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Harvest is in full swing at Quarry Hill Orchards

BY MATT REESE

In the autumn of the year, it appears that Bill Gammie is as busy as the pollinators that frequent the apple blossoms earlier in the growing season on his Erie County apple orchard. During the hectic harvest season for his Quarry Hill Orchard, Gammie flits around with the efficiency and industry of a bee.

"It's constant chaos this time of year," he said in between sorting apples, taking cell phone calls and greeting customers in his retail market at the orchard. "You've got to have a passion for this."

The passion for agriculture has spanned three generations of the Gammie family. Bill's father William G. was one of four children, and he and his family were part of the massive wave of immigration to America in the first part of the 20th century. Once in the United States, the Gammie family established a home in South Lorain around 1909. While growing up, William G. and his

brother Alex worked on northern Ohio vegetable farms and eventually moved to the present Quarry Hill Orchards location with their families during the Great Depression.

The Gammie brothers initially focused on vegetable production, but during the early lean years on the farm, came to rely on the profits from fruit crops to survive. Years later, Bill followed in his father's footsteps, though it was not necessarily according to plan. He graduated from Ohio State University with a degree in political science.

"The last thing I wanted to do was farm or teach, and I ended up doing both of them," Gammie said. "They were both full-time jobs."

He met his wife, Jacqueline, while teaching high school history. She continues to teach and help with various aspects of the orchard business around her work schedule.

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Bill Gammie, owner of Quarry Hill Orchards in Erie County, had a good year for growing these Melrose apples, along with more than 30 other varieties, though hail and wind damaged a lot of the crop.

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