

## Shelly's Hatchery on Loud Road

Egypt's Loud Road wasn't always so quiet. There was a time when the sleepy country road was home to thousands of residents. Loud Road farmers raised sheep, cows, and turkeys. Lots of turkeys. Al Sisson, a local WHAM radio personality, did a feature on the Shelhamer turkey farm in 1952. Among his observations, was the sound of the turkeys upon his arrival: *"...there greeted us from seemingly everywhere, a great outburst of sound, timed to the second as if a great valve had been loosened... the symphonic outburst brought a lovely lady from the house by the side of the road... no burglar alarm could have sounded more emphatic."*

Glen Shelhamer worked at the railroad car shops in East Rochester, but he and his wife Eva had another career plan. When the Larwood property on Loud Road became available in 1941, they bought the small farm and began their new career. Through Spiegel's Mail Order House, the Shelhamers ordered 100 young turkeys, or poults, on credit. And just like that, the Shelhamer turkey farm was born.

The Shelhamers worked hard and did whatever it took to make their enterprise a success. Not content to buy their poults, Glen and Eva began a successful breeding operation, adding incubators and all the other equipment necessary to hatch and raise young turkeys. With their three children, Del, Judy, and Glenda helping on the farm, Shelly's Hatchery was a success. Several farm buildings were added to house the growing business, built by Glen and his right man, nephew Harry Shelhamer.



*Glen Shelhamer of Shelly's Hatchery on Loud Road and one of his broad breasted Empire White turkeys.*

By the 1950s, the breeder flock at what became known as Shelly's Hatchery numbered over 1,200 hens, with an annual production of more than 50,000 poults, sold to customers in New York and several surrounding states. In addition, the family business provided thousands of full grown turkeys to local customers. The birds were dressed and frozen on site, and advertisements advised customers to visit

the Loud Road farm and “take your pick.” Shelly’s Hatchery even offered a delivery service, and would bring your turkey to you.

Perinton’s Loud Road turkey farm specialized in a new variety of bird developed at Cornell University, known as the broad breasted Empire White, which, as the name implied, had increased white meat content. Birds from Shelly’s Hatchery won many prizes at the annual New York State Turkey Grower’s Conventions.



**It's Time To Talk Turkey**

**They'll Be Ready  
Sunday, Nov. 23**

**DRIVE OUT**

**And Take Your Pick**

**SHELHAMER TURKEY FARM**

88 Loud Road Egypt, Telephone 951-F-13

*1952 newspaper advertisement  
for the Shelhamer Turkey Farm*

I recently had the opportunity to speak with Del Shelhamer and his wife Marion. Both grew up on Loud Road, and today they live just up the street from where Del’s parents operated Shelly’s Hatchery. Del recalls that cleaning up after thousands of birds was a tough job, and he also delivered countless turkeys to area customers over the years. He remembers the impact felt by area farmers when big grocery stores started selling turkeys at below market price, as “loss leaders”. The practice made it impossible for Shelly’s Hatchery to remain profitable, and by the early 1960s, the business closed.

*Written by Bill Poray, Perinton Town Historian*

*Published in the Fairport-ER Post, 11/21/2013*