

The American Emu Association thanks Allen & Myra Charleston for the donation of their emu information.



RED OAK FARM



Allen &
Myra
Charleston



Red Oak has been in our family since 1835. The house you see above was built by L. M. Jones (my Granddaddy) and his brothers in 1927 to replace the previous house which burned. They set up a sawmill in what is now the front yard and every bit of wood in the house, including the doors and windows, came from the farm.

Since very little was saved from the original house, we do not know what it looked like. Because of the loss, Granddaddy put a window or door on the wall of every room in the new house, even in the pantry.

Over the years the farm has gone through many changes and its size has fluctuated. Currently just under 100 acres, the fields have been rented out to a larger farmer for many years, while family has lived in the house, maintained the yard and a small garden. However, in recent years we diversified our operation to include emus.

Like many of our generation, my husband (Allen Charleston) and I (Myra Jones Charleston) were tired of working for someone else and longed to get back to the country (we were both raised on farms). Knowing that we couldn't afford a lot of land, we began investigating the alternative agriculture scene to see what the possibilities were for small farms. By this time the emu industry had already gone through the speculator stage and was on its way to a slaughter market. We liked the gentle nature of the bird, the meat and other by-products and the fact that it didn't require a lot of land to raise.

When my husband and I began investigating the possibilities of purchasing farm land in south Texas (we were living and working in Corpus Christi) for the purpose of raising emu, my Mother (Miss Billie), pointed out that we were being foolish, when we already had land up here and that she really thought it was time we came home. Realizing that she was right, we moved our emu operation to Tennessee on Mother's Day, 1995.