

## **The Forrest Meeker Homestead**

**The 1812 Colonel Forrest Meeker Homestead, currently the home of Garth's Auctioneers and Appraisers, is the most prominent pioneer-era homestead still standing in Delaware County. It has served as the nationally renowned Garth's auction facility for over fifty years, since being acquired by Garth Oberlander in the 1940s. In 1973 the auction business and the homestead was acquired by Tom and Carolyn Porter, who enlarged and improved the enterprise into a nationally acclaimed antiques auction house. In 2001 the Porters sold the auction business, but not the real estate, to Jeff and Amelia Jeffers, who continue to improve and enlarge the auction business to this day.**

**By 2009 the Jeffers' had grown the auction business, now international in scope, to the point where the historic homestead had become too expensive and inefficient to operate as a modern auction business, and plans were made to relocate to a new, custom designed facility in the Delaware area. This made the 1812 Meeker homestead, now very valuable as development property along the US 23 corridor, subject to redevelopment as a prime commercial location. Already previously zoned B-4, the historic home and barn were subject to demolition and redevelopment with no further restriction.**

**Fortunately, Tom and Carolyn Porter, being committed historic preservationists, contracted with Skilken Company, a Columbus development company who promised to develop the property without demolishing the historic buildings. After many months of complex negotiations, a partnership was forged between the Porters, Turkey Hill Minit Markets, and the Delaware County Historical Society. This carefully crafted partnership will allow the redevelopment of a two-acre portion of the site on the corner of US 23 and Stratford Road, currently occupied by a metal building, into a sensitively designed convenience store and gas station, while the remaining six acres and all the historic buildings will be donated by the Porters to the Historical Society for use as a museum and office in the house, with a wonderful educational facility and special events venue in the barn. The historic buildings will be protected by zoning and deed restrictions, and the convenience store and gas station have been designed to have the appearance of a cluster of nineteenth century farm outbuildings.**

