A 10-degree cold snap on Jan. 11, 1962, froze the top of University Lake.

The wettest years
Baton Rouge’s "wettest" year since 1888 was 1929, with 88.55". The only other years topping 80" include 1989 (88.32") and 1926 (88.05").

But again, these numbers are dwarfed by the state's two largest monthly totals: 37.90" at Lafayette in August 1940, and 36.91" recorded in Alexandria in June 1886.

Short-term events also have been marked by impressive downpours, with at least a half-dozen events exceeding 8" in a day for Baton Rouge over the past 50 years. The greatest 24-hour rainfall in recent memory came on April 14-15, 1967: an amazing 12.66", one foot of water in one day.

But Baton Rouge's daily extremes don't hold a candle to Hackberry's 22" on Aug. 29, 1962. That equals four month's worth of rain in 24 hours.

The dry spells
Although the mental picture of south Louisiana usually includes humidity and probably alligators and mosquitoes as well, parts of the state can become quite dry.

In fact, few people are keenly aware of the "normal" precipitation gradient that extends across our state. Average annual totals exceed 65", even 70" in parts of southeastern Louisiana, while several northwestern sites have yearly "normals" of less than 50".

As most folks know, 1999 was unusually dry for Baton Rouge and most of the state as well, with the exception of a few northwestern parishes. But 1999 will not come any nearer the "driest" ever for the capital city, or the state for that matter.

Based on continuous monthly records since 1888, Baton Rouge's annual total has failed to top 40" at least five times. The "driest" year was 1924, with a mere 37.76".

On our method of calculation, 1924 is also the state's "driest" year, with a statewide average total of just 38".

Baton Rouge has seen four months over the past 113 years with no "measurable" rainfall, but three of these months did officially report "traces" (7).
WEATHER ALBUM: Water, water everywhere

FROM THE FILES OF THE ADVOCATE  ■ RELATED STORY: A CENTURY OF WEATHER, PAGE 14G

1990: Rooftops surrounded

1983: Car, mobile homes flooded on Hooper Road

1982: A lone car stranded near Stanford

1927: Near Geismar. At left, the River Road. At right, the Mississippi in historic flood.

Dusk: Downtown workers hurry along in the rain

■ MORE PHOTOS, PAGE 31G
Planned road improvements for Baton Rouge metropolitan area — 1998-2020

Can you get there from here?

By DEANN SMITH

The space cars used by cartoon character George Jetson probably won't be flying around Baton Rouge in the next 30 years, but some state and local transportation officials said commuters of the next millennium could be heading downtown by light rail service or over a third Mississippi River bridge.

On the cusp of a new millennium, The Advocate asked state and local transportation officials and experts to discuss their thoughts about future transportation in the Baton Rouge area.

During the coming decades, more people will continue moving out of East Baton Rouge Parish and into the surrounding parishes, the officials said. More people won't hit the road in the morning to drive to the office because they will "telecommute" by logging into work from a home computer.

But downtown will continue to be an employment magnet, which will create traffic congestion, the officials said.

Congestion could be helped by a major transportation center near the Metro Airport that will help city-parish officials control traffic and send out alerts to motorists when wrecks or chemical leaks create bottlenecks. And a major interstate construction project completed in December and other planned projects will ease congestion in the short term.

But within the next 20 years, traffic congestion on the interstate in East Baton Rouge Parish will be worse than ever, the experts said.

The projects will help relieve some traffic congestion initially, but because the area is growing steadily, traffic congestion will only worsen, said Huey Dugas, chief of planning for Capital Region Planning Commission.

"By 2020 there will not be enough projects to keep up with the growth," he said.

City-parish Public Works Director Fred Raiford agreed. He said it's almost impossible to meet the increasing demand over the next 20 years.

"We are already 30 years behind," he said. "We are playing catch-up.

The state Department of Transportation and Development announced last fall that public hearings would be held early this year to get public input on ambitious projects to widen and improve Interstate 10 from the foot of the Mississippi River bridge east to the I-10/I-12.
split. The project is expected to cost more than $200 million and take 10 to 15 years to complete.

But Joan Bueche, assistant secretary with planning and programming at DOTD, said even such a costly project won't mean an end to traffic congestion on the interstates.

"The traffic jams will soon return," Bueche said. "We cannot build our way out of traffic.

He said solving the traffic problems will be "expensive, difficult and will cause disruptions.

"I see the present trends continuing. I think we will have some difficult problems," Bueche said. I-10 will be one of those. I-10 is a key transcontinental route, said Eric Kalivoda, deputy assistant secretary for DOTD.

The eastbound lanes of the interstate narrow to one lane just east of the Mississippi River bridge before widening to three lanes. Having only one lane causes tractor-trailer rigs hauling goods from Texas or California to stack up on the bridge during rush-hour traffic.

One project proposed to solve traffic problems is to build a bridge over the river and a bypass that swings around Baton Rouge, drawing the truck traffic away from the center of the city.

Kalivoda said building the bypass would not solve the area's traffic woes.

But it would help enough that it must be a reality before 2030, Raiford said.

"That bridge needs to be built before that," he said.

He said he would like to see construction begin within 10 to 15 years, adding it would take another eight to 10 years to complete.

R.J. Goebel, director of planning for CRPC, said he believes a bridge across the Mississippi River near Baton Rouge will be built within 20 years and a bypass directing truck traffic around Baton Rouge will be open.

CRPC is a planning agency that serves several parishes. For transportation purposes, the agency - which receives state and federal funding - serves East and West Baton Rouge, Livingston and Ascension parishes.

Part of CRPC's duties, as required by federal transportation officials, is to develop a transportation plan for the area. CRPC is required to review and update the 20-year plan every three years.

The 120 projects in the current plan total $1.2 billion.

One is a $10 million project to build an advanced transportation management center in Baton Rouge Parish.

Baton Rouge officials studied transportation centers in San Antonio and Houston before setting on the plans for the one being built near the airport.

As Baton Rouge installs more and more computerized traffic signals, they will be controlled from the center, and the sequence of signals can be changed depending on traffic conditions. Also, ambulances and fire trucks will have technology to change a red light to green seconds before entering an intersection while speeding to a call.

Closed-circuit cameras will be mounted along the interstate and major thoroughfares and will send immediate images to the transportation center where officials will use the images to monitor traffic conditions. Large computerized signs will hang above the interstate - similar in size to the signs alerting drivers to exits - detailing delays or alternate routes. Portable signs will also alert drivers to road conditions and delays.

Increased growth in south Baton Rouge means land for development is dwindling, the officials said.

"We've had all the growth we can stand in the south," Raiford said.

This means northern portions of East Baton Rouge Parish and all of Ascension and Livingston parishes will be where most of the residential and commercial development will occur, Raiford and the other transportation officials said.

Even though neighboring parishes will grow explosively, East Baton Rouge Parish's growth won't be stagnant, Raiford said.

"We will still be the hub. Our growth rate is tremendous," he said. "Downtown area will grow. It will ultimately be the hub.

The phenomenal growth in the Mandeville and Covington areas should continue in the next 20 years, Dugas said.

He said New Orleans transportation officials have indicated they would like to see major transportation from New Orleans to Interstate 1-12 linking into I-12 and ultimately I-10. Dugas said this will only further fuel growth along the Interstate 1-12 corridor east of Baton Rouge.

DOTD officials agreed.

The north shore of Lake Pontchartrain is going to continue to grow, and many will drive to Baton Rouge to work, Kalivoda said.

Goebel predicted new towns will spring up along the corridors, attracting residents and businesses.

William Oiler, a consultant for Capital Transportation Corp., said he expects to see development from Ascension Parish south to LaPlace and along the 1-12 corridor.

"Already we are seeing a good bit of commuting from Hammond," Oiler said.

He said he believes commuting from the outlying areas into Baton Rouge will only increase in the coming years.

Oiler said he believes small towns will spring up but local leaders will work to curb explosive development by imposing zoning regulations.

He said based on a study his firm did - as well as a separate one done by another company - about 1 percent of the population in Tangipahoa Parish commutes into the New Orleans area.

Oiler said he believes commuting and park-and-ride use will increase significantly in the coming years. Oiler said he believes people will turn over their keys and use park-and-ride if the vehicles offer enough amenities, such as televisions and modern hookups for computers.

"People will use it when it's convenient," he said.

CTC plans to start park-and-ride service in January. Oiler said he expects CTC will offer 24-hour, seven days a week bus service within the next five years.

He said within five to 10 years that CTC will have expanded and offer mass transit outside the parish in communities such as Ponchatoula and Denham Springs.

But both Raiford and Bueche said they don't see park-and-ride service and carpooling affecting congestion during the next 20 years. They said residents enjoy too much the convenience of having their own vehicle and not having to rely on someone else.

"I don't see any dramatic increases in park and ride and carpooling," Raiford said. "I don't think people will give up that flexibility."

Oiler said he thinks it will be accepted in Baton Rouge.

"This isn't rocket science. Systems around the country do it," he said.

Light rail systems are also being built around the country, but the experts disagree on whether it will arrive in Baton Rouge within the next 30 years and when it will be built.

Both Dugas and Goebel think within 20 years that light rail will be a reality in the Baton Rouge area.

"There's going to have to be light rail," Goebel said.

Light rail from LSU to Southern University is probably at least 30 years away, Raiford said. He said some have talked about using existing rail service, but he said some new tracks will have to be built because it will be impossible to get permission to have passenger service through the Exxon complex.

DOTD's Kalivoda said light rail connecting the New Orleans area to Baton Rouge is more likely to happen first.

"It will be at least 15 years before light rail becomes a serious possibility in south Louisiana," Kalivoda said.

Light rail systems recently built have been in cities much larger than Baton Rouge, such as Dallas, Portland, Ore., and St. Louis, Kalivoda said.

Kalivoda said light rail has a much better chance for success in New Orleans than Baton Rouge.

During the next 20 years, Raiford said he hopes to see local leaders do something they haven't done for more than 30 years: approve a property tax increase to fund road improvements.

Still, he feels confident about the future.

"The next 20 years will be very exciting," Raiford said. "Nothing would surprise me." Within the next five years, there will be developments that will be 50 times better than what we've got."
A city stretches
to the limit?)

By ADRIEN ANGELETTE
Advertiser staff photo by JEFF ADKINS

Baton Rouge witnessed a growth spurt in the early 1990s just like almost every part of the United States, according to a new report from the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. The report, which is based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau, found that Baton Rouge had the second-highest growth rate among the 100 largest metropolitan areas in the United States. The growth was driven by an increase in the number of new residents, as well as an increase in the number of jobs.

Ed Kramer, a 34-year-old Baton Rouge lawyer and developer, stands in the center of one of the "infill" developments on Jefferson Highway. Infill developments are pockets of land in urban areas that are turned into subdivisions, business parks or other given uses. Such developments are becoming increasingly popular as the suburbs fill up.

Since the early 1990s:

Beging the first hospital in Baton Rouge to provide obstetrics, rehabilitation services, cardiovascular care, emergency services, diabetes education and care, comprehensive cancer treatment, and burn services gave us the opportunity to respond to the needs of our ever-changing world.

But most importantly, being the first hospital in Baton Rouge gave us the opportunity to care for you and your family for the past 100 years.

As we close our first century of service and greet our Centennial year, we invite you to join in recognizing the many individuals who have contributed to the Baton Rouge General's legacy and to celebrate the people touched – and saved – by the General's care.

The extension of Bluebonnet Road to Jefferson Drive will open up 2,000 to 3,000 acres suited for development, Kramer said.

West Baton Rouge Parish, Zachary and Central also saw strong growth in the coming years, he said.
WEATHER ALBUM: Taking it to extremes

FROM THE FILES OF THE ADVOCATE  RELATED STORY: A CENTURY OF WEATHER, PAGE 14G

1965: A tree felled by Hurricane Betsy rests on a car.

1992: Emergency personnel remove an elderly person from a riverboat at the Baton Rouge dock as Hurricane Andrew approaches.

1998: It's rare, but sometimes it rains so little that the bottom of University Lake gets exposed, and the weeds almost need mowing.

1999: Heavy fog sometimes shrouds the Mississippi River and its busy traffic.

1999: Lawn sprinklers work overtime in summer's heat, a fact often documented in newspaper photographs.
From Wright brothers to 'right stuff,' a dream took wing

By DAVID FOSTER
Associated Press writer

ERE, Wash. — Wilbur and Orville would have laughed at the sight. The Boeing 747747
sits on the factory floor, a fat, belled,
tump-bucked behemoth weighing 400 tons.
That big? Ff
Not a chance, the Wright brothers could have told you.
In their day, both the notion of flight and the contrap-
tions devised to achieve it were tentative things, prone
to wavering, buckling and crashing.
The Wrights' historic first flight in December 1903
covered 120 feet. Had they launched their aircraft
at the back of the Boeing 747's economy section, they
wouldn't have made it to first class.
But they got far enough. What the Wright brothers
began on the windy dunes of Kitty Hawk, N.C.,
transformed the world. The history of flight is a 20th
century phenomenon, an extraordinary progression of
technical advances crammed into a dizzyingly short
time frame.

Airplanes not built in the same way for the same
people, and the idea of flying long distances,
the human imagination, but the reality always seemed
out of reach.

"Not within a thousand years will man ever
fly," Wilbur Wright cried out in 1910, frustrated over the
erratic behavior of a glider during a test flight.
He and his brother persisted, however, and their
first successful flight was powered, sustained and con-
trolled flight on the par of change for the century to
come. On Dec. 17, 1903, after a flight of 120 feet in
12 seconds, the 12-horsepower Flyer made three
more flights. The longest lasted nearly a mile and
covered 832 feet.
The Wrights kept building upon their success,
joined by other inventors and air enthusiasts in
America and Europe. By 1910, the Wrights had de vel-
oped the first practical airplane, the Flyer III, in
which one flight stayed aloft for 35 minutes and traveled
20 miles.
In 1909, Frenchman Louis Bleriot flew across the
English Channel and within two days received orders
for more than 100 of his Model XI Monoplanes.
In 1911, American Orville Wright flew a Wright airplane
across the United States in 84 days.
Each flight was an improvement. World War I put aviation in
the skies in World War II. Airplanes were employed
for reconnaissance, but air battles soon graduated as
such tactics tried to shoot down the enemy's observation
airplanes.

A rapid escalation of technology followed. Flying was
dared in the clouds over France: German balloonists
fought in the air, using Zeppelin airships and
then German became the Allies, as the welders, crossed the
intersection between soldier and civilian.
"It is the flying," shared the writer.
"It is the flying." The Wrights gave the ability to
project force over a dis-
tance, to strike the enemy where he lived, factories,

pictures, cities.

After the war, barnstormers thrilled audiences across
America, while the advent of the airliner ended the
breakneck and distance record.

In 1927, the British airliner, the Spirit of St. Louis, piloted
by Charles Lindbergh, made the first solo flight across the
Atlantic Ocean, a distance of 3460 miles in 33 hours. He
took off from New York in a single-engine monoplane
and landed in Paris. The flight marked a turning point in
airline travel, beginning the transatlantic era.

The Boeing 747, the world's largest commercial jetliner,
was a prime example. It can carry more than 400
passengers and fly them 8,000 miles without refueling.

Amelia Earhart captured the heart of America and
then broke the sound barrier with her solo flight across
the Atlantic in 1928.

"Courage is the price that Life exacts for granting
peace.
The soul that knows it, knows no release.
From little things..."

Where Earhart found adventure, big business saw
opportunities for profit. A market was started, with a focus on
how to move more people more efficiently through the air. A
breakthrough in commercial aviation came in the late
1920s, when Douglas Aircraft's DC-1, with a cruising
speed of 280 mph and a range of 800 miles, showed for
the first time that an airliner could carry passengers
and make money.

America's involvement in World War II began
and ended with the airplane. In December 1941, Japanese
aircraft attacked Pearl Harbor shook the United
States out of its isolation. Four years later, a Boeing
B-29 Superfortress carried the Enola Gay dropped an
atomic bomb, an event that changed the way the
United States produced nearly 300,000 military aircraft,
including

The Boeing 747 is the world's largest commercial airliner and can carry more than 400 passengers
8,000 miles without refueling.

The 747 made intercontinental travel possible for the
masses," says Boeing spokesman Gary Lesser.

Thirty years later, the enormous plane still impresses.
The Boeing Co. assembled the jets at Everett, 30
miles north of Seattle, in a factory that is considered
to be the world's largest building — 38 acres under
one roof. Painted on the concrete floor are roadways,
regulates by stop signs and traveled by electric buggies,
trucks and three-wheeled bicyclists.

One recent day, Lesser was driving a visitor around
the factory. He referred to a fact sheet
explaining that a 747 has six million parts, 171 miles
of wiring and 5 miles of tubing. It contains 147,000 pounds
of aluminum and has a tail that reaches 65 feet high,
the equivalent of a six-story building.
The jetliner's normal operating weight is 717,080 pounds.
"Courage is the price that Life exacts for granting
peace.
The soul that knows it, knows no release.
From little things..."

Across the cloudless desert sky — and the government
isn't saying anything — it doesn't take "black budget"
secrets to impress. Sweetman advances simply looking
skyward, wherever you happen to be.

I think what would most amaze somebody from 1903,
if they were around today, would be that they have
many airplanes," he says. "They're as routine as trains
were in the 1930s. They're flying everywhere."
On the farm
A harvest of uncertainty after 100 years of change

By ROKANA HEAGEMAN
Associated Press writer

 EWVTON, Kan. — The family still keeps the rough-hewn table that Christopher Johnson made 100 years ago. It stands in the kitchen of the house he built on an 80-acre homestead on the Kansas prairie.

At the turn of the last century, Johnson could look out across this land with pride and optimism. He had come a long way since 1869, when he arrived from Sweden with his brother, Andrew. That first winter, which the brothers had spent in a dugout along the creek bed, was already a distant memory.

Christopher Johnson and his Swedish mail-order bride, Helen, went on to raise six children in their two-room shanty. At first, the three girls slept in a rickety bed he had added, while the three boys shared a room in the loft of the big red barn. But by 1900, the farm had prospered enough for him to build a fine two-story house for his family.

The apple orchards that once lined the drive to the house provided a bountiful crop to sell to the hotel in town, as well as supply a steady clientele. And Johnson could always get 50 cents for a wagonload of prairie hay for the township's horses and horses. A small flock of sheep, a few hogs, some chickens and the dairying he supplemented the oats and wheat the family grew.

Now, approaching the turn of a new century, Johnson's descendants have much the same view across the flat, wheat-growing land — but farm communities here and elsewhere, have changed in ways that are harder to see. The view into the future is uncertain.

In the 20th century, mechanization revolutionized agriculture. In the 21st century, high tech will transform farms and the rural communities that surround them.

"In the 1960s, we got our farmer out of the mud and put him a telephone and electricity. We built an interstate highway system," said Extension specialist Barry Flinchbaugh. "Well, the information superhighway will have the same impact."

Farming today relies on machines and scientific advances that Johnson could not have imagined. And there are other sweeping changes:

Managing debt, world markets and competition with corporate agribusinesses are facts of life today, as are farm families split between off-farm and in-town jobs to make ends meet.

The number of farms like the one begun by Johnson is shrinking: 5.75 million in 1900 to 1.3 million today. It is no longer a certainty that farmers will succeed their parents in the fields.

Christopher Johnson's great-grandson, 56-year-old Gordon Stucky, now owns the original homestead, the fourth generation to till on this land. The Johnson brothers' two homesteads are now part of the 1,200 acres that Stucky must farm to make a living.

"We're working just as hard, but more acres of ground to make a living, to educate our children, to have the things our city cousins had that we didn't, or thought we didn't," Stucky says.

His mother, 86-year-old Wilhelmina Stucky, sits in the very room where her grandfather Johnson died in 1926, and her arthritic hands steadily hold a worn family autograph book. An entry often recited by her mother reads:

"We sleep and dream life is beauty, we wake and find life is duty."

She was wise to live by for a prairie family that survived the Dust Bowl of the 1930s and the farm credit crisis of the 1980s. But there was progress, too.

No advance surpassed the introduction of tractors and modern machinery to replace the mule, the workhorse and manual labor. The tractor, manufactured in the 1920s by Avery Company of Peoria, Ill., which boasted it could replace the work of four horses. By the 1970s, 100-horsepower models were in demand, as tractors over the years have offered greater power, comfort and safety.

Besides mechanization, developments in plant and animal genetics in the past century allowed farmers to farm hundreds more acres efficiently, producing bountiful fields of new prolific, disease-resistant crop varieties with fewer farm workers.

At the turn of the last century, most farms in this country covered less than 375 acres; today's typical farm is 807 acres. Meanwhile, farm employment dropped from 9.9 million in 1930 to 2.9 million in 1997.

Farming population slipped below 5 million in 1990, census figures show.

More change is ahead as plant genetics evolves despite some opposition. A farmer in the coming century may well plant genetically engineered varieties of tobacco if it's used for making medicines, or animal feed crops with the nutritional balance for specific livestock.

The most important farm policy issue of the next millennium may well be who controls the gene pool of all those genetically engineered crops and livestock.

"About half of the crops we will plant this year are somewhat genetically engineered — almost all in private hands," Flinchbaugh said. "That is a question we are going to have to address."

Even the animals are different today.

A massive pig, which once held land from the farm's fat hogs for cooking and making soap, now sits empty in the Stucky family's kitchen. The hogs they raise today are lean, the end product of decades of animal husbandry aimed at ensuring the kind of meat preferred by today's consumers and demanded by auction buyers.

Even feeding the pigs today entails far more than dumping the family leftovers and some grain in the animals' feeding troughs in their pens. Stucky uses a modern grain handling system and raises his hogs in a total confinement building.

Gone is the din from the grain threshing machines with their traveling crews, and the big harvest meal farm wives prepared to serve them. Combines, coating upwards of $100,000, now easily do the same work in the fields.

"A lot of things are much easier to do now," Stucky says, "but we pay a different kind of price for it today."

His wife, LaVern, now works off the farm as a school teacher — a move the family was forced to make after the farm crisis of the 1980s, when some 200,000 to 300,000 farmers went bankrupt, were forced out or had their operations financially reconstructed. High-interest debt on upgraded machinery and expanded acreage overwhelmed farmers hit by falling land values and low commodity prices.

Wilhelmina Stucky, who was born in 1912, remembers earlier lean times on the farm.

She graduated from high school during the Depression years — but her struggling parents somehow came up with the $60 she needed each year to go to college to become a teacher. Her family ate a lot of canned vegetables and beans back then.

She taught at a country school in Moundridge, earning $60 a year. In 1938, she married Ervin Stucky, and they settled on a farm nearby. As wedding presents, her parents gave them a cow and a male: his parents, a cow and a horse.

Thinking back, she says, "We didn't get too much for our eggs and milk — but our grocery bill wasn't too much back then."

She remembers fondly when the telephone came to her in 1939, and all the neighbors had party lines. "When the phone rang, you had to go listen to what the others were hearing," she says. "And that was the connective tissue in the area."

\[See FARM, Page 559\]
Hog butchering time in January was the social highlight of the year, when family and friends came together at each farm to help that family butcher. She canned all the meat; it would be years before freezers became common on the farm.

"Farm activities centered on the family farm itself and getting the crops in for winter," Gordon Stucky says.

But along with the tractor came the automobile, and the farmer started going to town more often for everything from shopping to meetings of the 4-H club, organized in the early 1910s.

"Now we were busy all the time, and didn't stay on the farm," he says.

Gordon Stucky lives in a farm home his own parents built, close to the hog buildings that are his livelihood.

The old Johnson homestead — which has never been mortgaged, and which Stucky inherited — stands on the outskirts of Newton. Stucky's 31-year-old son, Doug Stucky, a chemist for a Kansas pipeline company, moved in recently to live in the century-old farmhouse and to raise his own 2-year-old son, Joshua.

Beyond the neat white board fence that encloses the manicured lawn and old outbuildings, the newest generation to live here found a virtual time capsule filled with the everyday things that made this a working farm house.

There is Christopher Johnson's rough-hewn table, and an upstairs bedroom closet holding a lacy wedding dress, and fading military uniforms. A top hat sits on a side table as if someone had just laid it down. An antique iron baby bed sits in a corner of one of the bedrooms. Drawers overflow with old postcards and letters.

The barn still stands sturdy, although marauding raccoons have shredded the walls and ceilings in what had once been the Johnson boys' room in the loft.

If this is the farm's past, what is its future?

About all that Gordon Stucky can be sure of is that weather and markets will continue to be the great variables. "Those two things seem out of our control, no matter how hard we work," he says.

Most of the farm's revenue comes from livestock now, although wheat is still an important cash crop here as on much of the High Plains.

"It is a world economy. I can't take a load of hay into town anymore to sell to the city people who have mules," he says.

So-called precision farming — using satellite locating systems on combines to record field conditions and adjust fertilizer and other chemicals accordingly — is making inroads on several farms in this rural community where other Johnson descendants have established their own farms.

"As long as we can keep working, and have our health, there will be another year and another crop," Gordon Stucky says.

None of Stucky's own children has become a farmer, and Doug kept his city job when he moved into the old farmhouse. But Doug told his father he wants to give Joshua the same experiences and advantages he had while growing up on a farm.

"What his generation — what he will do — remains to be seen," Gordon Stucky says.

If young Joshua does return to the farm, he will become the sixth generation to work the homestead Christopher Johnson built a long century ago.