



# Herrs live history each day of their lives

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN

Farm life has no comparison on earth. It is the last bastion of wholesome existence in which a family can establish roots and nurture a continuing growth for generation after generation.

Take the Herr family as an example.

The name is synonymous with Lancaster County. When you think of Lancaster, the name automatically comes to mind — much like Kennedy in Massachusetts or duPont in Delaware.

But the Herr family, such as that of Harry G. and Kathryn Herr, 2125 Ruth View Road, Lancaster, can carry their farm heritage one, ultimate step farther. Each day of their lives, the family members literally live and breathe history.

The eighth generation on the 100-acre rolling farm, 75-year-old Harry and 70-year-old wife, Kathryn, are retired nearly a decade from actively operating the farm, which dates back some 242 years in the family.

But the family ties will continue. Son, Donald, is now operating the farm and his sons, Eric, 13, and Jason, 8, will be the 12th generation on the land.

The family's daily association with history ranges from the sheepskin deed from Thomas and William Penn to John and Abram Hare (the original spelling of Herr) to the large double-deck, stone-gable barn that the Pennsylvania Historical Commission used as a guide to rebuild the barn at the Rockford Plantation of General Hand.

"The stone barn is dated 1761," Herr explains.

"A lot of people don't believe it.

"But the stone ends are set on bedrock and where none is available the ends are arched.

"A large wooden ramp was built to get the top stones in place.

"Can you imagine the amount of wooden scaffolding that would have been required to wheel those stones up there by hand."

Just at their front door, the Herrs also have some living history — a male and female holly tree.

"It's supposed to be the second highest holly tree for this latitude," Herr said.

"Back in 1951, Norm Reber of Pennsylvania Farmer counted the rings and said it was 175 years old."

The Herrs keep spraying and caring for the trees, but admit they have noticed that the trees are starting to show their age a bit.

The Herr farm includes some 26 grade Holsteins, about 20 cattle being fattened, 10 acres in tobacco and the other tillable land in wheat, corn and hay.

Harry's father, Harry B., brought electricity to the farm in 1917 and built the stone road that came up from the Lime Valley Mill.

Harry also recalls the family's first tractor, an Oliver, bought back in 1938 — just a little bit before he took over from his father.

Family photos show such things as an old Peerless steam rock crusher that was used in the construction of the road. If you look closely Harry, then five years old, is barely visible on it.

Harry and Kathryn remember the days of mule farming before the tractor as if they were yesterday.

"I liked mules much better than horses," Harry says with conviction.

"Besides their feet are smaller."

Even after mechanization came, one favorite was kept for the garden and tobacco.

Harry and Kathryn get into a bit of a brief debate if that was Sam or Jack.

And even off the farm, the Herrs still live history.

A favorite pastime is participation in activities of the Red Rose Antique Car Club.

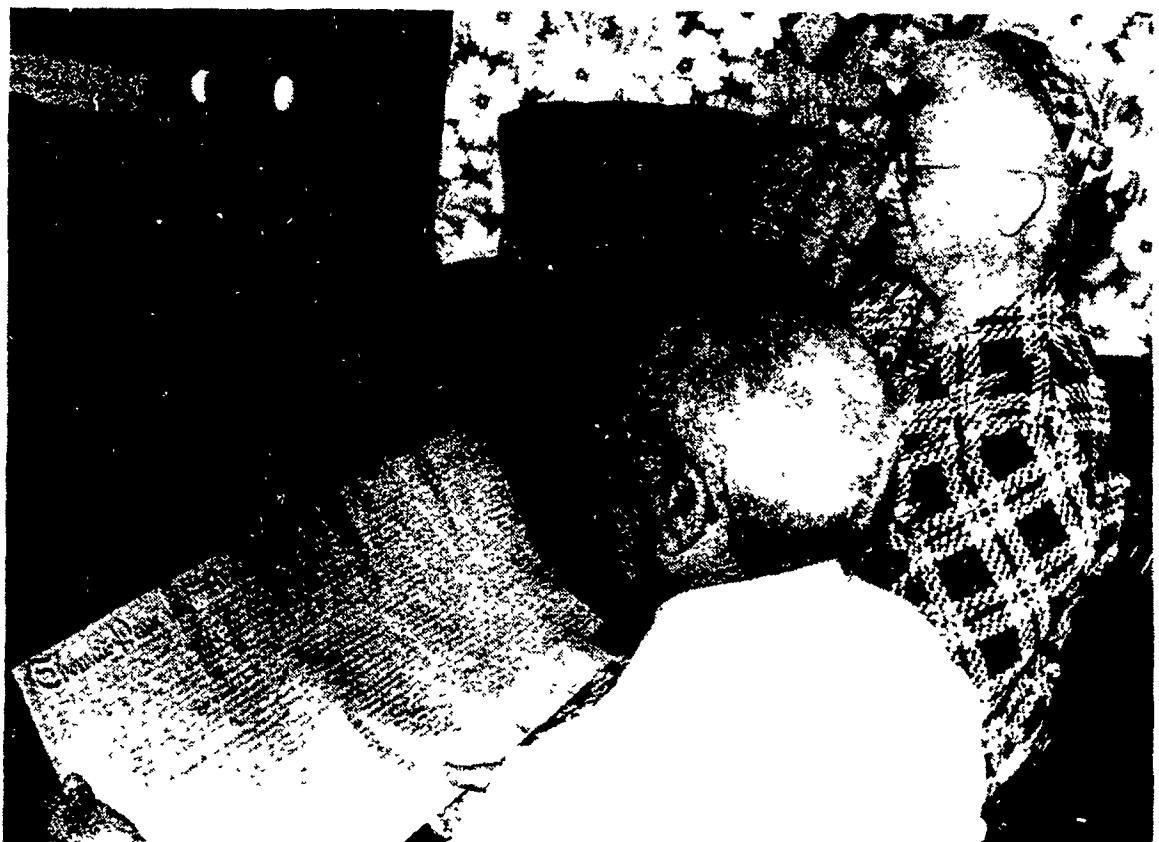
With top down they can be seen in a 1968 Classic Buick convertible or the shiny maroon 1938 Buick Straight Six.



Rising behind Harry G. and Kathryn E. Herr is a Holly tree, one of the biggest for this latitude and likely more than 200 years old.



Sitting in front of fireplace that was built for Potter County deer head, Harry and Kathryn Herr look over original sheepskin deed from the Penns.



Sheepskin deed begins: "Thomas Penn and Richard Penn..."