Sharing a love of Loudoun’s past, present and future

Jean Brown’s rural advocacy serves as a model to others

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As Jean Brown walks around the 200-acre farm in Lincoln, where she and her husband Bill raised their daughter, Sara, she proudly points to their recently restored bank barn, which dates to pre-Civil War times.

“I fell in love with the barn before I fell in love with Bill Brown,” she says with a laugh.

Jean’s comment is indicative of her love of rural Loudoun County and the passion she has put into many years of volunteerism and conservation projects.


Jean and Bill married in 1971 and moved to Oakland Green Farm — to become the 8th generation on Bill’s side of the family to live there. Their family history runs deep on the farm — and they still have the original 1741 Fairfax deed from Thomas Lord Fairfax to Richard Brown to prove it.

According to a story passed down through the family, it is somewhat by chance that Jean’s beloved barn was left standing and not burned down by Union soldiers during the Civil War.

Based on information from a Civil War chronology of Loudoun County, in August 1864 Union soldiers were ordered to retaliate against Gen. John Mosby’s raids.

They were told to “seize Loudoun crops, animals, slaves and all men under 50, burn fields and barns.”

As the story has been told in the Brown family, William Brown was standing at Oakland Green Farm watching fires burn on surrounding farms. He spotted a hawk flying around his chickens and called his son to come and shoot the hawk. At the same time, two Union soldiers, who were on their way to burn down their barn, heard the shots — and thinking the farm was being protected — they turned away.

After a recent and lengthy project to restore the barn by Loudoun-based stone mason Allen Cochran, Jean says the restoration of the barn was one of “my proudest accomplishments.”

“I’m trying to preserve our rural heritage,” Jean said.

Restoration and care of the farm has always been a priority for Jean and Bill. They deconstructed one of the home’s first buildings — a log cabin — which they rebuilt log by log.

Other projects and upkeep continued throughout the years. Jean now lives in Lincoln, where she and her daughter, Sara, continue to live and care for the land they love.
a cottage she built on the property so her daughter and family can live in the main house and run the farm and bed and breakfast business. Bill passed away in 2001.

The land has been farmed over generations and that continues to this day as portions of the land are leased to the county’s last remaining dairy farm owned by the Potts family. Jean’s two grandchildren — the 10th generation to live on the farm — are involved with Loudoun County 4-H and she hopes the legacy of farming at Oakland Green will continue for many years.

Jean’s daughter, Sara, describes her mom as “tenacious, passionate and nice, loving, caring and kind.”

She says her mom inspired her by the successes she’s had in cultivating policy and that continues to this day as por...