advent of progress might have been in the bar plow business longer. In 1925 the riding disc cultivator came on the market and made the bar plow obsolete. He then turned his efforts toward making harrows, wagons and plow shares. "I had a power hammer," said "Boon" that could pound out 50 shares a day at a dollar a piece. The only trouble was that business only lasted about three weeks out of the year."

In summing up the era of the bar plow Warner said "If my father had gone to one of the

large implement manufacturers with his patent and let them make it they could have made 10 times as many and he could have made a fortune. But he wanted to give the work to local men." "We made about 200 each year and several thousand were made in Monroe over the years," he added.

The Monroe Bar Plows were shipped throughout Ohio and neighboring states. An order was shipped to Alabama to be used in the plowing of cotton. George Velte was the Middletown dealer and the Shafor Brothers in Hamilton.

"Boon" concluded: "I came out with a new cutter in 1911 that gave the blade a little pitch to throw the dirt away from the corn. The shank was made with a twist in it and a concave blade. It wasn't patented because I felt it wasn't worth the while spending the money, but it did make quite an improvement in the results."

The village of Monroe will celebrate its Sesquicentennial Sept. 7 to 10th.



See the Bar Plow and experience first hand how difficult it was to use at our next Open House held on the first Saturday of each month from 10am-2pm. Contact us for private tours too.

Give a Lifetime Membership for a birthday or early Christmas gift!

GRECO INSISTS THAT FINE WINES NEED TIME

by Ted Pollard—Cox Media (January 9, 1994)

Monroe man cultivates hobby into grape business

When Anthony Greco says he drinks no wine before its time, he really means it. The red grape crop he harvested in the fall won't be ready for bottling for at least five years, and he often prefers even a year or so additional aging in the cask before putting his product on the market. It takes that long to do it right, and I think this could be as good a wine as any around.

His opinion deserves some respect. He operates the only commercial winery in Butler County, cultivation his own vines, bottling his own brands and serving as his own vintage.

One thing led to another, and he and his wife Antoinette, moved from their Middletown home, where he had made wine in the basement, to a modest farm plot off of Ohio 63, where he planted an acre in vines to facilitate production.

The selection of the strain of grapes to cultivate is critical. And knowing exactly when to pick them (at the peak of sweetness for red and about half that for white grapes) and how to handle them after that can make the difference between an ordinary and an exceptional end product.

Depending on sugar-alcohol balance, he bottles under semi-sweet, semi-dry and dry labels like Americano, Bianco Chiara and Supremo.

He thinks too that his special method of maceration, or steeping, helps achieve a better wine. This is a step between crushing and pressing. The just crushed grapes (separated from the stems in the crusher) are left in a stainless still tank for a period before pressing.



Aerial view of the Greco Winery in 1989. Today, the site is the home of Kroger Loyalty Fulfillment Center. (MHS archives)

It's a step not always taken by other vinyers, but one he feels is important in extracting the essence of the grapes. "I think this draws out the full flavor of the grape". He regularly stirs the now softened fruit and accumulated liquid after adding a French yeast and a bacterial retardant. In a week or so, he ladles the concoction into the presser just as it "starts to taste like wine".

GARVER FARM'S EXPANSION FIVE YEARS IN THE MAKING

by Staff Lauren Pack—Cox Media (September 2023)

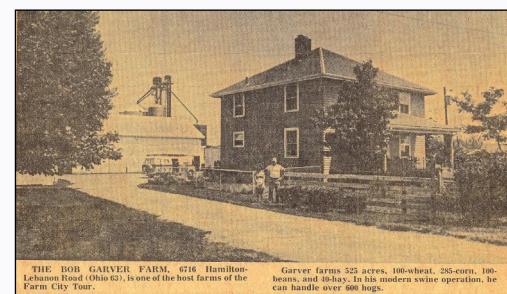
In 1925, Garver Family Farm was established on two-lane Ohio 63 in Lemon Twp. The neighboring city of Monroe and road rapidly expanded in 97 years, and so has the farm.

"When my parents got married they wanted to start a produce stand," said daughter Alayne Garver Taylor. It started with a folding card table set up on Saturdays and Sundays pilled with a couple dozen ears of corn and a few tomatoes.

"If they sold enough to go out on a date for that night, they thought that was a win," Garver Taylor said. Over the last 30-plus years the operation has expanded to a destination for visitors offering local produce and an up close and personal look at the farming business three seasons out of the year.

It continues to be a whole family affair with Alayne, her husband Daylon, and her parents working at Garver Family Farm Market.

"The farm where everyone shops is our home farm. That's about 200 acres."



THE BOB GARVER FARM, 6710 Hamilton-Lebanon Road (Ohio 63), is one of the host farms of the Farm City Tour.

Garver farms 525 acres, 100-wheat, 205-corn, 100-beans, and 100-hay. In his modern swine operation, he can handle over 600 hogs.

But the Garvers actually farm a total of about 2,000 acres across Butler, Warren and Preble counties.

An eighth of an acre is now planted with grapes for winemaking. "This fall will be our first year for harvest. We are really excited for that," she said, noting it takes three years before the plant grows and the grapes are ready for wine making.

Garver Taylor, who returned home after graduating from Wilmington College, said as farmers, it is a balancing act to see the suburbs move into the open land, but knowing everything eventually changes. And she said they know part of the growth of the farm has been possible through that growth and added traffic along Ohio 63 in Monroe.

GENE'S TALES: A MAN'S WORTH

by Gene Williams

In the 1850's the main crop on the local farms were hogs, so, the main feed for the hogs was corn. In order to grow the corn, the plough, pulled by a mule or horse and guided by a man, needed to be ploughed for best results, 10 inches deep, planting in squares, 3 to 4 feet each way, and working with a harrow and cultivator until the corn was knee high.

Then it was plowed once, and laid by with a cultivator. When I was growing up, "knee-high by the 4th of July" meant that you would probably have a good crop that year.



Gene Williams

There was some Indian corn still being grown in these parts, so the hogs would be turned out in the fields to feed off the Indian corn, thus saving the cost of hiring a man to harvest and grind the corn for the hogs. Since the average wage for a farm hand in 1850 was about \$220 a year... that's about \$4.25 each week in wages, 6 days a week, 10 hours a day, which works out to about 7 cents an hour, plus meals and a place to sleep.

Since most farmers then had little money, they attempted to make do with what they had, which meant very little hired help... just another reason for the large families that they had back then. Anyhow, most of the corn grown was fed to the hogs, which were fattened and sent to market. Wheat was the second largest cash crop grown in the Monroe area during this period. It was sold by the bushel, some of it being processed at local grist mills at Amanda, Excello, and Middletown, being shipped to market via the Miami Canal.

Parts of the Miami Canal can still be seen today. In 1850 a bushel of wheat sold for 80 cents a bushel. A good farmer could harvest about 30 bushels per acre in a good year. That works out to \$18 an acre, or \$180 for ten acres of seed that would eventually turn into the finished harvest. Today, it is a treat for my children and grandchildren to come to our house for dinner, with homemade bread, made from the same type of wheat that Great-Grandpa used to grow on his little farm, and Great-Grandma would get up at 4 o'clock in the morning to start baking.

Times sure have changed.

EXHIBIT UPDATE



Our former board meeting room has been transformed into the Military Responders Room. Thank you to our sponsor **Sherwin-Williams of Monroe** for the eye catching paint. If your business would like to sponsor an exhibit, please call us at (513) 539-2270 or email info@monroeohhistoricalsociety.org



Later this year, we hope to have the new Media Room open. This exhibit will be located in the 1910 Building in a former storage room and served as the office for the Monroe Historical Society when they first obtained the building in 1990.

The Media Room will house a variety of musical instruments from Monroe residents and Lemon-Monroe High School, vintage radios and televisions and a variety of telephones.

After our new spaces are open, plans are to remodel our lower level and increase the size of our Monroe Farming exhibit, the Monroe National Bank exhibit and Monroe churches.

Come out to an Open House—1st Saturday of each month (April-Oct)

Thank you to our 2024 partners and business members

Our Partners

- * City of Monroe
- * Butler County History Collaborative
- * Monroe Community Involvement
- * MidPointe Library
- * Monroe Lending Library
- * Monroe Lions Club
- * Optimist International
- * Middletown Community Fund
- * Journal News
- * Monroe Public Schools
- * Cincinnati Enquirer
- * Your Business Name Here

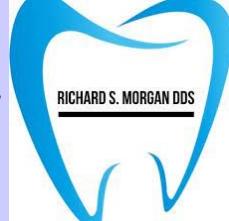
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Kroger Community REWARDS

An easy way to help! Enroll in Kroger's Community Rewards Program and designate the **Monroe Historical Society** as your charity of choice. A percentage of what you spend will be donated to the MHS.



Your financial support creates new & educational exhibits

MONROE'S OFFICIAL HONEYBEE KEEPER ALWAYS BEE-COMING IN BEARD

by Reed Musgrove, MHS Curator

This edition of *The Legend* and our next meeting on July 25 deals with the history of local farming in our area but there is one farmer you may have forgotten. A beekeeper who raised honeybees that pollinated crops in producing honey was my father, John R. Musgrove. After settling in Monroe in 1940, he began gathering swarms of bees and putting them into hives in our side yard at 629 Lebanon Street.

Within a few years nearly 50 hives had been accumulated. The average hive contained about 60 to 70,000 bees, so that totaled several million bees. We used to say that our five acres with well over a million "head" on it was the "biggest little farm in Butler County."

Each August our one car garage was turned into the apiary honey production room where honey was extracted from the honeycomb that the bees had filled. The honey was strained through cheesecloth to filter out pieces of wax and other impurities then was pasteurized by heating it to a certain temperature on a two-burner coal- oil stove. Finally, small jars up to gallon jugs were sterilized and filled with clover honey for sale on a stand in the front yard.

Over 2 tons (4000 lbs.) of honey was sold each year during World War II in the 1940s. The honey sold for \$0.30 a pound and was in great demand since sugar was rationed during World War II. People came from all over southwestern Ohio using their precious gasolene (also rationed) to purchase another sweetener, honey. It was needed for cooking and canning food which was especially important back then. Operations of this kind were often called "cash crops" as they generated more money than the family's normal source of income. In later years, my father became active in Butler and Warren County beekeeper's monthly meetings and became known statewide. He started a business, Southwestern Ohio Hive Parts, making beehive parts which sold worldwide, and he also received patents for innovations in beekeeping.



John Musgrove dawns a "bee" beard with a reigning American Honey Princess in this undated photo. (Musgrove family archives)



Sinclair Gas station at Elm and Main Streets in August 1967. Today, the site is home to Monroe Auto Repair. (Margaret Musgrove)



Some Lemon-Monroe students are assisting Mr. Perez' 6th grade Spanish class performing Piñata dancing at this 1964 class. (LMHS Archives)



Enter for a chance to win this Lemon-Monroe High School blanket and support the Monroe Historical Society. One winner will be announced on September 7, 2024 (you do not need to be present to win).

The blanket measures about 67 inches long by 47 inches wide.

\$5 a ticket or 5 for \$20

Name _____

Email _____

Phone Number _____



2025 MEMBERSHIP FORM

Want to continue receiving the MONROE LEGEND? Be sure and send in your Annual Dues! Already a member? WE THANK YOU! Consider a gift membership for a family member or neighbor!

Annual Membership:	\$20 Single	\$25 Family	\$150 Lifetime
Business Membership:	\$50	\$100	Other
	Renew	New	Gift

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

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Thank you for supporting the Monroe Historical Society!



MONROE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

10 E. Elm Street
Monroe, OH 45050

Contact Us

Phone: (513) 539-2270

E-mail: info@monroeohhistoricalsociety.org

Web Page: monroeohhistoricalsociety.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/MonroeOhioHistoricalSociety

MHS EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Thursday July 4, 2024 –Fourth of July parade at noon and the Log Cabin will be open at 5:00 pm.

Saturday July 6, 2024—Our museums on Elm Street will be open to the general public from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.

Thursday July 25, 2024--Alayna Garver Taylor will be speaking on the history of family farming in our community at the Garver Family Farm Market (PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE) beginning at 7:00 p.m. but come early and grab yourself something yummy to eat.

Saturday August 3, 2024—Our museums on Elm Street will be open to the general public from 10:00 am to 2:00

Saturday September 7, 2024—Our museums on Elm Street will be open to the general public from 10:00 am to 2:00 p.m.



Check out our website at www.MonroeOhHistoricalSociety.org