

## Golden crop thrives

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 here is not unusual for them.  
 As Barley talks he likes to philosophize and he feels tobacco farming may be a contributing factor to Lancaster County's neat

appearance. "Lancaster County is the Garden Spot of the world they used to say when I was a boy. A lot of that is because of tobacco. A man who did general farming always had a few acres of tobacco



Fourteen-year-old Abbey follows her grandpa's example of having straight leaves go into the bale for a quality product.

and when you look out the window of the tobacco shed you can always see something that needs to be done."

Therefore, fence rows got mended, trash got picked up and farmsteads always looked presentable. Those who weren't stripping tobacco, according to Barley, could be found at the general store or at the local garage and they didn't see all those things needing to be done in the Spring. "You don't see any tumbledown buildings in Lancaster County," he concludes.

Asked how much he is hoping to plant this year—his—51st Abe replies, "As few as I can get the boys talked down to. I'd like to reduce to ten acres." The boys, of course, are John and Abram, on whose land he raises the crop.

Barley predicts that acreage will be reduced on a voluntary level this year because of the lower prices and unsold tobacco. The previous year's high prices encouraged larger acreages to be planted this year.

For the first time he will not be sowing his own seedbed this year,

but will rely instead upon his nephew Harold for plants. In return Barley has promised to help pull the plants, a job which he says is the "most dreaded job" of tobacco growing. "You are on a plank and it gets monotonous and tiresome to be in the same position."

Barley admits that one way to relieve the boredom, is to throw a little dirt in someone's direction, or to "accidentally" spray the pullers with the water which is being used to loosen the plants.

Barley's goal is to get the plants in the ground early so the cutting can be done before school gets underway in September. With this schedule, the plants go in during the latter part of May or early June, and they start topping in mid to late July. "Then we leave it stand at least three weeks or longer before we cut it. We try to get it in before school starts. We all help out and get it in fast."

The grandchildren can all be found in the fields during this time, although sometimes only for an hour or two because of other activities. Most of them agree that

the field work is the part they like best.

Abe points out, "You can't cut in the heat of the day or it will get sunburned; then it must be used in second grade. By proper management you can do it with next to no sunburn."

Grace adds, "The weather has a lot to do with it. When we harvest early we must be much more cautious than with a later harvest."

The tobacco is put on laths and hung in three different barns. "When it is time to take it down, everybody pitches in an helps," Abe says. "We load it on wagons and leave it set until we are ready for it." Stripping may begin as early as November, but usually it is not begun until December. Abe explains, "On nice days I'm doing something else."

Barley points out that Lancaster County has never suffered a complete crop loss with tobacco; although in 1958, many, Abram included, had extensive hail damage, which some called a total

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