



CAPTINA
CONSERVANCY

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Illustration Attached

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Neal and Barb Caldwell knew their Belmont County farm had been in the family for a long time, but it wasn't until they started doing the research that they discovered it's actually been owned by family members for over 200 years. In fact, it was in 1818 that President James Monroe signed a land patent to Neal's great-great-great-great grandpa, Abel Brown, who bought the original 80-acre parcel as a gift for his son to start a new life in this beautiful stretch of eastern Ohio.

The farm changed hands over the years, sometimes being sold and sometimes deeded over "for love and affection," but always passing from one family member to another. Neal's father, Charles Caldwell, inherited the farm in 1951 and added over 200 more acres. The Caldwell family over the many years milked dairy cows, farmed crops, and hunted and trapped in the extensive mature woodlands.

Because of the rich history of the property, and the high ecological value of the forest and woodlands, Neal and Barb decided to permanently preserve the farm through a conservation easement with Captina Conservancy. Neal has spent many years serving as a trustee on the Killbuck Watershed Land Trust where land conservation and preservation are the primary mission of the group very similar to the Captina Conservancy. The conservation easement is an agreement that runs with the property, and so will be in place for all owners into the future. The Caldwells' conservation easement ensures the farm cannot be divided or extensively developed, and forest management is under strict guidelines of the USDA/Forestry/ODNR and Ohio Forestry Program as well as prohibiting clear-cutting trees.

“Clearly putting the property under the protection of a conservation easement is the best option we currently have to pass it on to future generations as a priceless natural resource,” Caldwell said. Their children and grandchildren are very supportive of the conservation easement as their son Heath is currently an Environmental Engineer in North Carolina.

After putting the conservation easement in place in 2019, the Caldwells decided to spend some time investigating the history of the property. When they discovered how far back the family connection went, they applied to become a part of the Ohio Historic Family Farm program. Run through the Ohio Department of Agriculture, the Historic Family Farm program recognizes the historic cultural and economic contributions of Ohio’s founding farm families, and provides certificates for farms that have been within the same family line for 100, 150, and 200 years. The Caldwells recently received their official certification as bicentennial farm in honor of the more than 200 years their family has been part of the state’s farming community.
