

The pursuit of a dream;



PORT ROYAL — Harold Sheaffer, a young industrial arts teacher who grew up on a farm and clings to his heritage dearly, has a dream which advanced a notch towards reality last week. His ambition is to create a year-round agricultural exhibit to depict life as it was in in-land America.

"I want to build a working situation as authentic as possible, and offer seminars for people to come in and take part in or re-learn forgotten skills," Sheaffer remarked. Already prepared with hundreds of antique agricultural items and machinery, as well as a farm, Sheaffer is aiming for an educational display where people can see all of the various progressions of American agriculture on one site. He calls this dream, now eight years old, "Agricultural Americana," and claims to have a 20 year program worked out towards realizing this goal.

A bachelor, with degrees in agricultural engineering, industrial arts, and biology, he says he is determined to see his dream come true.

"I really care about what is happening to American agriculture," the nostalgic part-time farmer explained. "I care about our American heritage and believe people have a need, and a right to know about it — I care about what we are losing," he said.

Sheaffer went ahead this year in organizing the first "Agricultural Americana" at the Port Royal Fairgrounds. Practically all of the machines on display belonged to the young enthusiast, as did hundreds of household and crafts items. He eventually plans on having his entire collection — approximately 1,000 pieces — at a permanent site for "Agricultural Americana," which will in all likelihood be his farm.

The earliest dated piece of equipment Sheaffer has in his collection is 258 years old. Among some of the bigger items he owns are 17 threshing machines; a left-hand, water-powered saw mill with friction feed; a fully operatable grist mill; a

steam tractor; a 1923 Fordson; an original ox cart; an original Conestoga wagon; 27 sleighs and much more. Someday he hopes to host the "biggest threshing reunion in the eastern United States."

Asked if his "Agricultural Americana" might be similar to the popular colonial attractions in Massachusetts and Virginia — Sturbridge Village and Williamsburg — he nodded but emphasized he planned

to depict rural life as it was in in-land America, as opposed to coastal regions. "I think it would be a boost in the arm for Central Pennsylvania," he remarked.

A science and industrial arts teacher at Kutztown High School, with additional duties as manager of a college cafeteria and coach for two sports, Sheaffer devotes whatever time he has left over to pursuit of his dream. He grew up on a Juniata County farm and is

"Agricultural Americana" m. last week with hundreds of event spread out over 45 acre: true for Harold Sheaffer, upper farmer-teacher, who owns 1 wants to expand the show to at threshing machine was of sp while children (above right) d straw blown out of the thresl

