



Educational Farm & Nature Preserve

Legacy Series

An ongoing series of articles recounting the history of the Stratford Ecological Center and the Warner family

Legacy Series: Part 5 June, 2011

Continuing with the story of Gale Warner's Delaware County roots...



Gale Warner

Gale's maternal grandmother, Mary Caroline Hills Oman, was born at 120 N. Washington St., Delaware, OH. She was the daughter of Fred and Mary Florence Hills (pictures of her parents and the family home were featured in a previous article). Mary Caroline was schooled at North Elementary and graduated from Delaware (later called Willis) High School in 1915. After receiving a Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics from Ohio Wesleyan University in 1919, she enrolled at Columbia University in New York City, where she was awarded a Bachelor of Architecture Degree in 1924. It was there that she met her future husband, Galen F. Oman. They were married in 1926 at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Delaware.

Galen Francis Oman, Gale's maternal grandfather, was born and reared in Columbus, OH. However, both of his parents, E.S. and Hattie Oman, were graduates of Ohio Wesleyan University (see last month's legacy article). Galen earned bachelor's degrees in Architecture and Architectural Engineering from Ohio State University in 1920, and continued his architectural studies at Columbia, receiving a second bachelor's degree in Architecture in 1923. Galen practiced his architectural skills in the city of Delaware, designing several schools (Smith and Woodward) and residences on Hefner Street (Colonial Hills area).

In 1953, he purchased 236 acres of pasture, farmland and orchard near the Village of Stratford, just south of Delaware, with the intent of establishing an upscale development and golf course (this land had become available after the new State Route 23 separated the owner's homestead from the rest of the farm, making access difficult). Health issues prevented Galen from proceeding with development, so he turned his vision to preserving the land. The pasture and orchard were allowed to succeed to forest, while the tillable ground continued to be farmed. Nineteen years after his death, the Stratford Ecological Center was created – under the guidance of his granddaughter – on his beautiful land. He would approve.



Mary Caroline Hills Oman



Galen Francis Oman

Stratford Ecological Center

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