

# The Mount O'Donnell Farm

(near Petersville, MD)

Research by Wayne Allgaier, June 2025

It all started when Wade Watson found this metal token “good for 1 quart of milk” marked “Mount O'Donnell Dairy.” **Question: Just where was the Mount O'Donnell farm?**



The story begins with **Col. John O'Donnell** (1749-1805), born in Ireland, but “ran away to India, where he ‘amassed a substantial fortune from mercantile pursuits.’” Subsequently, he “came to Maryland in his own vessel and settled near Baltimore in what is now known as Canton. He gave Canton its name and built a fine mansion there.” The O'Donnell family became very prominent in Baltimore's social circles.

His son, **Christopher Columbus O'Donnell** (1792-1873) became president of the Baltimore Gas and Light Company and was very wealthy, acquiring several properties. In the 1860 census, he was listed as having \$300,000 real estate plus \$130,000 personal property. In 1859, he purchased a 301-acre farm in Frederick County named “Montevue” from Governor Frank Thomas and renamed it “Mount O'Donnell.” (Historical note: According to Scharf in his *History of Western Maryland*, the residence was built in 1819 by Governor Thomas's father, Col. John Thomas. “During the late civil war, the house was occupied at various periods as the headquarters of Union generals, including Custer and Kilpatrick.”)

When Christopher Columbus O'Donnell died in 1873, the farm was willed to his grandson **John Columbus O'Donnell** (1861-1903) who spent much of his time there. John Columbus O'Donnell died as a bachelor in 1903 with no posterity to leave the farm to. The following year, the farm was sold to Charles Wertheimer.

Over the next 44 years, the farm changed ownership several times:

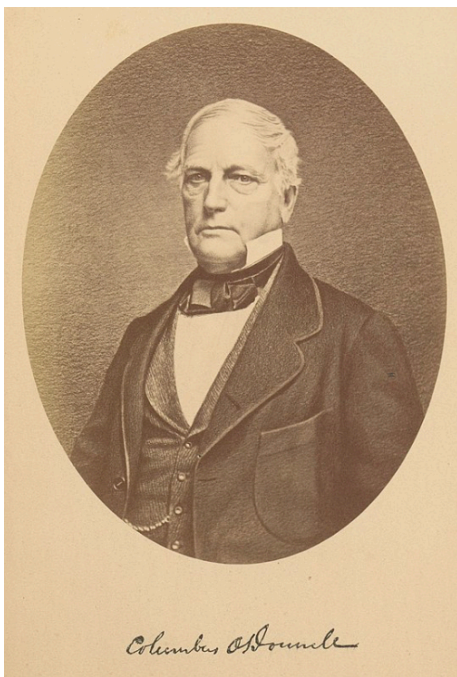
- 1916: Charles Wertheimer sold to J. Hanson Kepler
- 1919: J. Hanson Kepler sold to Howard Fawley
- 1940: Howard Fawley sold to John Wetnight
- 1948: John Wetnight sold to Woodrow Souder (Thomas Woodrow “Woody” Souder)

“**Woody**” **Souder** (1912-1981) purchased two smaller properties in 1968 and 1969 and continued to farm the three combined properties until he retired. In 1973, the farm, now totaling 201.96 acres plus an additional adjacent 50.1 acres, was sold to **Dr. Adel Demiray**, a Frederick surgeon. Although he passed away in 2010, the Demiray family still owns the property today (2025).

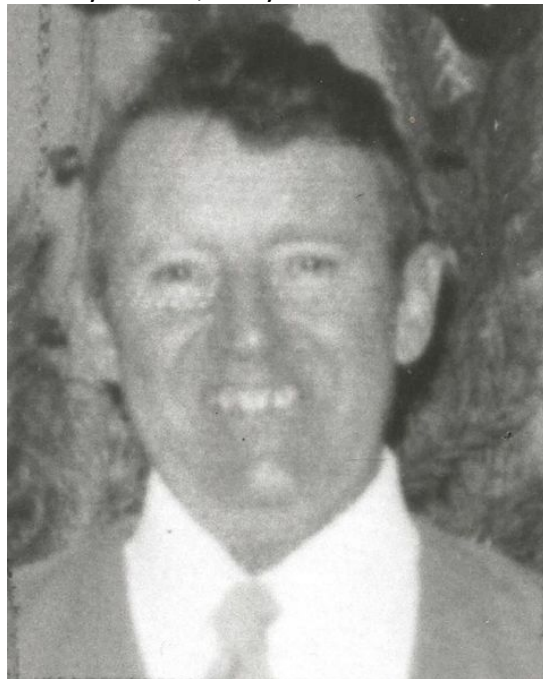
Captain John O'Donnell, Progenitor of the O'Donnell Family in Maryland:



Christopher Columbus O'Donnell, who purchased "Montevue" farm and renamed it "Mount O'Donnell":

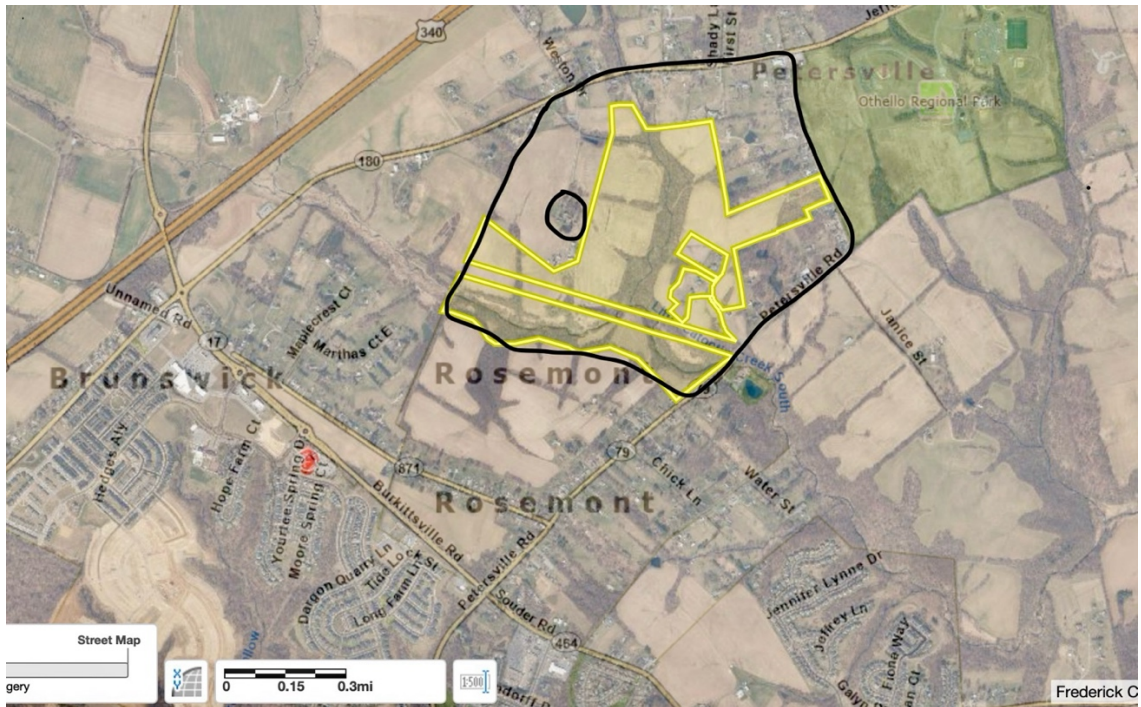


Woody Souder, dairy farmer:

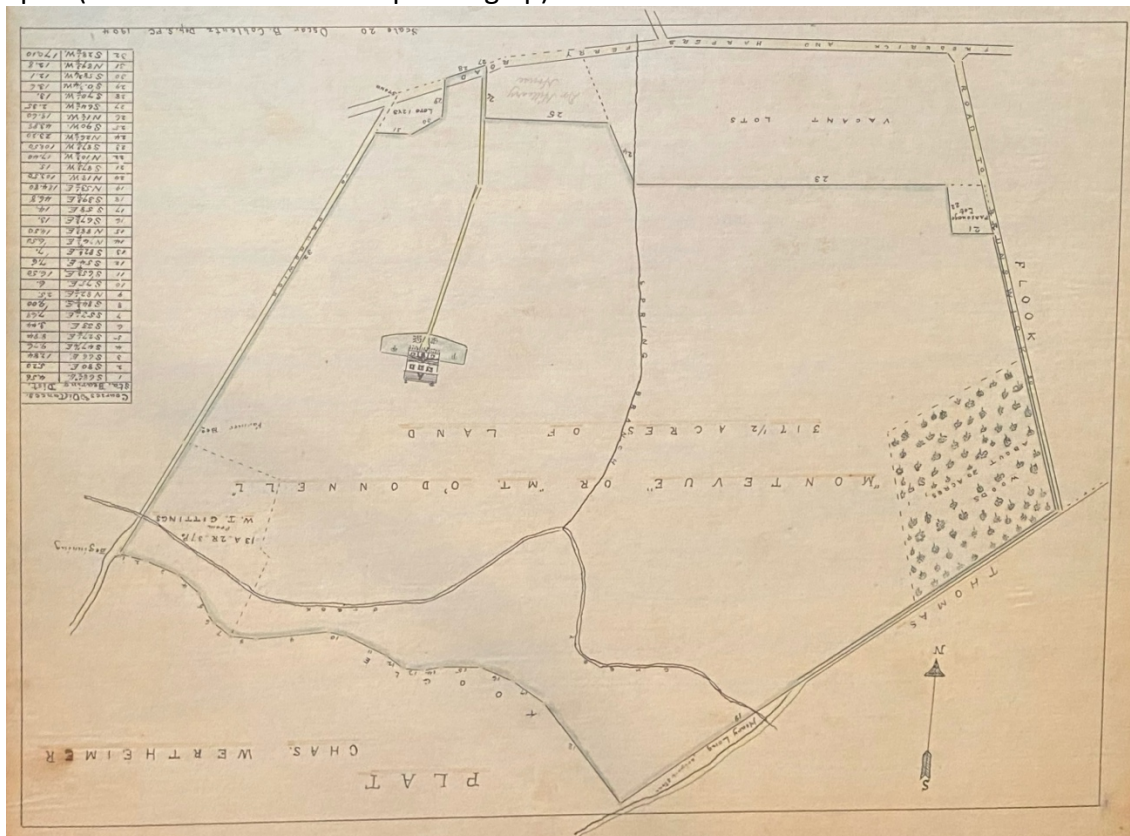




Map showing the approximate boundaries (in black) of “Mount O’Donnell.” The farmhouse is circled.



1904 plat (inverted to show north pointing up):





Drawing of Mount O'Donnell in Scharf's *History of Western Maryland*, 1882,, Vol 1, page 620.



The O'Donnell house today (2025):







Frederick News-Post, July 26, 1922:

The Petersville Farmers' Club, which has always been a live and progressive organization, has purchased the Mount O'Donnell woods on the Brunswick-Frederick state road about half a mile from Petersville and a mile and a half from Brunswick. The club will clean the grove and use it for picnics and other community purposes.