

Bicentennial farm

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After a 108 day sea voyage from Ireland. To top off the nearly four-month ordeal, his vessel arrived here shipwrecked.

The land now owned by Major Wilson and his family was originally given to Humphrey via a grant from the king. Some of the property has been sold off, due to economic conditions. But Wilson, who is a retired Army officer, and his wife still own the original homestead and 120 acres. The property is a source of pride to both and they heartily proclaim that they intend to preserve the land as a farm for as long as possible. "We hate to see houses come up this way," the Major said. "There's a sense of pride you experience from living on a place like this which gives you a special continuity of history," Mrs. Wilson added. She has spent numerous hours doing research on old family records and has become very much involved in retaining the look and flavor of the past in her home.

Acknowledging that they have had no easy task, the Wilsons continue to resist the pressures faced by all farmers - be they southern or northern. Land in this area is selling for as much as some of the better parcels in Lancaster County.

The Wilsons' home is an old log house which dates back to the American Revolution. Its 14-inch logs insulate and protect well, but have been quite a problem for contractors whom the Wilsons have hired in the past to do some remodeling. "The logs are hard as nails," Wilson explained, adding that it cost the contractor several saw blades before he could cut through one of the massive old lengths of timber.

Besides the old logs, the house at one time also featured hand-blown glass. Still a part of the structure are the hand-hewn nails and some pressed wood shavings for insulation. Knowledgeable in the antique field, Wilson claims he can tell the difference between nails which were forged in either Connecticut or Pennsylvania.

As is typical of old homes, the quaint Wilson house originally had a minimum of closet and window space. A curiosity about the home is that it has three variations of levels on the first floor - a feature which the Wilsons claim is probably unique in all of Harford County.



Major and Mrs. Tom Wilson cherish their heritage, their farm, and their beef cattle.

In addition to the house, the living style of 19th Century America included a smoke house, ice house, and spring house. Noting that all homes were built close to springs in those days, the Major pointed out that a hand-dug well is also on the property. It's lined with stones for 40 feet up. The spring house - like most all spring houses - was used for the cooling of milk and butter as well as obtaining water. The ice house was still in use when Wilson was a young man and he vividly recalls the hard work involved in filling it. Covered with a layer of sawdust, the ice would keep until mid-Summer of the following year.

"Smoke and salt was the way to preserve meat in those days," the Major announced. It was something he himself could remember from his childhood.

A far different recollection of the family - although it predates the Major's own lifetime - is that of an actual hanging that took place just across from the Wilson farm. That was the fate of a horse thief.

Also remembered by Wilson is the Christmas season the

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way it was when servants were still a part of the household. Servants were customarily allowed as much time off as the old Yule log would burn in their employer's fireplace. Amazingly enough, the old log would burn for two weeks - thanks to it having been thoroughly soaked in water for several weeks prior.

The rustic, well-kept barn remains largely empty as far as livestock is concerned, although the Major and his wife maintain a herd of 20-some beef cattle. Both take great pleasure in working with the animals and address each one by name whenever the occasion calls for it.

Like most barns which have been around for as long as this one (1860), the cavernous structure features immense hand-hewn logs, wooden pegs, and a slate roof. The latter was especially common in this area since the slate mine at Delta, Pa., was just a short distance away. Wooden stanchions still remain intact in the stable.

Formerly a tobacco and dairy farm, the Wilson property is now partially farmed by North Harford High School and a cousin of the Major.

Both of Wilson's grandfathers fought in the Civil War, and interestingly enough, on opposite sides. Several old documents from the war are displayed in the Wilson home.

"Those were hard times - not much to come and go on," the Major sighed in remembrance of the stories he heard about the Civil War. The family here could hear the booming of the cannons in Gettysburg, located less than 50 miles (direct air measurement) to the west-northwest.

One of Wilson's grandfathers used to peddle produce in Baltimore, an undertaking which took up to a full day from pre-dawn until long after dark. Oftentimes not returning home until the following day, he'd return home with goods for the family to use.

When roads were built, the land required for the project was gladly donated by farmers who were to be connected by the new traffic network. "They were glad to get out of the mud," the Major explained with an accompanying smile. But the new roads weren't as much appreciated during the Winter when each farmer had to shovel his own share. It was manual labor all the way, and the Major can remember having been paid 10 cents an hour for it. "But that was when you could buy two pounds of butter for 49 cents," his wife added.

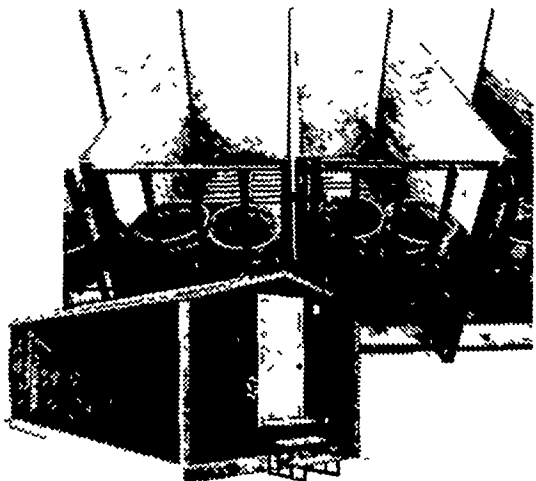
Goods were often transported by sled during the winter, and the fields were the right-of-ways. Also of significant importance to the transportation picture here decades ago was the Maryland and Pennsylvania Railroad, or the "Ma and Pa" for short.

Today the railroad is just a memory. A state road carries traffic swiftly. But some of the relics of an era gone by continue to be found from time to time.

Among the findings the Wilsons have uncovered are pieces and parts of old farm machinery, and grave markers with just a single name on them. It's presumed that these referred to slaves, as the blacks were only known by their first names.



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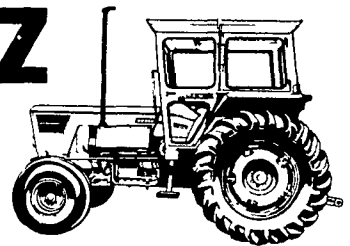
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elimination or reduction of hog population is affected by one or even both of these diseases.

Many of this pigs are marketed at five or six weeks of age for veterinary experimentation. The goal is to help find cures for rhinitis, and mycoplasma pneumonia. Henkel estimated that between 60 and 65 per cent of the U. S. hog population is affected by one or even both of these diseases. Although neither of these production complications have an effect on consumption qualities of pork, they are of concern and exemplify just one area where Henkel is actively doing his best to help the industry.