

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

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## SILVER FOX FARMING

About 1925 Irving W. Weet of Shelby Center started the business of raising silver foxes for their pelts. The farm was located on the north side of Route 31 west of Albion, just east of the Eagle Harbor - West Barre Road. A stucco house there served as the business office and the fenced yard in which the pens were located was situated immediately behind the office. On the back of the property and facing on the Phipps Roas was another house owned by the company and occupied by Ross Wilson and family. Mr. Wilson worked at the ranch for Mr. Weet from 1925-33 when the business failed. Dr. H.L. VanVolkenburg was the veterinarian and he occupied the house west of the office. A building called "the tower" was located at the end of the enclosed yard where feed was mixed. This was three stories high and the glassed in top floor served as a lookout where the foxes could be surveyed without knowing that they were being watched. They produced three or four puppies a year and were fed a diet of horsemeat, cod liver oil, skimmed milk and some cereal.

Mr. Weet not only owned breeding foxes but sold breeders to other people at \$3000 per pair. These were boarded at the ranch where their off-spring were pelted. A good silver fox skin would bring as much as \$175 - \$250 before tanning. Skins were taken to Rochester where they were tanned and made up into scarfs by Crosby-Frisian Fur Company. The skin of the silver fox however, is tissue thin and delicate and was not a long-wearing fur. The fad for silver fox scarfs didn't last long and the business ceased to exist.

Pictured here in 1931 is Ross Wilson at the left with Irving Weet standing on the porch as they display some of their seasons pelts with an unknown employee.