

# Berks dairy farm blends past with the future

**BY DICK ANGLESTEIN**  
**MOHRSVILLE** — Berks County dairy farmers Arthur and Liz Schlappich have a dedication to the past and a commitment to the future.

The lane leading into the Schlappich farm about 10 miles northwest of Leesport could be considered a kind of dividing line between their dual relationship with these different eras in time.

On the south side of the lane stands the large stone farm house with its unique historical significance and architecture, which the dairy couple are preserving and restoring.

Just across the lane is their dairy operation, which they are gradually updating and modernizing as they work toward the future.

In a realistic and personally satisfying way, the Schlappichs are utilizing the present as they carefully blend the past into the future.

Last month, the Schlappich home, built in 1807, was one of the featured stops on an historical tour of Leesport and surrounding areas sponsored by the Leesport Women's Club.

The couple had more than 125 visitors who viewed not only the imposing and majestic exterior of the home, but surveyed some of its interior historical attractions.

Among the more unique of the interior features are the dormers in the third-floor attic which have become an historical gallery of autographs of former residents of the home.

The walls of the three dormers contain scores and scores of names and dates of residents.

"The earliest we've been able to find dates back to 1846," Liz Schlappich explains.

"That's when this autograph tradition must have started and it has been continued all of these years."

The Schlappich family continued the wall signing started by previous residents.

"Our family has occupied the house continuously since 1884," Arthur Schlappich said.

"Some of the names of ancestors include the previous way of spelling the name as Schlappig."

But the house contains many more historical features of greater significance.

Among them are large built-in corner cupboards on both the first and second floors that stretch from the floor to ceiling, a three-story open winding stairway that reaches all the way to the attic, complete with wainscoting and chair rail.

Another interesting feature of the interior is the dividing of the house into a fancy side and one that is more plain.

On one side of the house the window and door frames are decorated with designs either circular in pattern or even resembling the blades of a windmill. But in the other half of the house the framework is quite plain.

There is every indication that both sides were constructed at the same time.

Arthur has a possible explanation:

"From all indications, several generations of a family occupied the house at any given time. It seems that the eldest generation always occupied the part with the fancy woodwork at the doors and windows. The younger

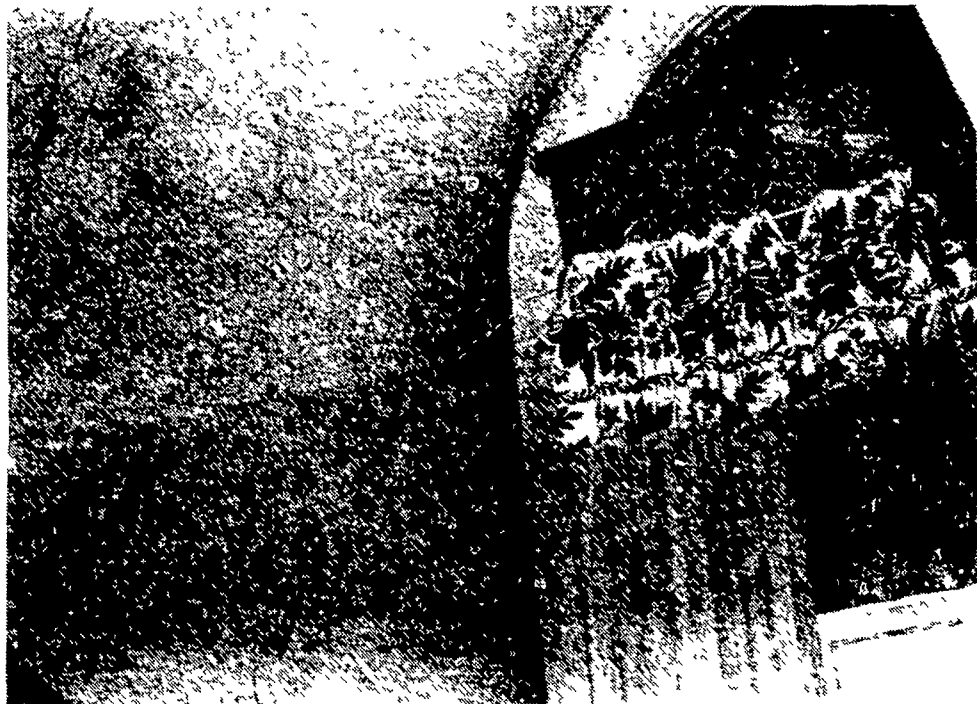


Large stone home, called the mansion or plantation house in old records, is found on the dairy farm of Arthur and Liz Schlappich, northwest of Leesport. Exterior features include red sand-

stone accents as lintels with keystone above windows, as dividing lines between floors and as archway around cellar entrance.



Liz Schlappich is refinishing this built-in corner cupboard which stretches from floor to ceiling. Large cupboards are found on both first and second floors.



Dormer walls in attic of Schlappich home are a living history book containing autographs of residents over past century and a half.

generations lived in the part which was more plain."

Outside, the house features red sandstone lintels above the doors and windows. A sandstone accent streak also extends around the front and one side of the house.

But amidst this history and concern with the past, it shouldn't be forgotten that this is a working dairy farm.

The farm contains 102 acres and with rented ground, the Schlappichs farm about 250 acres.

About 100 acres are planted in corn, some 70 in hay and the remainder in small grain, including wheat for marketing, along with oats and barley for feed.

The total herd of Holsteins includes 130 head, with about 55 presently being milked. The rolling herd average is 15,500 lbs. of milk and 530 fat.

Since taking over the farm in 1973 as the fifth generation of the family on the land, Arthur and Liz have been following a gradual program of herd growth, including introduction of purebred stock, and modernization and expansion of facilities.

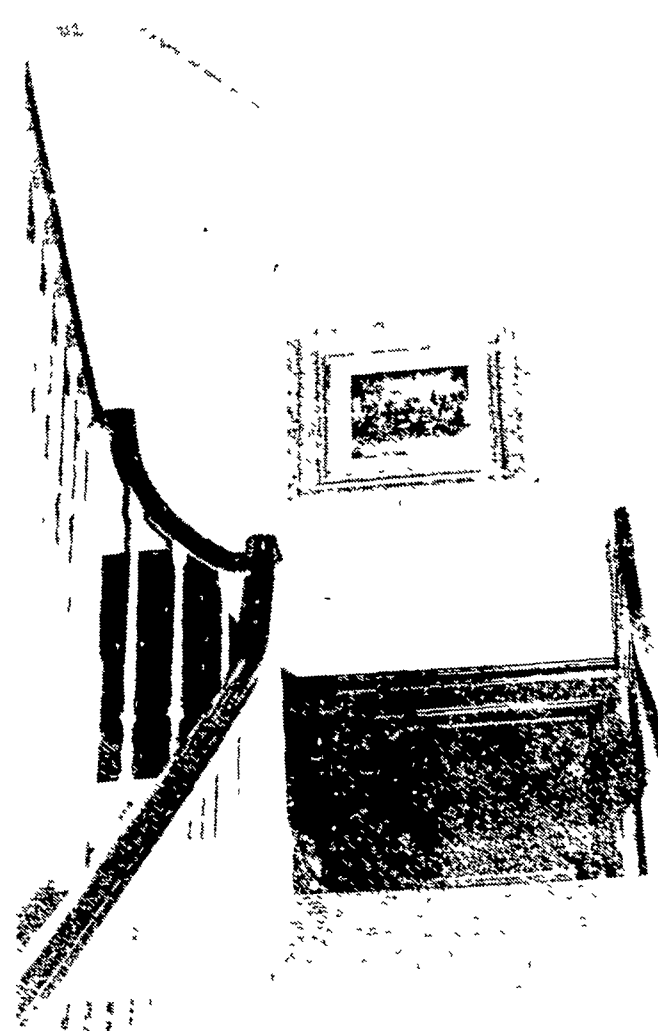
"About 10 to 15 percent of the herd is now purebred," Arthur said.

"The remainder is identified grade stock."

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Hay is fed to part of Holstein herd by Arthur Schlappich. Total herd, including replacement stock, numbers 130 head.



Ornate winding stairway reaches from first floor into the attic of Schlappich home. It includes chair rail and decorative wainscoting.