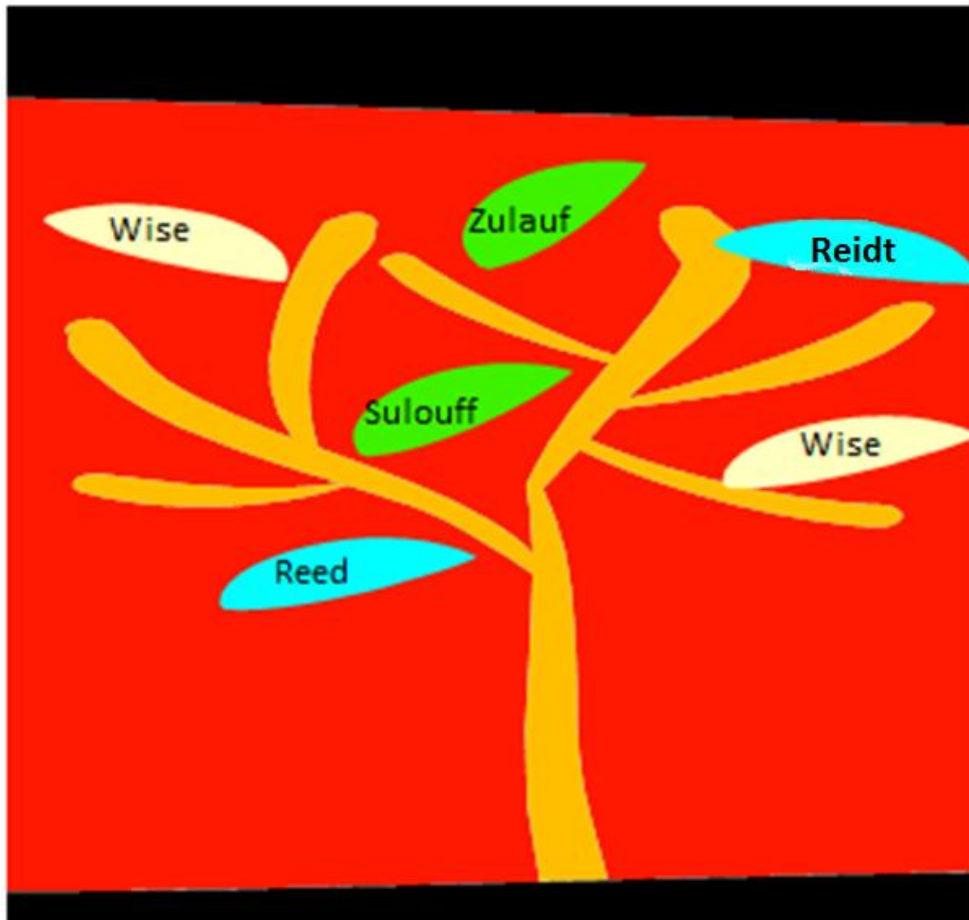


Some History (and memories) of
Circle W Farm
in Geauga County, Ohio

A Story from the Reed - Wise Family Tree



Researched and remembered by George Reed
Altoona, PA, USA

Rev. 1, 2021

Compiled by George Reed

Acknowledgments

A thank you goes out to all those family members who have supported research into our family lineage and who agreed to allow their names to be shown in this document. It was never the case where information contained herein was intended to be used to cause harm, embarrassment or exposure to possible rivals or criminals. The soul purpose of this booklet was to provide a vehicle to enlighten family members on their ancestral past and the history in which their family members were a part of. I regret any unintentional harm resulting from the release of this booklet.

Significant time and effort has been expended in an attempt to make the information contained in this booklet as accurate as possible to the extent of the available information to me. It does not in all cases meet the standards for acceptance by certified genealogists.^a However, it is as accurate as possible as of this writing and hopefully its creation can help form the basis for future genealogical research and verification by interested family members when and if the opportunity presents itself.

George J. Reed

^a Genealogy Standards, Second Edition, published by the Board for Certification of Genealogists, Washington, D.C., copyright 2019

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¹ Special thanks to Sylvia Wiggins, Township Historian, of Chester Township, Geauga County, Ohio.



Circle W Farm

Some history (and memories) of Circle W Farm in Geauga County, Ohio By George J. Reed © June 2021

Circle W Farm, located between Gates Mills and Chesterland, Ohio, was established in the early 1900s at great expense. There was the mansion where the owners lived, an expansive livery stable, numerous barns and other buildings, fields, forest areas, hills and ponds that made up the expansive farm complex. The main barn itself cost over \$1.25 million dollars to build in 1922. In general, Circle W Farm has a marvelous history that I can only minimally describe.

A notable man by the name of Walter Holzworth worked at Circle W Farm during the 1920s and 30s. He is notable not only for the numerous things he accomplished over his life, such as building his own home and writing several history books, but also because he was the Grandfather of a girl who in 1973 became my wife. Before we were married, I told Walter a little bit about myself and that I had grown up on Circle W Farm in the 1950s and 60s. This was such a surprise to Walter that he was at a loss for words for a moment, which was a rare occasion, since Walter was such a prolific story teller. Circle W Farm became a common experience between us that allowed for a quick friendship to develop. Here are some of the stories we shared, as well as a little more to help describe and provide some historical data regarding this once truly amazing place.

Walter Holzworth sitting next to Robert Essig, a Son-in-law, at a family get-together in 1969.



Four years later I told him I was marrying his granddaughter, Terrie.

Terrie's Sister Eudora

Walter's Granddaughter, Terrie Wise



Terre (Wise) Reed and George Reed in 2014

Although the farm played a significant role in the Northeastern region of Ohio during the first half of the 1900s, not much information remains about it. Searching on the internet for Circle W Farm brings up a few farms in other parts of the country, but not the one that played such a role in the history of Geauga County, Ohio. So for that reason alone, it is important to capture some of the memories of this remarkable farm that had been located on the outskirts of Cleveland, Ohio.

Because I didn't live at Circle W Farm during its heyday, I've attached some testimonies from individuals that lived and participated in the farm's activities in its early years or researched it from a historian's perspective. Some of the things they describe are absolutely amazing, such as



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the steam driven automobile developed by the White brothers called the Whistling Billy (see Attachment A) and the time that three Goodyear blimps were brought to the farm and provided entertainment rides for the children (refer to Attachment B), and that the inheritance tax Chester Township received upon Walter White's death ended up lowering the tax Chester residents had to pay each year (see Attachment C).

First, the "W" in Circle W Farm stood primarily for the White family, particularly Walter C. White, but also for the W in the name of its first Farm Manager, and the W's in the name of the farm's architects (refer to Attachment C). As reported in newspaper clippings, Walter and his Brothers, Windsor and Rollin, founded profitable companies in Cleveland, Ohio, including the White Motor Company and the Park Drop Forge Company. Walter was born in Cleveland in 1876, the son of Thomas White, the President of the White Sewing Machine Company. His family was also known to have invested in a large number of shares in a new company that started in 1892 that was making a new type of drink for the American public; it was called the Coca Cola Company. But farming at that time was still a money-making venture and also because of his love of horses, Walter purchased over 1,000 acres in Geauga County to create Circle W Farm in which his family could use to continue their stylish lifestyle (refer to Attachment A).



Walter C. White

Now Hawken School: Circle W Farm Plays Big Role In Chester's Heritage

By WILLIAM SHIRA
Times Leader Writer
CHESTERLAND — The
Circle W Farm on Sherman
Road, has been part of the

Chesterland heritage since it
was started by Walter C.
White before World War I.
The 1,000 acre farm cov-
ers almost one square mile.

It extends from County line
Road, east to Caves Road,
and from Wilson Mills
Road, south to Mayfield
Road.

Begun as a working hobby
by Walter C. White, the farm
and the White family have
been very much a part of the
Chesterland scene for more
than 50 years.

Before his death in a car
accident in 1929 Walter
White along with his broth-
ers Windsor, and Rollin
founded both the White Mo-
tor Company and the Park
Drop Forge Company both
located in Cleveland.

Born in Cleveland on Sept.
8, 1876, the son of Thomas
H. White president of the
White Sewing Machine Com-
pany, Walter went on to live
up to his father's name and
in the process built a dynas-
ty of tradition for Chester-
land.

Two generations of the
White family have lived on
See CIRCLE W, Page 12



THIS LARGE stable and dairy complex on the Circle W. Farm reflects an era gone by. The building complex was the center of farm activity when the Circle W operated at full capacity many years ago. The building is now used by Hawken School.

Times Leader established carrier
routes now open in Chardon and
Chesterland. Apply Cir. Office
Gauga Times Leader, 111 Water
St. Adv.

Circle W Farm



On one portion of the farm, Walter had a mansion built for him and his family. It was reported to have had 23 bedrooms each with their own bathroom. Next to it was built an enclosed arboretum and a beautiful flower garden. The front yard was huge and manicured like a golf course. This is one of the few buildings that still stands today, now a part of Hawken School.



A picture of the White mansion in the wintertime

Across from the White mansion was built a huge horse barn and livery stable, where he would allow wealthy individuals from Gates Mills, Ohio (the community right across County Line Road in Cuyahoga County) to board their expensive horses. There were many trails on the farm as well as through Gates Mills where these individuals could enjoy a good horseback ride (and maybe even a fox hunt as part of the Chagrin Valley Hunt Club) or even to participate in a polo tournament.

The Akron Beacon Journal (Akron, Ohio) • 25 Aug 1928

Firestone Brothers In Polo Tilt Today

CLEVELAND, Aug. 25. (INS)—The 12-goal handicap polo match between the Firestone and Fort Bliss, Texas, teams, which was postponed yesterday because of rain, is to be played this afternoon, weather permitting, at Circle W farm, Gates Mills.

Today's scheduled 12-goal match, between the Sweetbrier and Kirtland clubs, is to be played at the Kirtland Country club. The 12-goal tournament is being held in connection with the National Intercircuit championship matches. Tomorrow, at the Circle W farm, Point Judith, R. I., and Fort Riley, Kan., meet in the finals of the Intercircuit tournament for the national championship.

The Cincinnati Enquirer (Cincinnati, Ohio) • 29 Aug 1928

FT. RILEY WINS.

Cleveland, Ohio, August 28 (A. P.).—Fort Riley, Kansas, won a thrilling victory over the Sweet Briars, J. A. Wigmore's Ohio polo team, in the national twelve goal polo tournament at Circle W Farm today. A fast forehand shot from a milling scrimmage, made by Captain V. H. Cannon of the Army team, broke a 10-10 tie and clinched the game for Fort Riley. This was the first overtime period in the national meet which has been under way here for two weeks.



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When I, George Reed, was first brought to Circle W Farm, my family lived in a small apartment located in the upper floor of the livery stable across from the mansion. That's where my mother, Mary Reed, met and later married in 1955, Everett Holt, a farm hand and later the Farm Manager of Circle W Farm at the time.

Me and my sister standing in front of the Circle W Farm livery stables next to the White mansion in 1954.



George Tanneyhill, my grandmother's common-law husband, was a horse trainer so he was hired to help take care of the horses. He became my "Gramps" since my grandmother had long since left her first husband, Ralph Reed, back in 1947.

There are few memories of Ralph. Even my brother Scotty Reed who was born in 1941 doesn't remember him very well. I was born in 1951, and to my knowledge I never met him; thus all my memories are of the good and kind man who took Ralph's place in my life, George Tanneyhill.



From left to right - Scotty Reed, George Reed (me) sitting on "Gramps" George Tanneyhill's lap, Sally Reed sitting on "Mom" Mary Reed's lap, and "Grandma" Ruth (Horn) Reed in the apartment above the Circle W Farm livery stable ~ 1955.

Circle W Farm

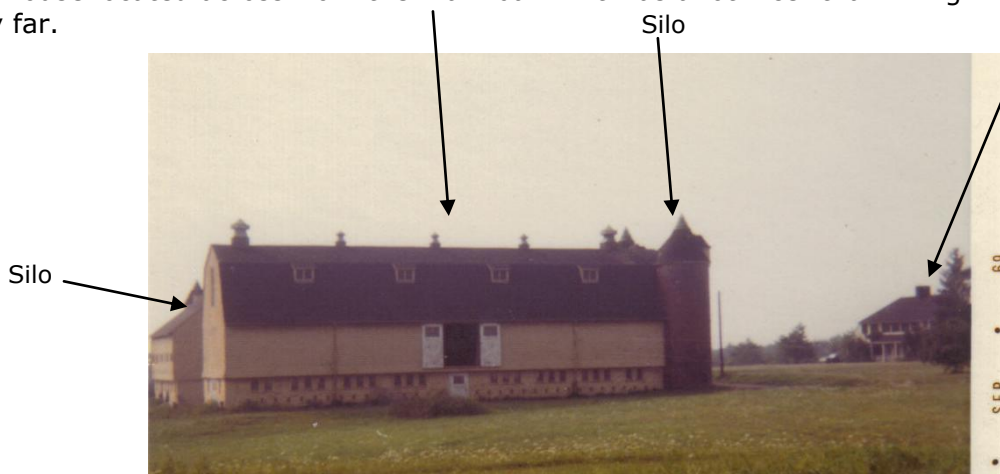


There were four houses (or some referred to them as cottages) along the road that ran from the mansion and livery stable over to the main barn. In these homes were people that worked at various tasks on the farm, including as full-time farm hands to work with Everett in keeping the day-to-day farm activities going, as well as people who took care of the mansion's flower garden, the stable's horses, and the dairy barn's cows and other farm animals, etc.

In the one house lived Bob Spice and his wife Bonnie. They were super nice people and I always remember Bob for his constant smile and friendly nature. He helped me out of many a jam as a young man. Once I was clearing the woods around a wealthy man's estate (i.e., a Mr. Malcolm Vilas, who lived across County Line Road from the entrance to the White mansion). I was using a powerful Gravely bush mower and hit something hard splitting the mower casing open. I was in a panic thinking I would be in big trouble, but Bob laughed about it and took the machine back to Circle W where he promptly welded it back together almost like new. In another of my crisis moments, I was plowing a field when the tractor went over a large rock that then became stuck between the blades of the plow. I was chewed out by Everett for not paying more attention, but Bob just smiled and proceeded to unbolt the plow blades and dislodge the large boulder without saying a word. I'll never forget him.

In another one of the houses was a family from Scotland, a Mr. and Mrs. Middleton. The husband took care of the gardens by the mansion. But what I remember is his wife, and how every once in awhile she would make a batch of buttery shortbread cookies that were out of this world. I have never tasted shortbread cookies ever since that have even come close to tasting how good hers were.

Once my mom, Mary Reed, married Everett Holt (the Farm Manager), me, my mom, my brother Scotty Reed, and sister Sally Reed (later to be called Sally Holt) moved into the right-hand side of a duplex house located across from the main barn. It was a lot nicer than living in the livery stable by far.



On the other side of our duplex house lived another farm hand, Ralph Burr, and his wife. He was a big man with large hands and fingers the size of sausages. We would play Pinochle with them sometimes in the evenings and I was always amazed at how small the cards looked in his hands.

Ralph played a role in one of my most visual memories from the farm involving chickens – roosters to be more specific. On the farm, further down the road past the farm houses and the main barn was a large chicken hatchery and egg production building. It was a U-shaped structure



Circle W Farm

such that the front had two office type buildings with an archway between the two (that allowed you to drive between them) and then attached to the two office buildings were the chicken buildings that ran for another 80 to 100 feet on each side. Inside the office buildings were testing equipment where each of the eggs collected were held up to a light in a metal devise that allowed you to check if the egg was safe to send to market, i.e., it hadn't started to form a baby chick yet. Inside the long chicken buildings were hundreds of chickens that were laying the eggs that were to be sold at market. Guarding these chickens, whether from weasels, raccoons or any other varmint as is usual on farms, were roosters. As a kid, when I first walked among them I use to think they were awfully snooty and cocky I guess you would say for something so small. But that thought in me changed one day when a rooster did not like what Ralph was doing inside the chicken building and he attacked him. Even though Ralph had on heavy farm overalls, this rooster used the spur on his feet to slice right through Ralph's overalls and down along his leg for several inches. Ralph was bleeding profusely and was in a lot of pain from the attack. Ever since then, I have always steered clear of roosters and even admire them for how well they do their job that they take on so seriously.

The Evening Review (East Liverpool, Ohio) • 12 Oct 1931



Across from the chicken facility was a huge alfalfa field (at one time a big chunk of it was the polo field) where hay was baled and collected to help feed the animals on the farm. Further past the chicken facility, on both sides of the road were huge fields where crops were grown, such as corn, wheat and soy beans. The type of crop of course was rotated every year so that the soil was not depleted of certain nutrients specific to each type of plant (a farming technique that was part of Everett's job as Farm Manager). These fields bumped up against Sherman Road, a dirt road that was open to the public even though it ran straight through the middle of Circle W Farm. It connected County Line Road with Caves Road and was used as a short cut for many of the locals.

Across Sherman Road clear over to Wilson Mills Road were several cleared areas with more open fields for growing crops. Also along Sherman Road, Wilson Mills Road, and Caves Road were the typical Red Barns that you would see at most farms across the country. These were used to store equipment closer to the fields in which they were being used to plow, till, plant and harvest the various crops grown on the farm. This always impressed me as to the size of this farm. Most

Circle W Farm



farms have a single red barn to facility the farm's activities. Circle W Farm not only had the huge main barn, but it also had three of the normal sized Red Barns in order to meet its needs.



One of the small Red Barns that were on Circle W Farm

On the East end of Sherman Road about a quarter mile from Caves Road was a natural spring and a small pond. A building had been erected over the spring along with equipment to capture this clear, cold and delicious water. From the spring building, water was piped down (which was several miles) for use at the houses, the main barn, the livery stable, and the White mansion on the farm. About 30 feet from our house was even an outside faucet for collecting this special water, which many did. From a practice that must have started in the early days of the farm, people from the local area and even the city of Cleveland would come with bottles and jugs to collect this special water to take home. Surprisingly the water pressure was good, even though there were no pumps involved. The water that was supplied from the spring building was gravity fed as it was originally constructed in the 1910 era; an engineering feat that still astonishes me. Someone had their act together when they were designing and building Circle W Farm.

Up by the pond near the end of Sherman Road and to the right along Caves Road was the home where Ann White, one of the daughters of Walter White, lived. I knew her as Mrs. Stockton, her married name. My mom use to clean her house and do their laundry, on top of keeping our own house clean and cooking, etc., and generally performing all the other tasks expected of a housewife. I never appreciated how hard my mom worked for most of the years of her life until I got older. What an incredible person she was.

I was playing with the kids at the home where the Stockton's lived one time and was amazed when they showed me some unbelievably large caves just below the house. I didn't know until

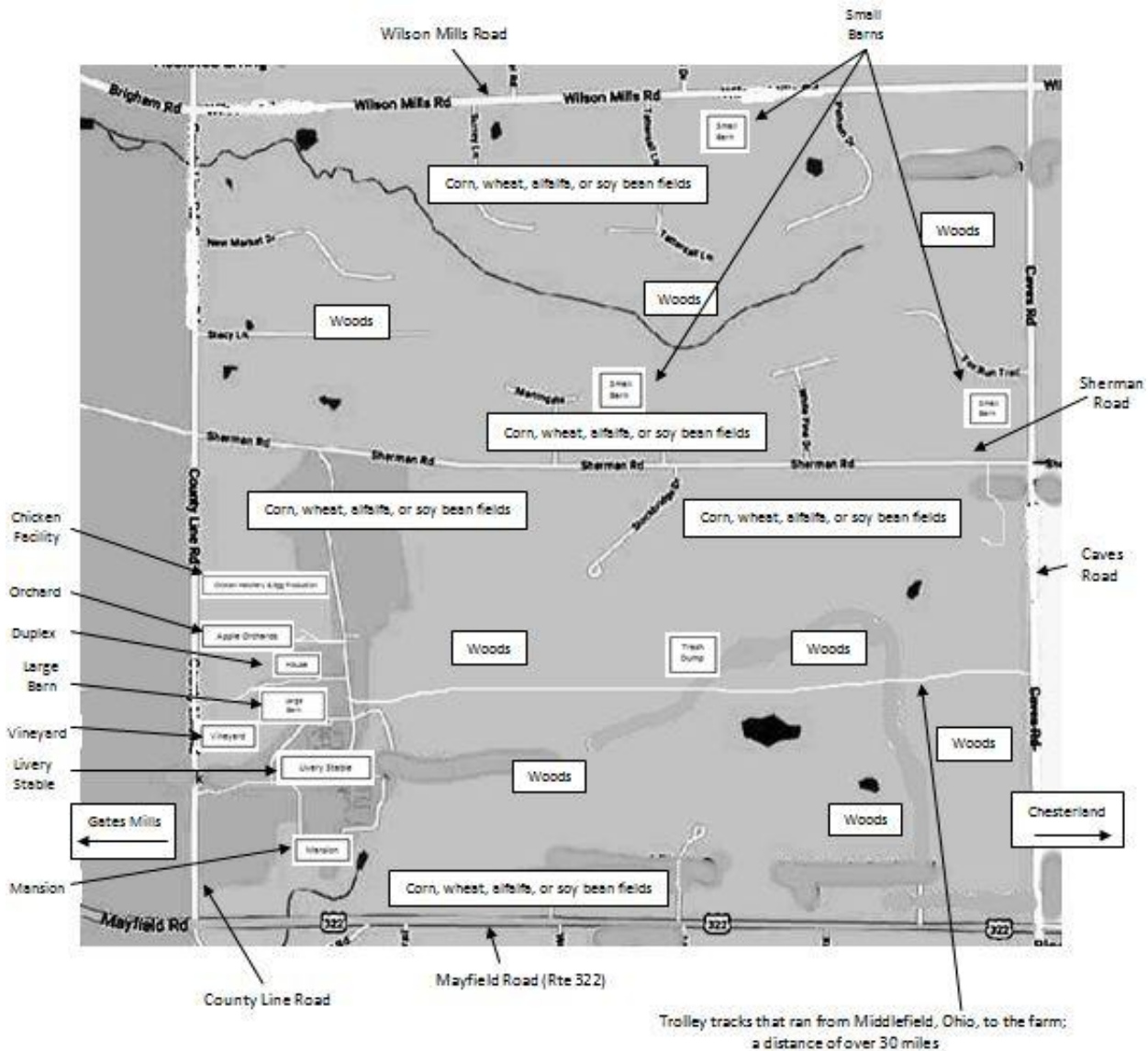
Circle W Farm



recently that in 1900 there was a resort established at this location where people from Cleveland would come out to visit and explore the caves. They would ride the interurban rail line since it had a stop at Scotland Station just south of the resort near where Caves Road intersects with Mayfield Road (where the Chesterland Historic Village is now located). It was reported to be a popular attraction with a dancing pavilion, a dining hall, several cottages, a boating pond, and multiple springs. The resort ceased operation in 1927 after the branch of the interurban trolley car line that ran between Cleveland and Chardon (and passed through Circle W Farm) was shut down.



I created the following diagram to show approximately where the things are that I describe in this write-up. The farm was situated between Mayfield Road in the south up to Wilson Mills Road, and from County Line Road in the west over to Caves Road.



I was never struck by how magnificent Circle W Farm was when I was a kid, but thinking back, I



Circle W Farm

wish that I had given it the respect it deserved. I could go out into the orchards and pick about any kind of apple on the market. Same thing in the vineyard, there were light green, dark blue and purplish colored grapes there for the taking. Everett would even collect enough each year to make some home-made wine, which I couldn't enjoy, but it sure made him happy. My Mom would even make different flavors of home-made grape jelly. Now that was something I could enjoy. They were delicious. Every year there would be a big effort to can some of the jelly and vegetables we grew on the farm to store for our meals during the winter. Canning was a pretty tricky process and to this day I haven't repeated it myself. With all the available options in grocery stores nowadays, it's not necessary to grow your own garden and can your own food stocks. Although there's something to be said for the loss in family interactions caused by this change in lifestyle. Somehow walking up and down the grocery store isles doesn't seem to compare to the time spent with family members goofing around and laughing with each other in the garden and the kitchen.

The main barn (pictured at the top of the page) was probably the most spectacular structure in Northeastern Ohio for many years. It was built around 1922 (or 1918 as another report states) at a cost of over \$1,250,000 dollars. In 2019 dollars, when adjusted for inflation, it would have been \$18,684,000.00!! You would be hard pressed to find someone today that would spend over 18 million dollars to build a barn.

This barn was incredible. As one of the newspaper clippings points out, it was listed on the National Historic Register in 1976 because of its incredible size and design. I wish I could describe as well as my memories are displayed in my mind, but I know I can't, so I'll try to provide some of the highlights.

The main barn I would say was made up of several large buildings all connected under one roof, similar in concept to having a bunch of stores under one roof in a shopping mall. It was a masterful design that served the many activities at the farm well. To try to describe it, each part will be broken down to make it easier to understand as follows:

- There had to have been a tremendous amount of concrete used to construct it, since all of the buildings had thick concrete floors and the large concrete ramp that went up into the main part of the barn was massive. There was a short concrete ramp that took a vehicle up into a huge archway between two large machine shops, similar in design to the archway at the chicken facility, but in no way comparable in size. This archway was huge to allow the largest of farm machinery including the enormous combine to go through. The concrete then continued on to the massive concrete ramp that gradually sloped upward into the main part of the barn. The picture at the top of the page just doesn't do it justice.



This is a picture the type of combine used at Circle W Farm in the 1960s. Notice, unlike the combines of today, there was no cab for the operator to sit in, so Everett was forced to wear a handkerchief over his nose and mouth to block the fine dust that was blowing back from the front blades as the crop was being harvested. At night when he came home, he was covered in dust and dirt. His eyes would have white around them when he took his sun glasses off because the rest of his face was so full of grime.



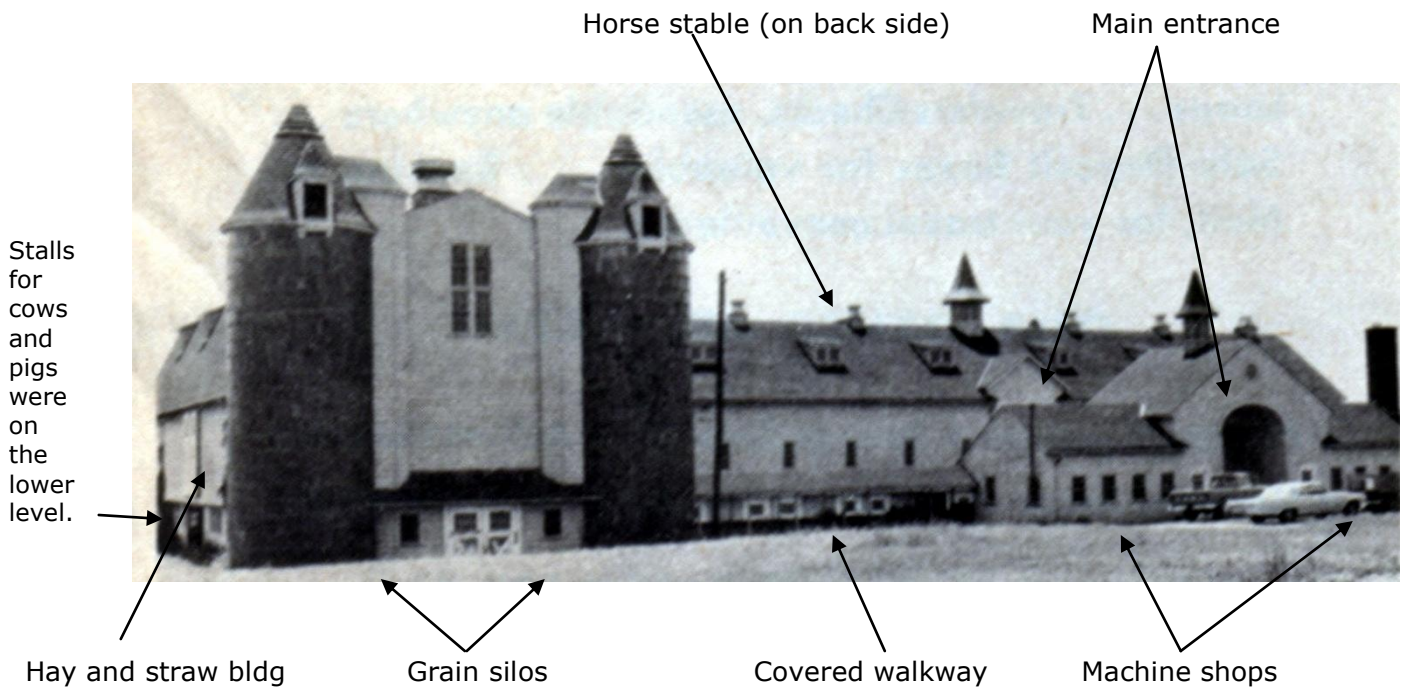
Circle W Farm

- The machine shops just mentioned had every type of tool you could imagine. They also had a metal lathe, arc welding equipment, torch cutting equipment and metal stock as well as an array of bolts and washers. Essentially everything (except special parts or electronic components) that was needed to repair and maintain all of the trucks, tractors, the combine, and even a bulldozer that made up the plethora of machines used at Circle W Farm. Then, as if that wasn't enough, underneath the machine shops were root cellars with tables and numerous shelves and storage racks. Here some of the crops grown on the farm could be stored for later use. The temperature in these cellars remained constant no matter what was happening outside. It could be a scorcher of a summer day or a freezing cold winter day, but the temperature in the root cellars was just right. I remember going out in the middle of winter and picking out some potatoes or some green beans for my Mom to cook for supper that night; or bringing back a bag of apples so that she could bake some apple pies! Everything tasted great as if it were just freshly picked. Running along the back of the machine shops was a concrete walkway that ran from the south end, through the archway, past the end of the west machine shop and then clear over to the hay storage building. And these concrete walkways weren't out in the open, oh no, they were conveniently covered with a wooden roof with shingles that ran the entire length of the walkway (which indicates part of the extravagance and attention to detail the designers put into this structure).
- Once up in the main portion of the barn it was amazing how large it was inside. It had numerous things that normal barns did not have and it still was large enough to swallow up the horses, tractors, dump trucks, combine, bulldozer and anything else that ventured to enter. To the right when you first walked in was a wood shop. Similar to the machine shops at the entrance to the complex, this wood shop was well equipped with a huge table saw (driven by a large belt and an electric motor about the size of a car engine), a wood lathe, and all the various types of hammers and nails you would need to build or repair any type of table, chair, crate or what-have-you. In his spare time (which was very little) Everett would create some beautiful things, like a bookcase and a boomerang shaped coffee table that we used in the house, and some wooden chairs for when we sat outside in the summertime. From the main floor of the structure up to the roof was about 40 feet, so there was plenty of room for the large grain bins that were constructed along the roof but high enough above the floor that the farm machinery could pass under them. There were bins on both sides of the roof and between them was what we called a "cat walk" that was essentially about a three board wide walkway suspended the length of the structure between the grain bins on either side. It was about 30 feet up and it gave you the willies when walking on it, but it was necessary to access the grain bins to check on their status. On the opposite end of the building from the work shop was constructed an office area that was probably used in the early days to keep track of the dairy herd and other financial avenues that a farm this large was involved with; however, it was no longer used in the 1960s with electronic systems replacing the old paper tracking methods. Also the farm had scaled back significantly and no longer was in the dairy or meat supply business since the profits from such endeavors was no longer what it use to be in the 1920s to 1940s. From this office area there were a nice set of stairs that circled around to the lower level where the animal pens were located. These had been for the dairy cows, but in the 1950s and 1960s they were used for pigs and goats. From this level the animals could go out into a small courtyard type area that was a natural open area between the various barn structures or they could go to the east or south into a large open field where they had access to fresh clover and grass in abundance.
- From the office area, you could walk up a wooden ramp (again through a huge opening) into the 60 foot high hay and straw storage building. This massive building is essentially the one

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you see with the two wide-open barn doors in the photograph on page 8. The lower level was of course connected to the lower level of the main barn structure and contained additional space for animal pens that had a number of windows along the length of the structure (as can be seen in the photo). Back on the upper floor, one end of the building would be stacked with bales of hay, which was used to feed the animals; and the other end would be stacked with bales of straw, which was used to bed the animals. The hay of course was cut and baled from the alfalfa fields on the farm, and the straw was cut and baled from the wheat stalks left-over after the wheat grain had been harvested. Along the center on the inside of the roof was a metal rail that held a wheeled device holding a two inch thick rope that ran clear down to a few feet above the floor. This was used to help move bales around the building when needed. However, to a kid this was a Tarzan swing from one stack of bales to another. As a playground this part of the barn was the best. Bales could be arranged to make tunnels to crawl through and forts to hide in or defend yourself. In grade school, usually each class I was in would take a field trip to visit the farm and I would always show the guys this part, until one year when the Teachers weren't around we engaged in some medieval warfare and I ended up getting a corn cob thrown into my left eye. I had a black eye it seemed like forever. On the north end of this building were two large silos that could be used to store grain (as can be seen in the photo), but again by the 1960s they largely went unused. Except by my brother Scotty and I, who use to climb to the top and catch pigeons; another activity our mom frowned upon.



(Note: Don't confuse the horse stable with the livery stables located by the mansion. They were two separate buildings for different purposes. The livery stables kept the pricier polo horses, while the horse barn kept those horses used for farm work and pulling sleds in the winter.)

- Back to the entrance of the main building as you come in by the wood shop, if you headed straight through you would walk into another open area that connected you to another large building that I will call the horse stable building. In here were a number of stalls where the

Circle W Farm



working horses were kept. These were not the high priced versions like those kept in the livery stable over by the White mansion, but they were still nice animals in my opinion. I was often tasked with feeding, watering and cleaning their stalls, but I enjoyed it since I enjoyed being around them. It reminded me of the times I went with my "Gramps" George Tanneyhill (who was a life-long horse trainer) to the horse tracks around the country. Back in those days horse tracks were still pretty popular. Today they only get attention when it involves the triple crown races publicized on TV. Anyhow, along with the horses were stored buggies and sleighs. These were high quality devices that when hooked up to one of the horses was a special treat to engage in. Buggy rides in the summer and sleigh rides in the winter could be enjoyed whenever the Whites (or members of their family) wanted to partake in them. I even enjoyed participating in some myself.



What a sleigh ride at Circle W Farm in the winter looked like

In the wintertime, because of the lake effect snow that the farm received every winter from Lake Erie, the sledding opportunities were endless because it seemed to be always snowing; and riding in a horse drawn sleigh is an experience you won't forget. It reminded me of the scenic beer commercials that use to be on TV of a horse drawn sleigh with a happy family merrily jaunting through the snowy countryside. It truly is a special memory. Like the hay and straw building, the lower level of the horse building contained more animal pens that connected to the ones in the main building. Unlike the hay and straw building, however, there was a level above the horse stalls. This level had another special treat it seems for kids, since it contained a roller skating rink. Whether this was something Walter White wanted as a place where his kids and invited family members could spend some enjoyable time together is not known, but I do know that in the 1950s and 1960s it was rarely used except by me, my sister and some of our friends.

- There were at least three more grain silos as part of the complex. They weren't as large as the two shown attached to the hay and straw building in the picture on page 14, but they were still pretty big. I remember two being attached to the west side of the horse building (the top of one can just be seen poking up in the photo on page 14) and at least one more on the west side of the main building.



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That pretty much describes the main barn and it is easy to see why it cost as much as it did.

There were so many other smaller buildings and farm stuff that I'm sure that I don't remember all of them. For example, to the West of the main barn was a large lengthy building that was used to house equipment for maintaining the vineyard and orchard, i.e., chemical sprayers and such. Also along there was a large corn crib that was filled with dry hard corn still on the cobs which was used to feed the pigs. In the same area was a refueling station where the farm trucks and tractors could pull up and fill up with fuel when needed.

Back in the woods, along the route that the interurban trolley used to use to come from Amish country to the farm, was a good sized garbage dump. I don't think something like that would be allowed with today's environmental laws, but at the time it was taken care of pretty well and it didn't smell that bad that I can remember. I cut my foot on some broken glass when I was rummaging around in there one day and I didn't notice it until I was on my way home. As I was riding my bike back to the house, I noticed my right foot felt wet and sloshy inside my tennis shoe. It turned out to be blood (I got chewed out by my mom for that one!).



George Tanneyhill (Gramps), me (George Reed when I was in the Cub Scouts), and Everett Holt in the duplex house we lived in at Circle W Farm ~ 1958

One other item of note is that the interurban trolley system ran through Circle W Farm in the early part of the 1900s. It brought many people in to help harvest the crops being produced on the farm. An important group of workers that rode the trolleys were the Amish; a large contingent of which lived in the Northeastern portion of Ohio. It was reported that a trolley track ran from Middlefield, Ohio (the heart of Amish country at the time) to Circle W Farm and back again every

Circle W Farm

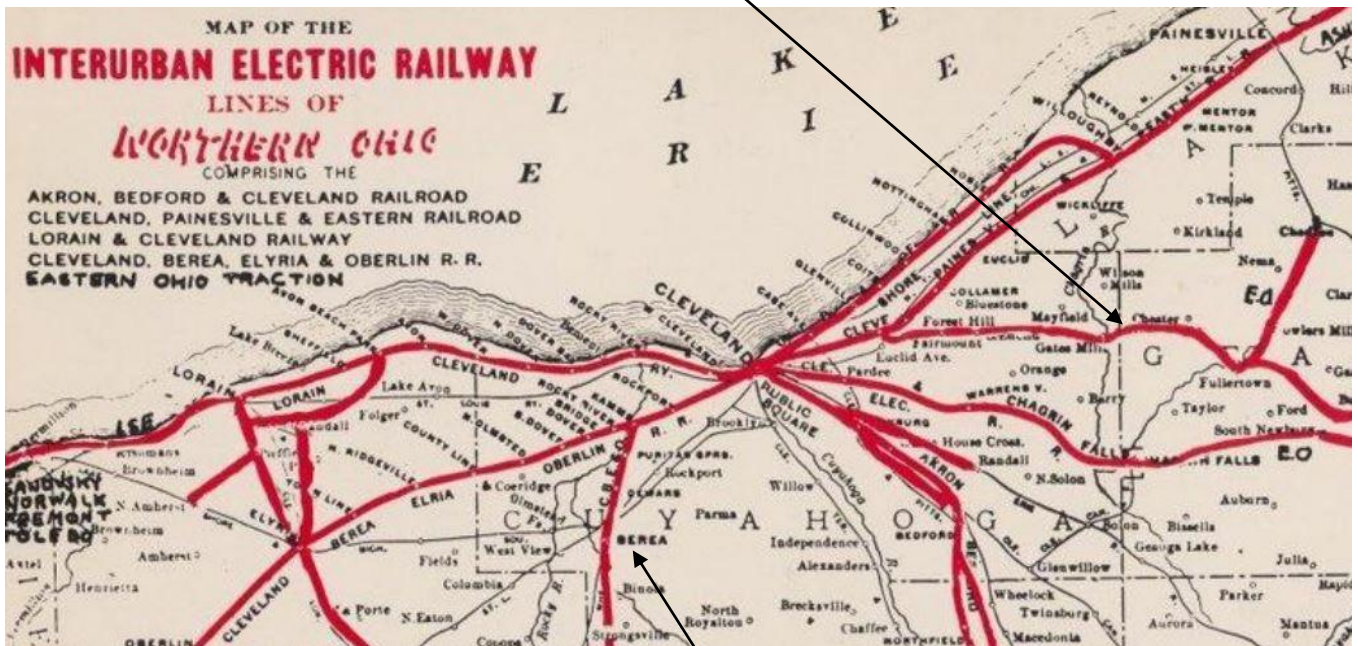


day to bring the Amish farm hands to and from work. They hand-picked apples and grapes from the orchards and vineyard on the farm, collected and examined chicken eggs for sale at local markets, helped harvest and store wheat and corn crops, baled hay and straw for feed and bedding of the many farm animals like cows, pigs and horses housed on the farm, as well as other building and equipment maintenance and upkeep tasks at the farm.

From a historical standpoint, the Amish played a major role in the activities of Northeastern Ohio. The Amish community was founded in Geauga County in 1886, about 80 years after the County itself was founded and just about perfect timing to be there to help out in the early years of Circle W Farm. It is the fourth largest of all Amish settlements in the country with 18,650 people in 132 congregations. In 2017 the Amish accounted for 19.8% of Geauga County's population.

When Walter Holzworth (my wife Terrie's grandfather) began working at Circle W Farm, trolley systems were still in operation. It is unlikely that they were being pulled by horses still in the 1920s, but Walter stated that he would ride the trolley (or the interurban as it was called) from his home in Berea, Ohio, to Circle W Farm near Chesterland, Ohio (a distance of over 25 miles as the crow flies), to get to work every day. "Slow, but better than walking," he said. Wow, how times have changed.

Location of Circle W Farm



Home of Terrie's grandfather, Walter Holzworth

Circle W Farm



Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority data –

- **1859**, First street railway operated between Downtown and East 55th Street. A horse-drawn streetcar pulled a coach on rails secured in the streets for smoother ride.
- **1860s and 1870s**, Three suburban steam lines provided uncoordinated transportation.
- **1884-1901**, The transportation system was electrified and consolidated. The first commercial electric railway in the USA ran in Cleveland. As trolleys gained popularity in the late 1800s, Cleveland had 425 miles of streetcar lines.
- **1903**, Marcus Hanna consolidated smaller lines as the Cleveland Electric Railway Co.
- **1904**, Cleveland Railway began operation of a Murray chain-driven "Opera" bus.
- **Oct. 1, 1908**, First mass-produced "Model T" car was sold, but it took time for cars to catch on so by 1910 the city boasted 6 separate electric interurban systems.
- **1925**, Cleveland's bus era began when the Motor Coach Division of Cleveland Railway began to operate a Downtown loop. Ridership losses, caused by the popularity of the automobile, forced the transit company to seek a more economical vehicle mode. This resulted in a gradual conversion from trolleys and streetcars to bus operations.
- **1930-1940**, Ridership during the Depression rose to 299 million.

Postscript – I lived on Circle W Farm until I was about 16 years old when I went to live with my Gramps and Grandma who had moved to Burton, OH, afterwards moving to Altoona, PA. I didn't know how important this move was until I met my future wife Terrie Wise there. We've been married now for over 47 years.

In 1960, the descendants of Walter White decided to donate a portion (about 300 acres) of the farm to Hawken School, which was then a private school for boys. (It has since become coeducational beginning in 1973.) I lived through the initial transition period until around 1967 when I left to live with my grandparents and although I didn't notice much of a change taking place, I'm sure a lot was going on, but as a teenager, it was my own little world that I was most attentive to at the time. In the years that followed, the remainder of Circle W Farm was sadly sold off in a piecemeal fashion and slowly faded into history.

Circle W Farm



News clippings on the loss of the historic main barn at Circle W Farm –

Now it's rubble

Fire destroys historic barn on Hawken School campus

The barn cost \$1.25 million to build in 1922 — and it was magnificent.

T. Douglas Stenberg, headmaster of Hawken School, recalled last night the history of the structure on the campus of the Upper School. It was leveled in an hour's holocaust earlier in the day.

It was built as a dairy barn, 400 feet long and 150 feet wide. It had three floors, one with a vaulted ceiling 60 feet high.

Now it is rubble. Only two silos and a concrete portion of the cellar remain. Stenberg said he did not know if it will be replaced.

It was part of the former Circle-W farm, built with the fortunes of Walter C. White of White Motor Co. It, along with White's home and several other buildings on the estate, was registered through the Department of Interior in the National Register of Historic Places.

By the time someone saw smoke pouring through the roof and firemen were called, it was already too late. Flames broke through the roof in half

an hour. In another half hour, the barn was leveled.

Pupils ran to get buckets, dog dishes — anything that could hold water — in a pitifully futile effort to save the 55-year-old building. Before flames enveloped the barn, some pupils went in and led five cows and three calves to safety.

The barn was used as a classroom for outdoor leadership and animal husbandry classes. The school's football and soccer equipment was stored inside.

Stenberg said no cause has been found. Chester Township volunteer firemen were busy into the night fighting brush fires started by embers carried by winds gusting to 25 miles per hour.

Stenberg praised the pupils.

Several, he said, went to three cottages where faculty members live, about 200 feet from the barn, and carried furniture outside to save it in case the houses caught fire. Some went stomped out grass fires.

Largest frame barn in Ohio burns down

GATES MILLS, Ohio (UPI) — Ohio's largest frame barn, once part of the old White Estate named after the founder of White Motors Corp., was burned to the ground Wednesday afternoon on the campus of Hawken School.

The blaze which destroyed the national landmark also set grass fires that kept firefighters from a half-dozen departments busy into the evening. Only three silos were left standing where the barn had been.

The cause of the fire was listed as undetermined and there was no immediate estimate of damage. No one was injured.

Students from the private school helped firefighters keep the blaze from spreading.

News Herald (Port Clinton, Ohio) 15 Apr 1977

Historic school building burns

CHESTERLAND, Ohio (AP) — A huge, three-story barn that was used as a classroom for Hawken School burned in a spectacular fire Wednesday.

The 400-foot-long structure, which was in the National Register of Historic Places, was part of the former Circle-W farm built half a century ago with the fortunes of Walter White of the White Motor Co.

The headmaster at Hawken, T. Douglas Stenberg, praised pupils who stomped out grass fires to prevent spread of flames to faculty cottages and carried furniture from some cottages feared endangered by the flames.

Firemen said cause has not been determined.

Circle W Farm



4, 1977

***Too little,
too late***

Pupils at Hawken School grabbed makeshift containers, but efforts to save a dairy barn on the school's campus in Chester Township were hopeless. The fire started about 2 p.m. of unknown causes and, an hour later, the barn was smoldering rubble. It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Story on Page 17-A.

Photos by Tom Morce, 5545 Hilltop Oval, Parma

Circle W Farm



News clippings on the loss of the historic livery stables at Circle W Farm –



HAY CAUGHT ON FIRE Tuesday afternoon at the Circle W Farm in Chester to call out firemen for the second time. Firemen earlier in the morning helped to prevent a fire, caused by

lightning, from spreading beyond stables worth \$250,000 to other buildings on the estate. The stables, however, were largely destroyed.

Circle W Barn Blazes 2nd Time

CHESTER — Hay caught on fire at the Circle W Farm in Chester late Tuesday afternoon, after area firemen had spent the morning in an effort to prevent total destruction of stables, worth \$250,000 struck by lightning.

The second blaze, although not as serious as the first, brought out the Chester Volunteer Fire Dept. Authorities pointed out that heavy rains in the morning helped prevent the fire from spreading

to other buildings and the main residence. The second blaze also occurred during rain.

The stables were located on the property of the late Walter C. White, former president of the White Motor Co. in Cleveland. It is located in the area adjacent to Rt. 322 and County Line Road, just across the Gates Mills boundary.

Hawken School, a private institution for boys in Cleveland,

plans to use the estate next year for upper-grade classes. The main residence was purchased by the school in July.

No one was injured by the blaze as 18 horses were rescued from the stables and items removed in time. The fire call was answered by the Gates Mills Fire Dept. with aid coming from volunteer departments in Chester, Newbury, Munson, Russell and Mayfield Heights.

Circle W Farm



News-Journal (Mansfield, Ohio) • 14 Sep 1960

Horse Stable Destroyed

CHARDON (UPI) — Lightning struck and set fire to a large horse stable on the Circle W. Farm in nearby Chester land, causing an estimated \$250,000 damage.

Eighteen horses were led to safety from the stable. The building, which included a residence, was nearly destroyed.

The farm was part of the estate of Walter C. White, president of White Motors

when killed in an auto accident. The main residence of the farm, purchased in July by the Hawken School for Boys, was undamaged.

Richard Day headmaster of Hawken School, said the fire was a "tremendous blow." He said plans were to convert the horse barn into class rooms.

Circle W Farm



News clippings from times in the past at Circle W Farm –

Jan. 28, 1920
Sixteen head of Guernsey cattle from the Conkle Dairy Farm near Clark were sold recently for \$4,000 to a buyer from the Circle W Farm at Gates Mills, Ohio.

Dayton Daily News (Dayton, Ohio) • 14 Oct 1926

Guernsey Calf Club at State Fair

The twelve best calf club cows of all breeds in the state, from the standpoint of production, go to the state fair and are entered in the Circle W Farm production contest. In 1923 a Guernsey was shown which won second place. Guernseys were not show again until this year. Three were eligible and shown by Harold Huston, Green co.; Everett Eckelberry, Guernsey co.; and Florence Paterbaugh of Montgomery co.

One very interesting incident connected with the club show is that of Harold Huston's experiences. In 1923 his junior calf was made grand champion. She was shown this year and made third place in the Circle W contest and seventh in the open class for two-year-olds. In 1923 she came in heat while at the fair and was bred free of charge to White's Searchlight Raymond, the grand champion of that year's show. The calf resulting from that mating was the first prize junior calf this year. It so happened that this heifer came in heat this year at the fair and was bred to Cherub's Grenadier of Shorewood, junior champion bull, owned by Charles G. Wiechel, who also gave a free service. Harold is getting a start with Guernseys which few boys get.—The Ohio Guernsey News-Bulletin.



Circle W Farm



The Akron Beacon Journal (Akron, Ohio) • 08 Sep 1933

CHESTERLAND HAS WEALTHY TREASURY

**Inheritance Taxes Pay All
Bills And Still Leave
Healthy Balance**

CHARDON, O., Sept. 8. (AP) — Chesterland township's financial condition is too good—it doesn't know what to do with all the money.

The township treasury will receive \$171,000 this month as the second payment of its share of the inheritance tax of the late Walter White, White, whose Circle-W farm lies in the township, was killed in an automobile accident nearly two years ago.

The first payment of \$202,000 already has been spent. It went for the payment of village debts, the erection of a fine new school building, for poor relief, and for new roads.

This winter the township will have \$7,000 for road work, \$20,000 indebtedness, a debt of \$60,000 on the school building, and only 10 or 12 families on the relief list—but the treasury will contain \$171,000.



Circle W Farm



Bibliography

Various Ohio Newspapers, including the Cleveland Plain Dealer, the Cleveland Times Leader, the Akron Beacon Journal, the Mansfield News-Journal, the Dayton Daily News, the Cincinnati Enquirer, the East Liverpool Evening Review, and the Port Clinton News Herald; obtained from Newspapers.com

Written accounts and photos of Circle W Farm provided by the Chesterland Historical Society, the Historical Foundation and Village, of Chester Township, Geauga County, Ohio

Descendants of Joseph Holzwarth and Rosina Troster, a family genealogy booklet researched and published by George Reed and Terrie (Wise) Reed, 2019

Wikipedia.com, the Wikipedia Encyclopedia

The Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority website, February 2019



A Man of Means

The year 1900 was a pivotal time in the young lives of Windsor, Rollin, and Walter White of Cleveland, Ohio, whose father owned the White Sewing Machine Company. The boys had bigger things on their minds than sewing machines—automobiles! They broke into the auto industry by developing the White 'Steamer.' In order to promote their steam powered autos, Walter began to race his cars around the country. His most famous auto was called "Whistling Billy," so-named for the noise it made getting up steam. As Vice President and, later, President, of the White Motor Company, formed in 1906, he put forth a superior product, and proved it.

His hobby, however, was horses, which brought him to the Gates Mills area where hunting and riding was the pastime of many residents.

The area was quite agreeable with Walter so he set about buying land with the intention of creating a gentleman's farm. Beginning in 1916 he purchased enough property in Chester Township to be included in the area bordered by County Line Road, Wilson Mills Road, Caves Road, and Mayfield Road, some 1,400 acres in all. (There is an undated map of the White property holdings in the historical files that states the acreage was 1,155). He named his farm the Circle W which came from the W's his own name, from his farm manager, Mr. Warner, and from his architectural firm of Walker and Weeks.

With the help of Connie Wells and Mr. & Mrs. Ed Siplock who have copied items from the early newspapers and shared them with me, I have found a few tidbits about the Circle W which you might like to read.

From the September 14, 1916, issue of the Chagrin Falls Exponent: "Mr Hart and Mr. White are going to furnish auto trucks to draw gravel to make two miles of better roads on the county line. Chester to furnish the gravel."

The June 28, 1917, issue of the Chagrin Falls Exponent states that Dr. Bingham (he owned land from Manchester Farms to where the Scotland Store was originally located on the east side of Caves Road south of Mayfield) and Walter White were showing the farmers how to farm with tractors.

When the interurban was laid across Geauga County in the late 1890's, it crossed what would become Walter White's farm. This became the transportation link for incoming supplies, outgoing farm products, and a way for the hired hands at the Circle W to get to work. But the following incident from the Chagrin Falls Exponent of July 19, 1917, was not so lucky: "TROLLEY CAR KILLS CHESTER YOUNG MAN SUNDAY NIGHT. Jack Maloney, aged 25, an employee of the Walter White farm in Chester, was killed by a Cleveland & Eastern car some time Sunday night. Maloney's body was found by a car crew early Monday morning. The body was badly mutilated. It is said that Maloney had been drinking and had returned from the city late Sunday night. Presumably he was either walking on the track or had gone to sleep there when the car struck him. Coroner Pomeroy of Chardon found the death to be accidental. The body was buried by the Chester authorities and an effort is being made to locate Maloney's relatives."

Walter's domestic duties—he didn't marry until 1919—must have been too much for him because he placed the following ad in the August 1, 1917, issue of the Geauga Republican: "WANTED: A woman to help with house work and cooking. Wages \$5 per week. Address The Circle W. Farm, Chesterland, Ohio."

From the Painesville Telegraph of April 11, 1918, the big news was that both Leverett Mapes and the Circle W Farm have new tractors.

We go on to the Geauga Republican of November 27, 1918, for this bit of information: "BIG DEVELOPMENT AT WHITE FARM - Most of the painters have been laid off at the big Walter C. White farm near the county line in Chester, several from Chardon among the number. The lay-off is probably for the winter. Carpenters are still busy there, we learn.

Circle W Farm – Attachment A



Mr. White is a member of the White Auto Company in Cleveland. For two years past he has erected buildings on his Chester estate as fast as he could get the labor and material and has underdrained hundreds of acres.

He has many blooded horses and live stock in winter quarters, and it is said to have already expended considerably over a million dollars in creating a country estate overlooking the Chagrin River valley.

The buildings already erected are extensive, but many more are certain to be constructed, it is said.

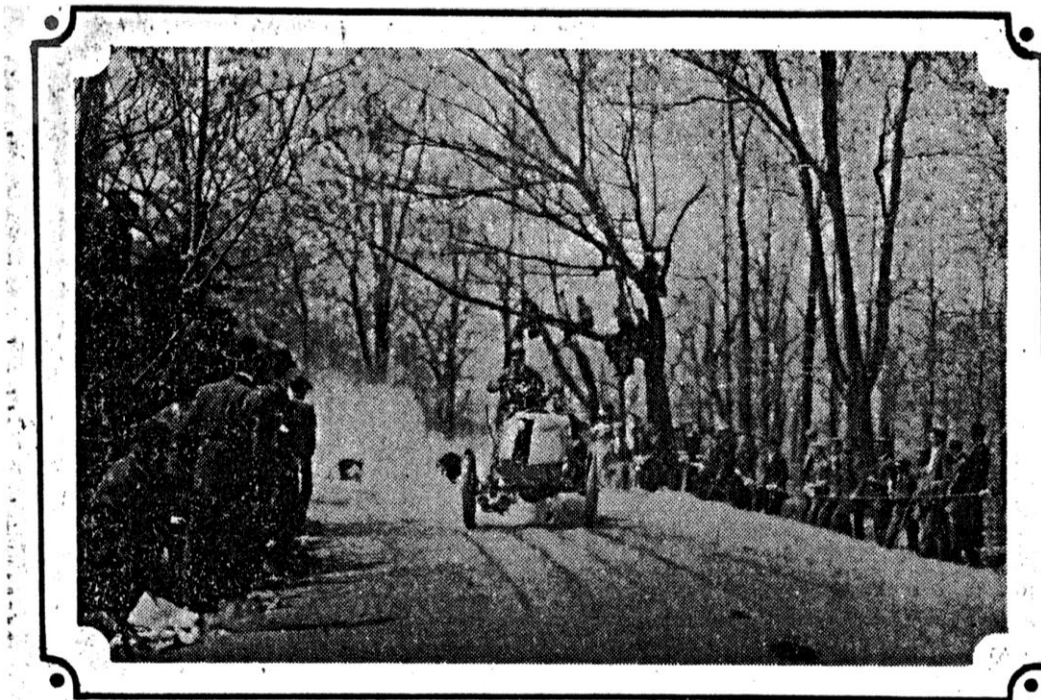
Mr. White has taken a lively interest in affairs that are for the betterment of Chester, and this spirit is greatly appreciated by people of the township, for it undoubtedly means much to Chester."

The July 30, 1918, issue of the Geauga County Leader announced that Robert Martin would become herdsman of the White dairy on August 1.

Walter White's contributions became global when the White Motor Company exported their trucks to Czar Nicholas of Russia and the French military forces during World War One. When the U.S. entered the war on April 6, 1917, Walter White was made the civilian head of transportation for the American Expeditionary forces and headed for France along with a shipment of White trucks. At this time White had turned to the gasoline powered engine. By the end of the war, White Motor Company had supplied 18,000 cargo trucks, utility vehicles, and ambulances.

In recognition of his service to the war effort, the French government made Walter White a Chevalier de l'Ordre National de la Legion d'Honneur.

Walter died in September 1929 from an auto accident, leaving his wife with five small children. Mrs. White lived 30 more years. The property was sold to Hawken School in 1960.



Walter C. White and his White Steamer are shown in a record-breaking mountain climb at Wilkes-Barre, Pa., on Decoration Day 1907. (NEA)

Circle W Farm – Attachment B



Clara's Children

(From the memories of Clara Knapp McGowan, July 20, 1982)

I was born in Huntsburg in 1906, raised in Chardon, and came to Chesterland in 1928 to work at the Circle W Farm owned by Walter White. The children had a governess before I came. I don't know why she left but I was hired to care for the five children. Martha was then ten months old and little Walter was two years old. I also supervised the two older girls as they entered Laurel School. Unfortunately, I was only able to stay there for three months because my mother died and the family needed me at home. But I returned to the White Farm in 1932 and stayed five years. Then I got married in 1937. I returned in 1940 for the third time and spent the next 20 years caring for the family. In later years I lived in the Watchman's house which was located on the west side of the original Mayfield Road, which is today called Old Mill Road, just off the present day Mayfield Road which had been rerouted and completed in 1941.

When Walter White met the southern belle, Mary Virginia Saunders, on a trip to South Carolina in the winter of 1917, he was smitten. The couple married on September 25, 1919, and returned home to live at the Circle W. The couple had a total of seven children but only five lived to adulthood: Anne, Mary, Walter, Martha, and Catherine, whose name was originally spelled with a "C" for her grandmother, but she later changed it to a "K". Mr. White died in an automobile accident in 1929; Mrs. White died in 1959.

Since I didn't have any little ones, the White children became just like my own. I spent all my waking hours tending to their needs. Their mother didn't do too much with them except visit them for an hour or so in the evening and perhaps read them a story.

When I arrived at the Circle W in 1928 it was running at full capacity. It was easy to see what a tremendous impact it had on Chester and the surrounding area. Because the interurban ran right through the farm, many employees had easy transportation and the various farm products and milk was shipped to Cleveland on the interurban. (The track entered the Circle W property just to the north side of the current driveway off of County Line Road and the pickup point was No.22A on the interurban schedule.). This worked well until the line disbanded on March 31, 1925.

Many employees lived right at the farm. The estate had housing for ten families and three boarding houses for single men. There was a full time teamster, blacksmith, poultry man, superintendent, gardener, and truck drivers. General farmhands worked with the crops, 200 head of Guernsey dairy cows, horses, and other farm animals. The White home had ten people on its staff at all times. They employed a 1st and 2nd chauffeur plus a night watchman.

The gardener was a Scotsman from Gordon Castle who came to America in 1925 and stayed until after Mrs. White died. He raised beautiful flowers which were available all year round from the three greenhouses on the property. Every room in the house had flowers, even in the maid's room and hall. In the fall the west porch was full of colorful chrysanthemums. Each spring he would draw up plans of exactly what and where his plants would be located. He was so good that "Better Homes and Gardens" featured him in their magazine. One of the interesting items he grew was Jerusalem artichokes. They were made into pickles and became a great treat at dinner parties.

The farm had every kind of fruit tree: apples, pears, plums, and three different kinds of grapes. For one or two summers, the farm had a fruit stand along Mayfield Road.

The poultry man had thousands of chickens. He had a once-a-week egg and poultry route into Cleveland Hts., and Shaker Hts.

The laundress came three times a week from Fullertown (Sperry and Fairmount). She was there from about the time they were married until the year of Mrs. White's death.

The barns and big house was a work in progress during the late teens and early 1920's. A carpenter who lived next to us in Chardon said he and his brother worked there for 17 years just doing carpentry projects. An acquaintance was a painter at the estate when the barns were built. He said they put seven coats of enamel on the inside of the cow barn!

The big three-story barn on the farm was the biggest non-commercial barn in Ohio. It had a vaulted ceiling 60 ft. high. The children used to have a rope attached to that roof and they would

Circle W Farm – Attachment B



swing out and drop in the hay mow. One of my duties was to take them over to the dairy barns in the afternoon so they could get a cup of warm milk in their silver mugs.

Construction on the house, which was fashioned after Mt. Vernon, began around 1918, but it wasn't finished until 1923. The living room was curly maple; the dining room would seat 18 people easily. Mrs. White was an artist and had a studio on the third floor. When a coat of paint was applied to the wall, it was rubbed down, then another coat of paint was applied, then it was rubbed down again, etc. It never had to be touched during all the years I was there.

The stonework on the estate was by the famous George Brown of Gates Mills. (His record book indicated he was employed by Mr. White from October 1916 to August 1923). There was a fountain at the back of the west porch which had a trellis with an opening in the middle which looked like a path. It was done in stone which got smaller and smaller to give the effect of distance.

The water supply for the big house was from the spring at the Chesterland Caves which was at the southwest corner of Sherman and Caves Roads. They made a pond where the ducks could swim but there was also a rowboat the children could use in the summertime; they could ice skate in the wintertime.

There was a tennis court and, for the children, an imitation log playhouse where we had cookouts and picnics.

The children had their own ponies. I remember Walter in his basket saddle. He rode every day that it was good weather.

The adults had a polo game nearly every Sunday. Their field had such good drainage that when it was too wet in Gates Mills, they came to the Circle W to play. Polo players from all over the country plus foreign players would descend on the farm. The polo barn could house the ponies as well as the men. Part of the building housed a big room, dining room, kitchen, and a trophy room with a dormitory upstairs.

Half of the front lawn was a practice polo field and each morning Mr. White went out with a stick and balls to get in a little practice before he went to work.

As the Depression settled in, Mrs. White found her finances were not what they were. I recall that we went perhaps a couple of months without pay and also took a reduced salary for a while, but we had our room and board and it didn't matter so much.

I raised the children until they went to college and then I became the housekeeper for the 26 room house. During World War Two it was hard to get extra help so I did everything, but mostly I helped Mrs. White. I had graduated from Andrews School in Willoughby as a dressmaker so I was kept busy altering everyone's clothes. There was no waste, Mrs. White was quite frugal. I made over clothing like ski clothes, heavy outdoor things because they were handed down from one child to another. One time Mrs. White had a dress which had buttons with sets in them. After it had been laundered, one of the buttons had lost its set. Instead of buying a new set of buttons, she had me pick out the sets in all the remaining buttons. I don't remember much mending, but, for instance, I made slipcovers and draperies. Once Mrs. White brought me a hand printed bolt of linen from England and I made draperies for the library.

One of the family traditions was to spend every March and April at Mrs. White's southern home, Borough House. The children's ponies were sent south by train for their visit. Later, they used Windsor White's polo trucks for the trip there and back. I went along and had a great time.

Another tradition started by Mr. White which Mrs. White continued after his death was the Thanksgiving Day Eggnog Party following the drag hunt. The grooms filled a sack with fox excrement and then they hung it on the back of a truck and went around the countryside making a trail of the scent. Then the hounds could follow the scent, and the riders followed the hounds.

Mrs. White hosted many dinner parties but she never let anyone drink more than two cocktails before dinner. Since the drinks were served to the guests, they had no choice. There was no open bar. She didn't want any drunken brawls. She always selected the menus herself but they were in this order: soup, a fish course, entrée, salad, dessert, and after dinner liqueurs.

I remember one incident when I was serving as housekeeper that I had to reprimand one of

Circle W Farm – Attachment B



the cooks. We were ready to serve—but there weren't any peas on the tray. The dinner was ready but the cook didn't even have the peas on the stove yet.

Although I was never asked to help in the butler's pantry, I loved handling the fine china and all the beautiful silverware. When there was a really big event, I always came in and helped with the dishes. There weren't any dishwashers then!

Because the two oldest girls were close in age, they 'came out' together and had a big "Plantation Party" bash. They had the Plantation send up a bunch of Spanish moss which was draped on all the trees to give it the atmosphere it needed.

At Christmastime the plantation always shipped a bale of holly and evergreens up north to decorate the house.

The most famous party of all times was just before Mr. White died. He had ordered three Goodyear blimps to come by and settle on the lawn. Their job was to give the kids a ride. In the summer, Mrs. White always served mint juleps in silver goblets to her guests. This was one of those occasions. After the guests had left, the silver goblets were gathered together by the staff who reported that several were missing. A hunt around the grounds turned up all of the shiny cups but one. Six months later they found it underneath the pilot's seat in one of the blimps.

After Mrs. White died the children took what they wanted from the house and then I worked for the next year getting everything in order to sell the estate in 1960 to Hawken School..

One of the interesting finales to this story is that Anne White, after she married in the 1940's, lived in the groom's cottage for a while until their home was built on the site of the Chesterland Caves Resort, replicating the years that her parents had lived in the same cottage until the White house was finished.

Mrs. White and the children soon after Mr. White's death.
(Cleveland Press, March 12, 1977)





The Circle W Farm – The Walter White Estate (Now Hawken School)

Born September 8, 1876, in Cleveland, Ohio,¹ Walter Charles White² was the son of Thomas White, president of the White Sewing Machine Company. As the early auto industry took hold, Walter and his brothers, Windsor and Rollin, became developers of the steam motor truck and, as their business grew, they separated from the sewing machine company to form the White Motor Company. Their early success with the White Steamer brought many firsts in the auto industry.

The White auto became one of the outstanding racing cars of its day. Walter White undertook racing as a promotional stunt to sell White automobiles. His most famous racer was "Whistling Billy," so-called because of the noise it made getting up steam.³

During World War I Walter White was made civilian head of transportation for the American Expeditionary Forces and went to France. Subsequently, the White Motor Company supplied the Allied Forces with 18,000 ^{large trucks, utility vehicles and ambulances} ambulances and trucks for the war effort. The French government honored Walter White by making him a member of the Legion of Honor. *from Konrad Schreiber Jr*

Among his many service awards, Mr. White was made an Honorary Colonel in the Toronto Scottish Regiment by the Canadian Government. An officer of this rank was assigned a piper for life by the Regiment. In return, the officer supplied the piper with his pipes, his kilt uniform, and paid his transportation when his piping services were requested by the family. Pipe Sergeant Major Thompson became the White family piper. Strangely enough, his first duty was to pipe Walter White's funeral procession from St. Christopher's Church in Gates Mills to the cemetery.⁴ Walter White's untimely death came at the age of 53 on September 29, 1929, as the result of an auto accident.⁵

Walter White was drawn to the Gates Mills area by his love of horses and hunting. He decided to invest in some property and develop a gentleman's farm for himself and two bachelor friends, Al Bailey and Charley Clark.⁶ According to the Geauga County Deeds, Volume 143, p. 611, he began purchasing property in Chester Township no later than June 1916. The estate eventually included 1,400 acres of land bounded on the west by County Line Road, the north by Wilson Mills Road, the east by Caves Road, and the south by Old Mill Road.

Circle W Farm – Attachment C



The estate was named "The Circle W Farm" which came from the W's in Walter White, Mr. Warner, the farm manager, and the architectural firm of Walker and Weeks who designed the estate.⁷ Mr. George Brown of Gates Mills, who was a master mason, worked for Mr. White between October 1916 and August 1923 and designed the stone work included in the retaining walls, bridge, garden area, vestibule, and pumphouse.⁸

The buildings on the estate were located at the northeast corner of County Line Road and today's Mayfield Road. At the time Mr. White began purchasing property Mayfield Road ran through the Village of Gates Mills. As traffic increased in the Village and accidents became more frequent, the state decided to relocate Mayfield Road from a point beginning at the entrance to the Circle W Farm, then crossing the White property to the river and joining Mayfield Road on high land one mile west of Gates Mills.⁹ New Mayfield Road was completed in 1941.¹⁰ (The original driveway to the White home was located at the north side of Mayfield opposite Westchester Trail.)

While on a trip to South Carolina in the winter of 1917, Walter White met Mary Virginia Saunders. They were married on September 25, 1919, and moved to Cleveland.

Mr. White was interested in horses for equestrian competition and hunting, but held a special interest in polo ponies and the game of polo. In order to provide shelter for the horses, the stables were completed as soon as possible. However, shortly after Mr. & Mrs. White were married, these wooden stables caught fire. Rebuilding the stables was a priority. The first floor of the second structure was constructed with cement blocks.

The stables were home to over 100 polo ponies and hunters as well as all the men (stablemen, head groom, and full-time trainer) needed to care for them. The second floor of the stables contained rooms for the stable hands.

The Circle W polo field was a masterpiece. Tiles were laid under the field to ensure proper drainage. It was then sodded for three consecutive years before it was used. When polo fields were wet in the Gates Mills area, players could go to the White Estate and find a perfect playing area.

Because it was one of the prime playing spots, it was not uncommon to find a large number of horses, players, and grooms descending on the Circle W. At that time it was usual to have one groom for every four horses. Besides local players, international polo teams traveled to the Chagrin Valley for competitions and many of the participants were housed at the estate.

Circle W Farm – Attachment C



In order to provide quarters for visiting polo players,¹¹ the second floor of the trophy room had bedrooms and shower facilities available as well as a kitchen and dining area downstairs. The building which housed the visitors became known as the 'trophy room' because of a collection of animal heads. Many of the trophies were bagged by Mr. Windsor White on a hunting trip to Africa, but the collection also included trophies of Rocky Mountain goats which were shot by Walter White on trips to the western part of the United States.¹² The trophy room was also the site of Sunday night potluck suppers with neighboring families, employee Christmas parties, and parties for the White children.¹³

Polo games were held almost every Sunday as well as other scheduled times. To keep in shape Mr. White spent some time each morning with his stick and ball practicing on the lawn between the house and the stables before we went to the office. (By the time of his death he was president of the White Motor Company.)

Originally, the area in front of the stables was gravel and contained mounting blocks to assist riders to their horses.¹⁴ Unfortunately, the stables burned again in 1959.¹⁵

When the stables were rebuilt the first time, Mr. & Mrs. White moved into the groom's cottage and lived there until the main house was ready for occupancy in 1923.¹⁶ The couple had seven children, but only five lived to adulthood: Ann, Mary, Walter, Martha, and Catherine.¹⁷ Twins born in September 1923¹⁸ died in June 1924 from whooping cough.¹⁹ *date changed to K - Clara M. Lowman*

Members of the Chagrin Valley Hunt Club, headquartered at the Maple Leaf Inn in Gates Mills (later the Chagrin Valley Hunt Club), began the sport of drag hunting and fox hunting in the early 1900's using the Chagrin Valley area as their hunting grounds.²⁰ In 1919 the Whites began the tradition of hosting an Egg Nog Party following the annual Thanksgiving Day Drag Hunt.²¹

Every spring the White family spent March and April at Mrs. White's home in South Carolina. Not only was the baggage packed off to the south, but many ponies and riding horses were shipped by train, and later by truck, for the enjoyment of the family members during their visit.²² Even the youngest child had riding arrangements. All the children started riding in basket saddles.²³

Next to the stables the most important building on the Circle W was the dairy barn which was built about 1918 at a cost of 1.25 million dollars.²⁴ It was designed by Fritz Walker and was regarded as being the largest standing single barn and largest non-commercial dairy barn in the State of Ohio at that²⁵

Circle W Farm – Attachment C



time. Measuring 400 feet by 150 feet, the three-story structure included running water in each stall and one of the first electric automatic milking machine systems.²⁷ The farm featured the best Holstein and Guernsey cows holding the highest milk producing records. Only the most qualified men were hired to tend the animals. The White children were taken often to the barn to enjoy a drink of fresh warm milk from their silver mugs.²⁸

The barn was so immense that a truck pulling a hay wagon could drive in the barn, turn completely around, and drive back out again.²⁹ The hay mow was under a 60 foot vaulted ceiling where a rope was tied so the children and their friends could swing back and forth and land in a big pile of hay.³⁰

Workmen hired to finish the inside of the barn recall brushing up to eight coats of enamel on the interior surfaces.³¹

The dairy barn, as well as the White house, was entered on the National Historic Register in 1976. Unfortunately, the barn burned down on April 13, 1977.³²

The farm included sheep,³³ pigs,³⁴ poultry, and four teams of Clydesdale draft horses used to work in the fields. Besides polo ponies and hunters, Mr. White became interested in purchasing and breeding thoroughbred horses.³⁵

The Circle W not only grew crops such as corn to use for ensilage for the cattle, but had extensive orchards where apples, pears, plums, and three different kinds of grapes were grown.

The Circle W employed many people year-round including a farm superintendent, teamster, truck drivers, blacksmith, carpenter, poultryman, four gardeners, two chauffeurs and a household staff of ten people. The estate also had several cottages where married full-time employees lived. The unmarried barn employees lived in a huge boarding house just north of the barn and the blacksmith shop had an apartment on the second floor. Seasonal workers were hired to supplement the full-time help. Up to 1925 the employees who did not live on the estate had transportation right to the farm by means of the electric interurban.³⁶

Milk, eggs, poultry, and produce were shipped from the farm into Cleveland on the electric interurban which ran through Chester Township between 1900 and 1925.³⁷ The Cleveland and Eastern Interurban Railway traveled from Cleveland to Gates Mills, through the White property at the north edge of today's driveway into Hawken School, merging with the drive several feet before it turns right to the school buildings or left to the playing fields. It then continued east to Caves Road just north of Mayfield and on through

Circle W Farm – Attachment C



Geauga County. (See Chapter 16 on the interurban) The White Estate was designated as Stop 22A.³⁸ Since there was a milkstand at the carpenter/blacksmith shop on the corner where the drive turns south to go to the school area, that could have been the pickup point.³⁹ After the interurban went out of business March 31, 1925, Mr. White bought the right-of-way for a riding path into Gates Mills. When Mayfield Road was relocated, a tunnel was built under the new highway so horses could still use it. The measurements for the tunnel were determined by gauging the size of the estate's master horsehandler, Lou Collister, on horseback, with another horse next to him.⁴⁰

Mr. White acquired the property at the northwest corner of Caves and Mayfield after Scotland School was closed in June 1926. Garage doors were placed in the southeast side of the school and the building was used to store equipment.⁴¹

One of the employees on the White estate was the head gardener, a Scotsman named Middleton⁴² who came from Gordon Castle, Scotland, to the United States in 1925 and worked at the Circle W until after Mrs. White died in 1959. He managed three greenhouses located south of the house and tended the vegetable gardens. Among other things he grew Jerusalem artichokes which were made into pickles,⁴³ a southern delicacy, and served at formal dinners. The greenhouses flourished under his care and provided fresh flowers for the house which were arranged twice a week by Mrs. White.⁴⁴ He provided especially beautiful arrangements of chrysanthemums for the west porch.⁴⁵

Mr. Karl Eichhorn, who had a degree in Animal Husbandry from Ohio State University, was hired before 1923 as the poultry manager. Although Mr. Eichhorn married in 1923 and lived elsewhere for some years, he returned and worked at the same job from 1932-38 when Mrs. White decided to discontinue the poultry business. At this time, being a married man with children, he lived in one of the cottages on the estate as did some of the other family men who worked full-time such as Arleigh Hendrick, the farm superintendent at that time, Frank Schoen, the chauffeur, Mr. Gunn, the night watchman, and the gardener. (Mr. Gunn had to sleep during the day so all the children were told to be quiet around his cottage).

At that time Mr. Eichhorn's wages were about \$100 a month, but he got free housing and received fruits, vegetables, eggs, poultry, etc., from the farm for his family's use.

Mr. Eichhorn managed the Circle W hatchery and did custom pheasant

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hatching as well as providing a comfortable laying shed for his hens. Capons were also an important item at that time. Poultry and eggs were produced for market, much of it going to the Gates Mills area.

The families who lived at the Circle W were a close-knit group. One of the favorite activities during the year was the April Fool's Day picnic. Everyone came to see who would get the rubber hot dog, rubber swiss cheese, and the rubber doughnuts which had real powdered sugar on top.

At Christmastime Mrs. White gave each of the employees a gift, usually for the children in the family.⁴⁷ Every Sunday she sent the chauffeur, who was dressed in a uniform and leather cap, to each cottage on the farm where there were children, and they all climbed in the big limo and rode off to St. Christopher's Church in Gates Mills.⁴⁸

Construction of the house began in 1917 but was not finished until 1923.⁴⁹ The 23 room,⁵⁰ Georgian Revival,⁵¹ three floor structure was built at a cost of over one million dollars.⁵² Workers who handled the painting recalled painting one day and sanding the same area for six days. A total of seven coats of paint was brushed on and sanded to a velvety smoothness.⁵³ The result of all this work was that the house had a beautiful interior which didn't have to be touched for many years.

There was a sunken garden at the west end of the house and beyond that was a lily pond, tennis courts, a covered area where spectators could sit and watch tennis games, and a log cabin playhouse for the children.

Originally the house had a beautiful fountain on the first floor porch.⁵⁴ After Mr. White's death, Mrs. White installed stone steps at the north end of the porch which led down to the basement where the laundry room and Indian room were located.⁵⁵ The Indian room contained a collection of cigar store Indians.

Next to the porch was the living room which was lined in curly maple, much of which was taken from the Circle W itself. The doors are solid mahogany.⁵⁶ All the wood was pegged together; no nails were used. A fireplace was built in the west wall.

East of the living room is the foyer. A winding staircase leads to the second floor. The unique feature of the foyer is the wallpaper going up the staircase. The mural was almost completed by the time Mr. & Mrs. White were married. Mrs. White asked to have her home in South Carolina portrayed in the space which was still unpainted. So in the scene, the

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the house is real, the rest of the scenery is fictional.

Next to the foyer was the formal dining room which could seat 18 comfortably. This room also has a fireplace which is located in the east wall.

The last room was originally a porch with a small breakfast room on one end. The porch was remodeled into a library after Mr. White's death. Glass doors divided the two areas.^{57.} The butler's pantry also had a door to the library. South of the informal dining area was the kitchen and beyond that a five-car garage. A stone walkway ran along the south side of the dining room, foyer, and living room.^{58.}

A pond on the south side of the house, dug originally to provide water in case of fire,^{59.} was home to a pair of swans and several ducks at various times.^{60.} The pond was used for boating in the summer and skating in the winter.^{61.}

Originally there was to be a sleeping porch at the west end of the house on the second floor as well as the east end of the house.^{62.} The Whites' bedroom, sitting room, and bath were to the right at the top of the stairs on the second floor. Other bedrooms were located on the same floor. The maids' rooms were also on the second floor at the back of the house. Mrs. White was an artist and had a studio on the east side of the third floor in which to draw and paint.^{63.}

Mr. White was a member of the Society of Automotive Engineers. In July 1929, shortly before Mr. White died, members of the Society were invited to the Circle W.^{64.} The delegation of members arrived in three Goodyear blimps and landed on the front lawn! The children got rides in the blimp while the adults were served mint juleps from Mrs. White's Georgian silver goblets. After the party was over, the Whites discovered that many of the goblets were missing and the children were recruited to search the grounds where they found most of them under bushes, etc. One goblet, however, was not recovered. Six months later it turned up underneath the pilot's seat in one of the blimps.^{65.}

Economically, Walter White made a very significant impact on Chester township. He hired many, many people from the surrounding area to work on the farm. He even gave a big boost to Chester's economy after his death. Chester Township received the inheritance tax from the White Estate in 1933, four years after he died. The \$171,070.95 helped pay off the school bond *a total* for Chester School, repaired and resurfaced roads and bridges,^{66.} and reduced the tax of Chester residents by \$5.50 per half year.^{67.}

After Mr. White's death, Mrs. White still entertained and hosted many charitable garden parties. The children living on the estate looked forward

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to the clowns and pony rides at these events.^{68.}

When guests were invited to dinner, Mrs. White served cocktails before dinner, but never more than two were offered to a guest. Mrs. White chose the menu for dinner parties which usually consisted of soup, a fish course, entree, salad, dessert, and after dinner liqueurs.

The house always had fresh flower arrangements from the greenhouse, but at Christmastime Mrs. White's family shipped holly and evergreens from the south to help decorate the house.^{69.} When the two oldest girls had a dual coming out party, all the big trees in the garden were hung with Spanish moss shipped from South Carolina.^{70.}

After Mr. White died, the cattle and most of the horses were sold. The family retained only enough horses for their own use.

It took almost a year after Mrs. White's death in April 1959 to get the estate ready for sale.^{71.} Hawken School's eastern campus now occupies several acres of the White Estate. ^{325 acres on wikipedia.org 2015}

27, - Commemorative May 1959 p. 11

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FOOTNOTES - CIRCLE W FARM (WHITE ESTATE)

1. Geauga Times Leader, June 28, 1967
2. Clara McGowan
3. Mary White Anderson
4. Hawken Review, Winter/Spring 1986-87
5. Geauga County News, October 4, 1929
6. Review
7. Ibid.
8. George Brown of Gates Mills, Gates Mills Historical Society, 1969, pgs. 16, 27, 28
9. Geauga Republican Record, March 9, 1938
10. A Pictorial History of Gates Mills 1826-1976, The Gates Mills Historical Society, Gates Mills, Ohio, p. 60
11. Review
12. Anderson
13. Review
14. McGowan
15. Review
16. Anderson
17. Review
18. Geauga County News, October 3, 1923
19. News, June 11, 1924
20. History of Gates Mills, p. 146
21. Leader, June 28, 1967
22. McGowan
23. Anderson
24. Leader, March 9, 1973
25. Cleveland Press, July 18, 1980
26. Leader, March 9, 1973
27. Review
28. McGowan
29. Charles Dewey Boepple
30. Review
31. Boepple
32. Cleveland Plain Dealer, April 14, 1977
33. Leader, June 28, 1967
34. Boepple
35. Review
36. McGowan
37. Review
38. Author
39. McGowan
40. Review
41. McGowan
42. Review
43. McGowan
44. Anderson
45. McGowan
46. Barbara Davies
47. Anderson
48. Davies
49. The Sunday Paper, December 26, 1976
50. Chesterland News, May 21, 1986

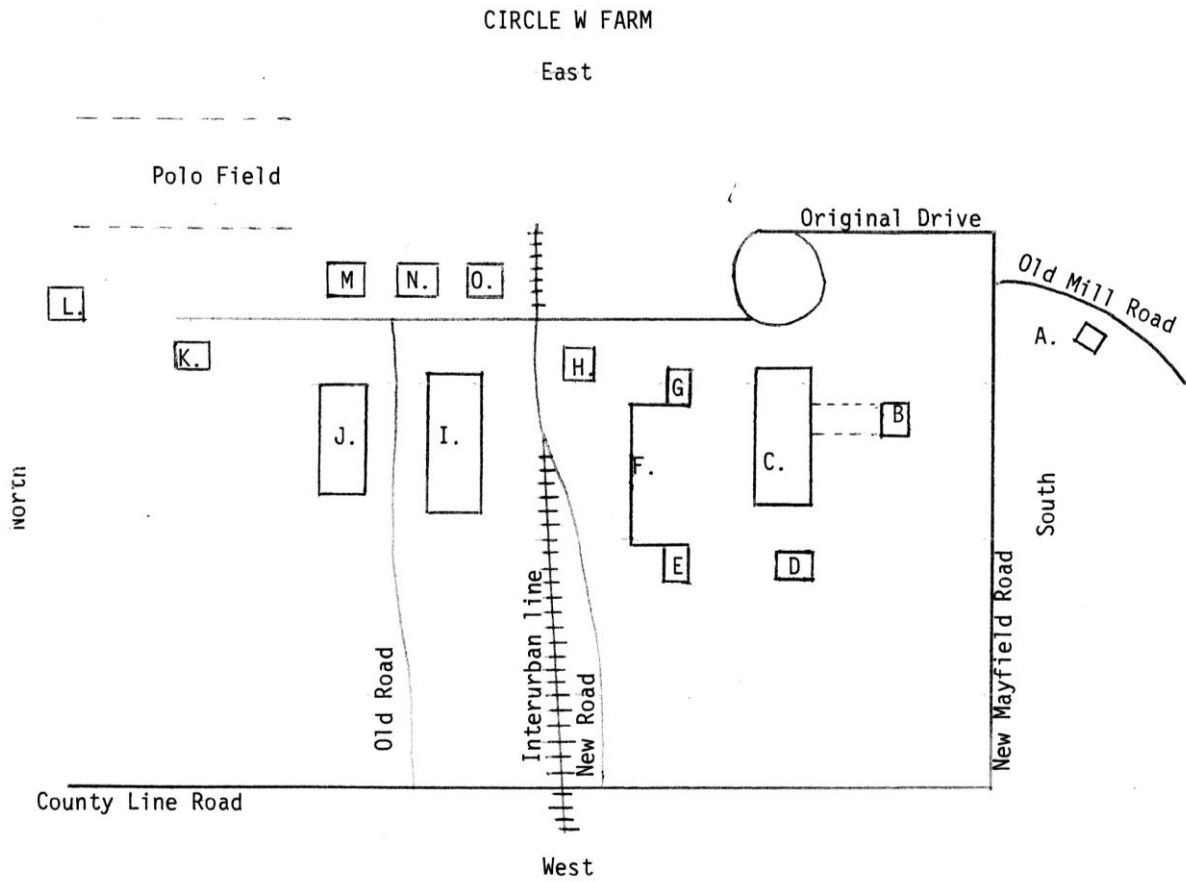
Circle W Farm – Attachment C



FOOTNOTES - CIRCLE W FARM, PAGE 2

51. Ohio Historic Inventory done for the Ohio Historical Preservation Office
Found in the records at Geauga County Historical Society at Burton, Ohio
52. News, May 21, 1986
53. Boepple
54. McGowan
55. Anderson
56. News, May 21, 1986
57. Anderson
58. McGowan
59. Anderson
60. Davies
61. McGowan
62. Anderson
63. McGowan
64. Geauga County News, August 2, 1929
65. Review
66. Chester Township Trustee minutes of August 14, 1933 and August 17, 1933
67. Boepple
68. Davies
69. McGowan
70. Anderson
71. McGowan

Circle W Farm – Attachment C



- A. Watchman's house
- B. Greenhouses and vegetable garden (Greenhouse behind the house attached to garage)
- C. The Main House
- D. Tennis court, log cabin for children
- E. Groom's cottage
- F. Stables
- G. Trophy Room
- H. Blacksmith shop with three carriage stalls, Carpenter shop, garages.
- I. Dairy Barn
- J. Boarding House for unmarried men
- K. Poultry house
- L. Old farmhouse
- M. Gardener's house
- N. Farm foreman's house
- O. Chauffeur's house

Mary White Anderson
