

## History of J.H. Cline Farm

*By Karen Ferguson, Town of Kirkwood Historian*

While Kirkwood was officially named a town in 1859, its early settlers started arriving to the area around 1793. Settlers found this area to be covered with heavy timber, mostly pine. The river flat soil along the Susquehanna was rich and great for agricultural, but the sloped hills consisted of rocks and clay which was better for grazing. While this article isn't per se about the first inhabitants, it is noteworthy in the sense to understand the lay of the land and in relation to how their homesteads were used. With an abundance of pine, the land was cleared to make way for houses and barns. Sawmills were built and farming became a way of life. These farms were greatly significant in Kirkwood's history. However, as the area grew through the years, they started disappearing to make more room for industry, housing and transportation. For this reason, I want to highlight one particular farm in the Riverside Hamlet, near the Pennsylvania line.

On Route 11, near the corner and along Grange Hall Road, stands a 36-acre farm that dates back to at least 1866. According to the Plat of Kirkwood Map dated that same year and the 1908 map, this farm was owned by J.H. Cline. While I have had trouble locating much information about J.H. Cline, I did discover that John Cline (presumed to be the same person) served as a Justice of the Peace in 1875.

Around 1940, this farm became known as the Dunham's house. Gerald "PA" and his wife, Carlotta, raised beef cattle and resided in the house until Jerry's death in 2004. Besides farming, he was an associate member of the VFW and the American Legion and a charter member of the Hallstead-Great Bend Lions Club. He also had a wide range of other occupations. He was 90 years old when he passed away. His wife, Carlotta, preceded him in death in 1996 at the age of 80.

In 2005, the property was then bought by Medine Karakoc Ozuneguve. For a short time, she and her husband had alpaca, sheep, a horse, and ducks on the property. She currently resides out of town but rents out the house and the farm separately.

In the summer of 2022, I had the opportunity to tour the farm and take pictures of the original structures. The house is still in great shape. The long cow barn was in the process of being converted with stalls better suited for horses. Alongside that barn stand two beautiful silos made out of stone and tile. Behind the cow barn is a second barn. The backside of it collapsed from the weight of our heavy April snow storm.

It is nice to see that after almost 150 years this farm still exists and its buildings are in overall great shape.