



Normandy Farm | One HISTORIC EXPERIENCE



1730

The history of the property dates back over 285 years to 1730, when it was first purchased by Jacob Levering. Not much is known about the Mr. Levering, except that he eventually passed the land, originally 68 acres, onto his daughter Catherine and her husband, Jacob Heist.

1834

In 1834, Catherine and Jacob built “The Franklin House” or “Franklinville Inn” on the property, which is believed to be the core of the main house that sits on Morris Road. This tavern became a popular restaurant and lodging house for those traveling along what at the time was the newly constructed state road between Norristown and Doylestown in Bucks County.

1873

The property did not gain recognition until 1873, when Mr. William Singerly, a prominent Philadelphia businessman, purchased all 68 acres and used it as his country home. He named the property “The Record Farm” after the Philadelphia Record newspaper, which he purchased in 1877.

1875

Even though Mr. Singerly was at heart a businessman, he had a very active interest in Farming, and in 1875 built the massive barn that you still see standing 126 years later. The barn is over 200 feet long and nearly 50 feet wide, and at the time was the largest barn in the United States. Mr. Singerly continued to acquire land, eventually growing his farm to 825 acres. He built several other barns and structures on his property to house his cattle, sheep, horses and employees that worked the farm. The farm was extremely successful and became famous for pioneering new farming and agricultural techniques.

1913

When he died in 1898, it was discovered that Mr. Singerly had amassed massive debt, and the land was eventually broken up and sold off to various local farmers. In 1901, a Mr. William Wilson purchased the land that contained the farmhouse and barn, and he eventually sold it to Ralph Strassburger. Like Mr. Singerly, Mr. Strassburger was a prominent Philadelphia businessman who harbored an interest in farming and agriculture. Mr. Strassburger renamed the property “Normandy Farm”, after Normandy, France, where he honeymooned with his wife, the daughter of the president of the Singer Sewing Machine Company.

1928

Sometime in the late 1920’s the white stucco walls that you see surrounding the property were built. Mr. Strassburger also added the design touches you see today. He also continued the tradition of running a state-of-the-art farming facility. Unfortunately, instead of amassing debt like the farm’s previous owner, Mr. Singerly, Mr. Strassburger was indicted for failing to pay some \$12,000 in income taxes. He and his family escaped off to live in France where he eventually died in 1959. After his death, his wife and son came back to live on the property.

2000

Over the years, the Strassburger family gradually sold off pieces of property until his son Peter died in 1993. The land was left with two distant cousins, who had no real connection to the farm. They eventually sold the property to various other land developers, with Hansen Properties, Inc. acquiring the land surrounding the barn and the other historic structures.